

The Shining Star Above The Heaven

- Chapter 717 - 717: Started Arriving

Chapter 717 - 717: Started Arriving

[1,660 words]

Four days later, at the eastern coastline of the Barisan continent, there was a small fishermen village. The village had tens of villagers, and most of them were fishermen who had been fishing for generations.

In the past, when the continent was still covered by the protective barrier, these villagers could only sail not too far from the coastline, but they could still catch enough fish to keep their economy moving and fill their bellies. However, since the barrier disappeared, they could sail much farther, and they could also catch many more fish, which in the end elevated their condition.

At this moment, a few fishermen had just come back from fishing. Their catch was satisfying, with many fishes caught inside the net. Their ships anchored near the simple dock, and they moved their catch to the land through it.

"What a great catch today too. At this point I don't think we will run out of fish," one of the fishermen said as he helped pull the net full of fish from the ship.

"Yeah, I'm truly grateful to live to this day, as I can enjoy this," replied his friend.

"Thanks to His Majesty, we can live to this day and enjoy this condition full of peace and fish."

While they kept working and conversing with each other, their activities suddenly stopped as their gazes turned toward the middle of the ocean. At first, they were confused when they saw what looked like a "wall" approaching. But then, their eyes widened in shock, as they finally realized what it was, a huge wave rushing toward them at great speed.

"Shit! A wave that high?! A tsunami? Where the hell did that suddenly come from?" one fisherman shouted in shock.

"Run! Warn the other villagers about the incoming wave!" another yelled. But the wave moved too quickly. It was already closing in on them, and as mere mortals, they were

not fast enough to reach the village. In that moment, they thought all of them were going to die as the wave loomed over them.

But then, before the wave could crash into the land or even touch their anchored ships, it suddenly broke apart, splitting and splashing to both sides. A massive figure appeared beneath the water, growing clearer and larger as it rose from the sea.

The fishermen looked upward in disbelief.

What they saw was a giant whale.

Standing on top of the whale were several humanoid figures. In the next instant, those figures leapt down and landed right in front of the fishermen.

By now, the villagers had already gathered near their place, drawn by the commotion from the sea.

The moment they saw the scene before them, they were shocked, as this was the first time they had ever seen something like this. A giant whale and five blue-skinned figures stood before them, and some of the features on their heads reminded them of fish. Still, their shapes were more or less human, and it was even possible to distinguish their genders.

At the front stood a beautiful woman with long blue hair, wearing a blue dress, while four muscular men stood behind her like guards. They exuded a strong aura that made everyone present tremble in fear.

The fishermen were only mortals, so when faced with these powerful figures, they did not know what to do. But then they remembered the words about the outsiders who would begin arriving on the continent. Their emperor had already told them not to be afraid and to stand with dignity, for he would be behind them.

Recalling their emperor's words gave them a surge of confidence. They forced themselves to stand firm, trying to appear unafraid, even though fear still lingered in their hearts.

However, at that moment, the beautiful woman suddenly spoke, in the same language as them.

"My apologies if our arrival startled you all. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Xeris Nerevalis, princess of the Ardemia Empire, located in the Sermoin Ocean, the eastern ocean of the Barisan continent. We are, in a way, your neighbors. We are the sea folk, and we wish to meet with His Majesty Aldrian."

Her voice was soft and comforting, which helped ease the hearts of the villagers. They also finally understood her intention, and one of the fishermen stepped forward to speak.

"I see. Then, Your Highness, you should head toward that floating land with the grand palace. That is the Imperial Palace, where His Majesty resides. Although the floating land can be seen from here, it is located in the central region of the continent, which is far away from this place. Even we have never visited it." As he spoke, he pointed toward the floating land.

The sea folk turned their gaze to the floating land in the distance, and then Princess Xeris looked back at the fisherman.

"I see, thank you for the information. However, before we go, may I ask a few questions to any of you? We will compensate you for your time and make sure you suffer no loss, as we will reward you generously."

The fisherman nodded, though he still felt wary in his heart.

"Please ask, Your Highness. If this is something I, or we, can answer, then we will do so."

The princess nodded with a smile, and they began their question-and-answer session.

While the guests from the sea folk were the first to arrive after Aldrian's announcement, out in space near the Barisan continent, an interstellar vessel was approaching. As it drew closer to the continent, the vessel began to slow down and descended into the atmosphere.

A few moments later, the giant vessel nearly reached the coastline of the Barisan continent, but it hovered for a moment before flying off in a certain direction. From its position, the crew could see a wide field that had been prepared by the authority of the Barisan continent, specifically for such massive vessels to land.

Not long after, the vessel finally landed, and the side hatch opened, revealing several figures. Among them was someone Aldrian knew well—the emperor of the Martal Empire. These people were the group from the Avilandis imperial family. Beside him stood his son, Prince Ronwell, along with several imperial guards.

After disembarking from their vessel, they looked around at their surroundings.

"Finally, we have arrived on this continent. Still, we wasted too much time, which caused us to arrive only now, even with an interstellar vessel," Emperor Rozwald said.

"Well, it couldn't be helped, Father. The gift for His Majesty Aldrian only appeared not long ago, and we were fortunate to obtain it," Ronwell replied as he gazed at the surrounding scenery.

They had even resorted to using an interstellar vessel in order to travel through space at greater speed. Warp ability could not be used, as the vessel had a minimum warp range, but they could still take advantage of its flight capability, which was far faster than that of cruisers. This allowed them to travel freely through space and reach the Barisan continent without hindrance.

Emperor Rozwald sighed and gave a nod before looking at his surroundings once more. Not far from the landing zone, he noticed a lone structure where a few figures could be seen standing. He and his group decided to approach it, but before they could walk further, they suddenly sensed something approaching from the sky.

They lifted their heads and saw another giant interstellar vessel descending, which made Emperor Rozwald click his tongue.

"Cih, we truly wasted too much time. Even those who were located much farther away from the Barisan continent have arrived at the same time as us."

The vessel slowly descended, and before long, it landed right beside the Martal Empire's vessel. As the hatch on the side of the hull opened, numerous figures disembarked, all wearing the distinctive robes of the demon territory.

The moment Emperor Rozwald laid eyes on them, he was stunned. Many renowned figures had arrived aboard this vessel. The lineup was no joke, the three sect masters of the three great sects, along with several other notable individuals from distant stars. Among them were the Sword Maiden, and the twin redheads—the Two Red Stars.

Emperor Rozwald did not expect that he would meet these people all at once. He understood the importance of the Barisan continent, and he knew many sought to explore this land, but that alone would not normally make the leaders of great organizations come personally. They could have simply sent envoys composed of their key figures to show their seriousness in building relations with the Barisan continent.

Yet, to think that the three sect masters of the three great sects of the demon territory had made the journey themselves... He had believed that he alone showed the most sincerity, thinking he was the only leader of an organization who would come in person at this moment.

"Ah, I did not think I would meet Emperor Rozwald here. I thought you would have arrived a few days ago, since the Orian continent is much closer than the Central Continent," Sect Master Han said after spotting the emperor.

"Well, there were matters I needed to settle, so we departed late. But I also did not expect to see the sect masters of the three great sects come personally, not to mention the Sword Maiden and the Two Red Stars arriving with you," Emperor Rozwald replied.

"We just happened to have time and wanted to visit personally. Coincidentally, the Sword Maiden and the Two Red Stars also came to my sect, so I thought, why not visit this place together?" Sect Master Han answered with a smile.

Emperor Rozwald narrowed his eyes suspiciously but remained silent.

"Anyway, we'll go first. Have a good day," Sect Master Han said before leading his group toward the teleportation station.

Emperor Rozwald watched them for a moment before following behind.

'It looks like this continent will be quite festive in the next few days.'

Unbeknownst to him, at that very moment, many transport vessels could be seen approaching the Barisan continent from every direction. Just as Emperor Rozwald thought, the continent would indeed become lively in the coming days.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 718 - 718: The Influx of Outsiders

[1,670 words]

For the next few hours after the arrival of the first visitors from outside the Barisan continent, the number of arrivals grew larger and larger. Some of them used cruisers, while others came in interstellar vessels. Those with cruisers flew directly toward the deeper parts of the continent, intending to explore and learn about it first.

The sight of flying cruisers and interstellar vessels along the coastline became common for the people living nearby. The scene truly amazed them, as this was the first time they had seen such transports. They wondered why the Barisan continent did not seem to utilize those kinds of flying transports.

As far as they knew, the only flying transport on the Barisan continent was the flying fortress, which was used for war. They had never seen anything like cruisers, which were smaller and much faster. If such transports existed on their continent, the Barisan continent would have much more varied transportation besides the teleportation portal.

As the visitors from outside became more numerous, their interactions with the locals of the continent grew more frequent. These outsiders first wanted to learn about the continent itself while also preparing for their journey to meet the ruler of this land.

For the great powers from outside, it would not be polite to simply explore the continent without first meeting its ruler.

At this moment, Aldrian, who was enjoying the palace scenery from the balcony of his room, could sense everything happening across the continent. With his domain's sense, he knew exactly what those outsiders were doing, and with his domain covering the entire world, he was aware that many more would soon arrive.

He sensed some familiar figures among them, interacting with the locals as they learned about the continent. There were no problems for now, which made him nod in appreciation at the outsiders' understanding. He only hoped that this situation would last, and that those outsiders would be sensible enough to take his warning seriously.

It would take some time before those people arrived at his palace, so he did not need to prepare for now. He could sense that they were taking their time to learn about the continent while making their way toward the palace.

A few moments later Sylphia appeared, entering the room and standing beside him on the balcony as she also watched the scenery.

"It has started. Those outsiders are already arriving one by one. My father said some of them landed on the coast of the Ivory Kingdom," she said, to which Aldrian responded with a nod.

"I just hope there will be no problems in the future. To be honest, I'm still quite nervous about the influx of outsiders while we are overall still much weaker than them."

Aldrian smiled as he hugged her waist and kissed her temple.

"You don't have to worry. I will always oversee the entire continent and make sure no great problem arises."

"I know. You are my strongest emperor, after all, and I know that once any problem arises, you can solve it easily. It's only my worry, so I said it aloud, not because I doubt your ability," Sylphia replied, which made Aldrian kiss her again.

"I know, my love. I know."

While the two lovers enjoyed their own moment, some of the outsiders were arriving at the cities and towns near the coast. Among them was the earliest group to set foot on the continent, the sea folk. After learning what they needed from the villagers along the coast, they took out a cruiser from their storage ring and continued their journey.

By now, they had already arrived at one of the coastal cities of the Doria Kingdom and had begun seeking further information about the continent. Everywhere they went, people turned their heads toward them, their unusual appearance drawing constant attention.

This was natural, as the Barisan continent had never seen a mixed race of humans and spiritual beasts like the sea folk. Everyone was curious about these newcomers. They had already known that outsiders might come, so they were prepared, yet they still could not help but watch them as if they were the most fascinating sight in the world.

As the sea folk strolled through the streets, one of her personal guards glanced around at the crowd and could not help but comment.

"Have they never seen someone like us before? Or are they simply curious about people from outside their continent?"

"I don't think they've ever seen us. Those villagers earlier were already a sign that they had never met sea folk before. It's no wonder these people look at us as if we're strange creatures," another guard replied.

"From our observations since we arrived, we can conclude that the information spread a few weeks ago about this continent seems true—the people here are weak. But I'm confused as to why. The energy here seems sufficient for people to break through to the Immortal Transition Realm. With their strength this low, this place is basically like a big piece of pie that many powers would want to claim," the earlier guard said.

"Well, that is, if they can defeat the protector of this continent," Princess Xeris interjected as she looked toward the floating land.

"Aldrian the Great. The people here truly regard him as a kind of god. Although we thought that was somewhat excessive, we must admit his strength is the real deal, based on what we saw that day," she added.

The battle between Aldrian and Tarius naturally drew the attention of the sea folk from the ocean depths, for a clash of that scale could not escape their notice. In fact, from the very moment the devils succeeded in creating the black pillar, the sea folk had sensed the disturbance on the continent, yet they could not enter it to investigate further.

Just as with the sea surface, they could not enter the continent from beneath the ocean because of the violent currents, which were truly dangerous even for those at the peak of the Pseudo-Immortal stage. These currents were so powerful that they could sweep away a massive creature like a mountain whale, and so sharp that they could pierce flesh with ease.

Those who dared to force their way into the continent through the sea would be dead before they even realized it, their bodies torn to shreds by the razor-like, overwhelming currents.

"I truly wonder how an existence like that could appear. How could this continent produce someone like him? Even when I recall that day, I still get goosebumps. There is no way such power could be unleashed by a mortal," one of the guards said as he looked toward the floating land.

"We might know soon. In any case, we need to keep gathering as much information as we can here before continuing our journey to the palace," the princess answered, before they resumed their stroll under the watchful eyes of the city's people.

Scenes like this with the sea folk could be seen across many parts of the continent, as more and more outsiders entered the coastal cities.

The Martal Empire's group received the same treatment, though the attention they drew was not as intense as with the sea folk, since they were human. The people were only curious about who they were and eager to catch a glimpse of those from beyond the continent.

"This is truly as His Majesty Aldrian said. This place is indeed lacking in terms of average cultivation level. I don't sense even a single cultivator at the Immortal Transition Realm in this city," Emperor Rozwald remarked.

Prince Ronwell nodded. "Yes, if there were no one like His Majesty Aldrian, then I can already imagine the chaos that would follow. The great pie called the Barisan continent, with its weak populace unable to defend it, the final fate of this land would be nothing more than a battlefield for countless powers fighting to claim it."

"This is the greatest weakness of this continent. And we could take advantage of that by offering His Majesty Aldrian something to ease his burden," Emperor Rozwald said.

Prince Ronwell wondered what his father was planning, but then a thought came to him. "Ah, yes. We could offer strong cooperation with His Majesty and build a much closer relationship with him."

"Are you from outside the continent?" a little girl suddenly asked the emperor, causing their conversation to stop. Emperor Rozwald and Prince Ronwell turned to look at the child nearby, who gazed at them with wide, curious eyes.

Her mother, carrying her in her arms, quickly covered her daughter's mouth and bowed deeply. "My apologies for my daughter. She is simply curious about Your Excellency. Please don't take her question too seriously."

Emperor Rozwald was slightly stunned, but he showed a gentle smile as he began approaching the mother. The people nearby grew wary, wondering what this group intended to do. Was he going to cause trouble despite the warning of Aldrian the Great?

The mother herself grew frightened as Emperor Rozwald drew closer, the only thing she could rely on being the silent reassurance that their emperor stood behind them.

However, the mother was stunned when the emperor took out a piece of candy from his storage ring and handed it to the child. The little girl accepted it with a bright, happy expression, while her mother, still nervous, allowed her to take it.

"Yes, we are from outside the continent. And please, don't be afraid, we have no intention of bringing harm by coming to this place. You may rest assured," he said, glancing at the mother as he spoke.

"You have a cute and beautiful daughter, madam. I hope you both have a good day," he added before continuing on with his group.

The mother watched them leave and let out a sigh of relief, smiling as she looked at her daughter holding the gift from the outsider.

The atmosphere in the coastal cities remained peaceful despite the influx of people arriving from outside the continent. Yet, within such an amicable setting, there were always those who sought to exploit the situation for their own schemes—just like the one who had just stepped onto the continent.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 719 - 719: Each With Their Own Intention

[1,437 words]

A group of humans came out from an interstellar vessel that had just landed in one of the landing zones along the coastline of the Vindas Kingdom. There was nothing particularly unusual about this group of ten people of mixed gender, and those who saw them would simply think they were normal visitors from outside, just like many others.

The ten people, six men and four women, looked around curiously at their surroundings, and that was all the others could see from them. The strongest among them was a middle-aged man with black hair and red eyes, who was in fact a middle pseudo-

immortal stage cultivator. As for the rest, most of them were at the pseudo-immortal establishment stage, which was an exceptionally strong composition.

However, they concealed their aura and cultivation, so no one could accurately predict their true strength.

Their bodies moved naturally, as though they carried no ill intent, yet their minds acted differently as they communicated with one another through sound transmission.

"We will learn everything about this continent, and more importantly, about our target before we plan how to make a move. Until we have gathered enough information, we will act as if we are nothing more than ordinary guests from outside the continent," the strongest of them, their leader, spoke to the group.

"We cannot be careless this time since we do not know the true capability of our target. Just in case, we will communicate as discreetly as possible while we are on this continent. If you want to discuss the mission with one another, then you are to use voice transmission only, and only when face to face."

"However, if you must use a communication artifact, you will have to speak in code so that no one else can understand what we mean. Is that clear?"

"Yes, my lord," the rest of them replied in unison.

"My lord, based on the target's reputation, are we truly enough to deal with him? I think we will need many decoys to shift his attention if we are really going to bring him down," one of them asked.

"Yes, that's why many more from the Hunting Ghost will arrive here in the next few days. They will serve as reinforcements and could act as decoys if we decide to move in the future," the leader answered.

"Once again, remember, do not even think of underestimating our target this time. Our target is the most powerful person we have ever faced. We must take this mission more seriously, follow the plan, and avoid doing anything reckless," he added as they walked toward the teleportation portal, which was guarded by troops from the Barisan Continent.

The teleportation portal connected to the nearest cities or towns, from which visitors could continue their journey to anywhere across the continent.

As they approached the portal, the leader addressed one of the guards.

"Excuse me, where does this portal lead? And how can we meet with His Excellency, Aldrian, the ruler of this continent?"

The guard looked at him. "You should call him His Majesty, since he is the Emperor of the great empire that unified this continent, sir. As for your question, this portal leads to Marlin City, the nearest city from here. You may continue your journey from there. If you wish to meet His Majesty, he is on the floating land where the grand palace is located."

The guard pointed toward the floating land and the grand palace, both visible from where they stood.

"Ah yes, thank you, sir. We will be going." The group continued walking, but before they could enter the portal, the guard called out to them.

"Enjoy your stay in the Barisan Continent."

The leader stopped and gave the guard a faint smile. "Thank you. I will enjoy it here," he said with hidden intent, before stepping into the portal, followed closely by his group.

In another place, a group had just entered one of the cities in the Doria Kingdom. This group was composed of elves, which was not particularly surprising to the people of the continent, as they were already accustomed to their presence.

The elves numbered seven in total, with the lowest among them at the pseudo-immortal foundation stage. The highest cultivation was held by a male elf at the low pseudo-immortal stage, though their leader was a blonde-haired female elf at the low pseudo-immortal establishment stage.

All of them wore robes commonly worn by elves, garments that displayed their elegance and refinement as a race closely connected to nature.

The woman glanced at her surroundings after stepping out of the portal, then began walking away, the others following close behind her. After a few moments of strolling through the city, one of the male elves spoke.

"This place is just like the information already spread. It is truly weak, and even with only our group, we could take this city if we wanted to—heck, maybe we could even take over the entire continent."

After hearing that, the female elf stopped walking and turned to him with a cold expression.

The male elf shivered under her gaze and instantly bowed. "My apologies, Your Highness. I merely spoke what was on my mind. There was no intent behind my words."

The female elf resumed walking as she replied, "You had better be careful, Luren. We do not want to offend the ruler of this continent with your arrogant words. What if he were to hear what you just said?"

Hearing that, Luren nodded repeatedly as they continued on their way. "Yes, Your Highness, I will keep that in mind."

But inside, he ground his teeth. 'Bitch, let's see how arrogant you will be in front of me in the future. When the plan of our faction succeeds, you and your mother will have no choice but to step down from your lofty positions.'

The female elf, who was in fact a princess, ignored him outwardly, but she remained wary of Luren, suspecting he might cause trouble in the future. This was because he was the son of a duke whose family had a poor relationship with the royal family.

She had not wanted to bring him to this continent, knowing full well that both his character and his position might stir problems. However, his family's faction was quite large, and they had persistently pestered her mother until she had no choice but to allow him to accompany her here.

All the princess could do was sigh inwardly and hope that no problems would arise during their stay on this continent.

"For now, let us first visit the elves' territory on this continent. We can ask them for any information they have about this land and His Majesty Aldrian. Perhaps we can take advantage of the ties from the past, since they originally came from us," the princess said.

"Moreover, it is said that one of Emperor Aldrian's women is a princess of the elven kingdom here, so they must have many details that others do not know."

"Your Highness, but what if they no longer consider their roots, since they have lived here since ancient times? From their perspective, we might simply be strangers, a different group of elves altogether. If that is the case, we cannot pressure them by appealing to their origins," one of the male elves asked.

"If that happens, then there is nothing we can do except build our relationship with them naturally. Since the elves of this continent are under the rule of Emperor Aldrian, we cannot lean too heavily on our own influence, as that would only sour our relationship with him," the princess replied.

Their purpose here was to build a good relationship with the Barisan Continent, or more specifically with Aldrian, just as her mother had instructed. For the elves, this could bring many benefits, but for the royal family in particular, it would be even more valuable.

If the royal family could establish close ties with Aldrian, they would gain an additional support that could serve as a deterrent against the opposing faction. That faction had long sought to shake her mother's position as queen of the elves, and their pressure had grown more intense in recent weeks after 'that' incident.

That was why she remained wary of Luren, knowing he could ruin her family's plans. She was almost certain his family had sent him here with the intention of sabotaging any plan her family had that involved Aldrian.

'I have to make sure nothing happens to our plan,' she thought as they continued strolling through the city.

Two days later, Aldrian sat upon his throne in full noble attire, befitting his status as emperor.

Why was he seated here in such formal dress? It was because several figures were already on their way to his palace, and they were close.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 720 - 720: Meeting Again

[1,641 words]

At the teleportation formation in Aldrian's palace grounds, the formation shone for a moment before a few figures suddenly appeared. These figures were actually a group from the three great sects of the central continent.

The group consisted of an elder from the Xin family, the three sect masters, the sword maiden and her friend, the two red-haired twins, and a few other elders from their respective sects. The moment they appeared on the teleportation formation, they were amazed by the grandness of the palace. They had never seen anything like it, and even before they arrived here, they were already amazed by the scenery of it and the core region environment.

The dense heaven and earth energy, the strange golden river containing rich unknown power, the regal giant statues, and the floating land so high and so immense that it could lift an entire city—all of this made them feel like country bumpkins. Moreover, after

stepping onto the floating land, they felt this place was on another level, as the grand palace seemed to be where the concentration of energy gathered.

The grand palace itself was the most magnificent palace they had ever seen in their lives. Even while still standing outside, they could already feel the luxury within. More importantly, they felt its sacredness. The aura of the palace seemed to declare, This is the palace of the true sovereign who rules this land. You had better show the utmost respect for him.

"This way, your excellencies. Let me escort you to meet His Majesty," the elder from the Xin family said as he guided them into the palace.

Once they entered, they could not help but observe the interior, marveling as though they were experiencing such luxury for the first time like bumpkins. However, one person was slightly stunned when she sensed something the moment she stepped inside.

The Sword Maiden detected a strong sword intent somewhere in the inner palace. What shocked her most was that she recognized it.

'This is that man's sword intent,' she thought, recalling the time she had met Aldrian. Back then, when she sparred with him, he had unleashed his sword intent, and she had memorized its uniqueness. To sense his sword intent here made her wonder what that man was doing in this place.

What she sensed was actually the sword intent that Aldrian had created inside Zander's training room, something that someone like the Sword Maiden could detect with ease. Her special physique made her especially sensitive, after all.

As they continued walking toward the throne hall, they finally reached the circular hallway that surrounded it, where statues of Aldrian's closest followers were erected. The three sect masters could not help but fix their eyes on one statue nearby, feeling an inexplicable pull toward it.

They felt a strange sense of connection and even reverence when they gazed upon this statue, as if compelled to prostrate before it. It was the statue of a man, and though he merely stood there in silence, it already exuded a regal aura. Just looking at it gave them the urge to submit.

They did not understand why and simply brushed off the feeling. The demon cultivators among them were also drawn to this same statue, their gazes lingering upon it.

If only they knew that this statue depicted the very one they all unknowingly revered as their god—the sole god of the demon cultivators, the Heavenly Demon.

They did not linger in the hallway for long, for they were immediately greeted by the massive double doors, which swung open the instant they stood before them. The moment their eyes fell upon the throne hall's interior, their gazes glimmered with astonishment. And when they finally saw Aldrian seated upon his throne, their hearts could not help but skip a beat.

For Sect Master Han, who had already seen Aldrian's true face, it was not so surprising. But for the others, it was a different story. From their information gathering during the journey here, they had learned that the emperor was young—seventeen years old.

Seventeen years old!

Seventeen years old, already at the pseudo-immortal establishment stage! And possessing power so overwhelming that it made every one of them seem no more than a passing fart before him!

They could not fathom how someone like Aldrian the Great could exist. There was no explanation, except that this emperor must have been sent by the heavens themselves.

Although they were prepared to meet Aldrian, the moment they finally saw his face, they were still shocked. His flawless, handsome features were enough to be fatal for any woman who laid eyes on him, even more so now, when his charm was heightened to its peak by his aura and imperial attire.

However, for the Sword Maiden, her shock came from another reason. She finally understood what that mysterious man had meant when she once asked if they could meet again. The presence she sensed from the emperor before her and from that mysterious man was the same.

'He is that man!' she thought, her usually calm expression breaking into one of astonishment.

Still, their moment of being petrified did not last long, for they had to approach Aldrian, who sat upon his throne.

"Your Majesty, I have brought the group from the central continent as guests before you," the elder of the Xin family said, bowing deeply to Aldrian.

Aldrian nodded. "Alright, you may leave. Thank you for guiding them."

"Yes, Your Majesty." The elder then took his leave, leaving Aldrian alone with the group from the central continent. Aldrian smiled as he rose from his throne and walked toward them.

"Welcome to the Barisan Continent, and welcome to my palace, esteemed guests. It is truly my pleasure to receive your visit," Aldrian said as he walked down the stairs.

"Thank you, Your Majesty. To be honest, I still feel overwhelmed by my experience here. This place is truly like heaven. In my entire life, I have never seen anything like this. It is as expected from the man who rules over the entire continent, and it is truly worthy of Your Majesty," Sect Master Han replied.

"Sect Master Han, you exaggerate, but I hope you enjoy your stay during this visit. What you have seen is only a small part of this palace and the core region as a whole," Aldrian said.

"I would be glad, Your Majesty."

Aldrian nodded before turning his gaze to the two other sect masters. "Sect Master Jang, Sect Master Baek, this is our first time meeting without me wearing my mask. I must apologize, as I had my own considerations at that time."

"Ah, no, Your Majesty, you don't have to apologize. I understand that you have your own circumstances, and even if it were just your preference, we would not say anything," Sect Master Baek said.

"Yes, Your Majesty, it is really not a problem," Sect Master Jang added.

Aldrian nodded, then turned his gaze to the red-haired twins, who immediately bowed to him. "We greet Your Majesty and the succe—"

"Do not say that I am the successor of the Heavenly Demon."

The twins froze mid-greeting as Aldrian's sudden voice transmission reached their minds. In an instant, they understood and stopped what they had been about to say. They knew without doubt that the man standing before them was the same one from that time—the successor of the Heavenly Demon.

The resonance within their souls was unmistakable. Only the successor of the Heavenly Demon could trigger it, just as he had done before.

Aldrian smiled and nodded before turning his gaze toward the beautiful veiled woman who could sway any man who looked at her. Her eyes had never left his face until now, which made Aldrian smile teasingly at her.

"Well, Miss Meilan, I already told you that we would meet again sooner than you thought. And here I am," he said, making the Sword Maiden let out a quiet sigh.

"You truly got me, Your Majesty. I honestly did not expect to meet you like this. Now I feel that I acted inappropriately back then."

Aldrian's smile did not fade. "Miss Meilan, you don't need to feel bad about it. In fact, I enjoyed our spar at that time. Facing someone like you was an experience for me, it was also a form of learning."

"You are too humble, Your Majesty. How could you possibly learn anything from me?"

Her friend still felt lost at this moment. At first, she asked herself why these people seemed to already know this emperor. Who was he? Could anyone tell her so she could understand better?

Then it finally clicked in her mind when the emperor mentioned meeting Meilan again. She instantly realized that this emperor was the same man as the masked man from that time.

Aldrian then looked in her direction, leaving her stunned. She forced herself to smile, but it was a rigid one, for she was standing before the very legend so many had spoken of.

"Miss Rei, you too, please feel free to enjoy this place. There is no need to feel pressured here," he said.

"Ah, yes, Your Majesty. Thank you," she replied.

"So, how about I take all of you for a stroll through the palace? It will be a good experience for you," Aldrian said as he turned his gaze to the others.

"Ah, thank you, Your Majesty. It will be our honor to be guided by Your Majesty himself," Sect Master Han said before Aldrian led all of them outside the palace.

While Aldrian was receiving his guests, in another place, a few figures gathered in a restaurant within the capital city of the Doria Kingdom. They sat around a large table, seemingly in the middle of a discussion, and from their expressions alone, it was clear this was a serious matter.

These figures were actually spies from the Barevisk family who had already been turned into slaves by Aldrian.

Vars, their leader, appeared deep in thought when one of his men spoke up.

"So, what are we supposed to do, sir?"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 721 - 721: Their Dilemma

[1,526 words]

"So, what are we supposed to do, sir?" one of Vars's men asked, but Vars remained silent as he continued to think about the problem they were facing.

Not long ago, they had received news from headquarters that an envoy had already been sent and was almost arriving at the Barisan continent. With their arrival, they would undoubtedly ask many questions about Aldrian, yet they had no way of answering truthfully because of the slave seal.

The Everlasting Demonic Follower seal embedded in their souls ensured they could not harm their master, nor could they give truthful answers to their families, for doing so would trigger the seal. Unless their master granted permission, they could not reveal the truth.

The problem now was that once they gave false information to their families, and something happened as a result, they would essentially be betraying their own families. Their families would definitely not let them go unpunished. If that time came, their only choice would be to seek Aldrian's protection and hope he could shield them.

However, the problem was—

'Did he consider us as valuable pawns or not?'

If Aldrian did not intend to keep them, then their betrayal would surely end in their deaths. Aldrian might not care if the Barevisk family came after them. They knew well how cruel and persistent the Barevisk family was in hunting down traitors, and that was why they truly hesitated to betray them.

Even though the triggered Everlasting Demonic Follower seal inflicted extreme pain upon their souls, the Barevisk family had their own methods of torture that made them shudder just from imagining it.

The uncertainty of their value in Aldrian's eyes was what placed them in such a dilemma. They felt they could not betray the family that had been part of their entire lives, especially with the harsh punishments awaiting traitors. Yet at the same time, they did not want to endure the agony brought by the Everlasting Demonic Follower seal.

Moreover, they did not dare to offend someone like Aldrian, whose power they had come to understand after spending some time on this continent. From what they had learned, they could only conclude that anyone who made him an enemy would be inviting their own destruction.

No matter how strong they were, there was no way for them to withstand the unstoppable force named Aldrian. They could already imagine the Barevisk family's fate if they truly offended him. Even at this moment, they did not know the true purpose of their infiltration mission. Was it really only about gathering information on this continent and Aldrian?

They did not know the true nature of the mission, nor what their family was using the information for that they had been sending all this time. But they were certain it was not for a good purpose.

"We cannot reveal certain information to the family without it being considered betrayal. As long as this slave seal exists, the only choice is betrayal," the leader sighed. "In the end, the safest bet in this situation is to lean on Emperor Aldrian."

That was Vars's conclusion. Their best chance of survival was to rely on their master, Aldrian. They could only hope he still saw some value in them, even if their family branded them traitors after this.

"Let's join Emperor Aldrian after this. We will abandon the Barevisk family," Vars finally spoke, causing the rest of them to sigh. Vars looked at them and raised his eyebrows.

"You don't seem surprised?" he asked.

"We more or less knew it would come to this. As long as the slave seal remains embedded in our souls, we can do nothing but betray our family. There is no other path left to us. We are only forced to join Emperor Aldrian," one of his men said.

"If you had said we should return to the family, I was prepared to persuade you to change your mind. From my perspective, a war against Emperor Aldrian would only end in defeat. No one has any chance of winning against that man," he added.

Hearing this, Vars sighed again and nodded. "Then we can only hope that Emperor Aldrian will see our value, even though our family has discarded us."

That was the only way left for them to survive.

On the next day, Aldrian received another guest, this time from the Avilandis imperial family. Emperor Rozwald, accompanied by his son, the crown prince, Prince Ronwell, had finally arrived. At this moment, they were strolling through the garden as Aldrian guided them around the palace grounds.

They had already exchanged some conversation when Prince Ronwell suddenly took out a beautifully carved box from his storage ring.

"Your Majesty, please accept this gift we obtained before departing here. This is a sign of our sincerity in building a good relationship with the Aster Empire as a whole," he said, before opening the box to reveal its contents.

Aldrian looked into the box and raised his eyebrows. Inside the box was a transparent flower. Its petals reflected faint colors within their layers, giving the flower a beauty of its own.

"This is the Seven Laws Rainbow Flower," Prince Ronwell explained. "It is a spiritual herb that blooms only twice in ten thousand years. By chance, a few days ago was its blooming period, so we decided to present it to Your Majesty."

"This flower contains seven laws: the four basic laws, along with space, illusion, and light. It can be consumed directly, granting the user deep comprehension of these laws. Even someone at the pseudo-immortal establishment stage could still gain benefit from it."

He continued, "This miraculous herb can also be given to a child, instantly allowing them to comprehend the laws and turning them into a genius overnight. If Your Majesty were to refine it into an elixir or pill, depending on the ingredients combined with it, the benefits could be even greater. Such a treasure will surely bring immense benefit to Your Majesty."

Aldrian was genuinely surprised. For the Avilandis imperial family to offer something this valuable, they were truly giving nearly everything to secure a good relationship with him.

Although he already had many treasures that could help his family's development, it did no harm to add more, especially something as valuable as this flower.

Prince Ronwell then closed the box again.

"Please accept this, Your Majesty. We hope to build a good relationship with the Aster Empire, one that will last long," Emperor Rozwald said from the side.

Aldrian smiled, then took the box and stored it in his storage ring.

"Alright, I accept it. Thank you for giving me such a valuable gift. I suddenly feel bad that you have given me something so precious when I have given you nothing in return," he said.

"No, Your Majesty, it is our pleasure to present this to you. It is simply our way of showing sincerity, and we hope this gift will benefit you in the future," Emperor Rozwald replied.

Aldrian nodded. After that, they conversed for a few moments before Emperor Rozwald and his son finally took their leave.

Once they were gone, Sylphia appeared and approached him with a smile.

"Tired?" she asked.

Aldrian shook his head. "Not really, especially with you always near me and ready to recharge me," he said as he wrapped an arm around her waist. Her face flushed with embarrassment, yet she still allowed him to hold her.

"I can see that after your cultivation session just now, you're already close to the next stage. Perhaps you could break through to the high marquess stage within the next few weeks. It would be even faster if we dual cultivated," he added.

"Ah, stop it. You just want to satisfy your beastly desire."

"Well, I'm a beast in front of you," he said playfully, pretending to bite her neck while making beast-like sounds, causing Sylphia to giggle at his antics.

But as they were still enjoying their moment, Aldrian suddenly stopped. His communication artifact was giving off an incoming signal.

He took it out, activated it, and a voice came through from the other side.

"Your Majesty, there is another guest who wishes to visit you."

Hearing this, Aldrian was not surprised and simply continued to listen.

"This one is a group from the continent of elves, led by the princess."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows before glancing at Sylphia in his embrace.

'The princess from the continent of elves?'

He knew there was only one empire on that continent, the root of the elves who now lived on the Barisan continent.

Sylphia, who could also hear the message, was equally surprised. Yet at the same time, she felt curious about the elves from outside the Barisan continent.

"Alright, bring them in," Aldrian ordered.

"Yes, Your Majesty."

After cutting off the communication, Aldrian looked into Sylphia's eyes.

"Do you want to accompany me to meet them? I think you might be interested in seeing them."

Sylphia nodded. "Yes, actually I'm really curious about them. I've never met elves from outside, and from what I know, they come from the place our ancestors originated."

Aldrian nodded. "Then let's go. They should already be near."

"Wait, let me prepare myself first. I don't want to embarrass you," she said, wiggling out of his embrace before running into the palace.

Aldrian smiled at her and made his way toward the throne hall, waiting for the group of elves to arrive.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 722 - 722: The Tree of Life

[1,709 words]

The moment the elves from the continent of elves arrived at the palace grounds, their expressions were more or less the same as the other guests visiting this place for the first time. They were truly amazed by its grandness and the unique qualities that could not be found anywhere else, not even in their homeland.

With awe and admiration, they were then brought to the throne hall where they finally saw Aldrian for the first time. There, they also noticed an elf standing beside him. The moment they saw Sylphia, they knew she must be the emperor's woman, the one many people had already spoken of.

The beautiful elf who was said to have accompanied Aldrian for a long time and remained with him throughout his entire journey. The male elves beside the princess were also quite stunned by Sylphia's beauty, especially Luren, but they quickly pushed their admiration deep inside their hearts, making sure not to show it on their expressions.

They had to restrain themselves from showing any insolent act that might offend the man standing beside her.

As they kept approaching, they could not help but feel something from Sylphia, and it was really difficult to ignore. Beyond her beauty, there was something that made all of them, including the princess, feel a kind of connection to her. They sensed a sacredness that seemed to exude from Sylphia.

Still, they ignored that feeling as they arrived at the base of the stairs leading toward Aldrian's throne.

"Your Majesty, I have brought the group of elves from the continent of elves," the Xin family's elder said, to which Aldrian responded with a nod.

"Thank you. You may go back."

"Yes, Your Majesty." After that, he left, leaving the group with Aldrian and Sylphia.

The moment the elder was gone, the princess slightly lowered her body as a sign of respect.

"Your Majesty, please allow me to introduce myself. I come as the envoy from the Verdyn Empire, the sole elven empire from the continent of elves. I am the sole princess of the Verdyn Empire, Princess Vaeril Lyn Silvarin. Behind me are my personal guardian and some of the sons and daughters of the noble houses of our empire."

Aldrian nodded. "I have already heard of the sole empire that rules the continent of elves, the protector of elves around the world, and the land where your people live in peace. A place full of miracles and mysteries. It is truly my fortune that Princess Vaeril has come here personally."

He observed the beautiful princess, whose beauty was not inferior to Sylphia's, though she was much stronger, with her cultivation having reached the middle stage of the pseudo immortal foundation. Her beauty would undoubtedly draw attention whenever she walked the streets, something he had already noticed when this group first arrived a few days ago and entered one of the cities of the Doria Kingdom.

"You flatter me, Your Majesty. It is truly we who feel honored that Your Majesty has spared time to meet with us," Princess Vaeril replied.

"Our visit this time is to convey my mother, Empress Vilena's, regards and to build a relationship between our two empires. For that, my mother has sent a gift for Your Majesty." She then took out a beautifully crafted box from her storage ring.

"I hope Your Majesty will be satisfied with this gift, which my mother personally prepared. Please accept our sincerity." She opened the box to reveal its contents.

Aldrian and Sylphia looked inside the box, and what they saw were five unknown fruits. Yet Aldrian recognized them instantly the moment he read the information through the system, and it left him astonished. The fruits were oval in shape, half green and half white like milk, and from them emanated a richness of various laws.

"This is the Fruit of Life," Princess Vaeril explained. "They grow from the Tree of Life, which is safely protected within the sacred grounds of our imperial family. It is the only

known Tree of Life in this entire world—no, we have never even heard of another existing outside our empire. The tree bears fruit once every twenty thousand years. The last time it bore fruit was more than three hundred years ago, and we still have five of them stored within our treasure vault."

"These fruits are extremely beneficial for anyone who consumes them, especially elves. They contain profound comprehension of the laws of earth, air, and wood. The immense energy within each fruit can also significantly raise cultivation, to the point that even those at the pseudo-immortal stage can greatly benefit."

"However, one of the things that makes the Tree of Life truly legendary is that it is said to hold comprehension of the legendary Life Laws. These laws are said to grant the one who comprehends them the ability to heal even the most dreadful illness of any kind, and even revive the dead, or at least, that is what the records of our empire state."

"Across the history of our empire, there has been only one person who was able to comprehend the Life Laws. That person was the first ancestor of our empire, and since then no one has been able to comprehend them again."

"But Her Majesty Sylphia may try her luck with it. Perhaps she could comprehend them. And even if she cannot, the remaining benefits will still allow Her Majesty Sylphia's cultivation and comprehension to soar significantly."

Aldrian had already been astonished from the beginning, not because of the fruits' effects, but because he recognized both the fruits and the tree that bore them. The Tree of Life, it was the very tree that once grew in a region near the Heavenly Tree of the World in his past life. From his visions, he knew that a sole Tree of Life existed in that place.

'So that is why I sensed such a strong presence of Life Laws from a lone tree beneath one of the World Trees on the continent of elves, back when I swept my domain's sense. That tree was actually a Tree of Life.'

At that time, when he had eradicated every single devil in this world, he spread his domain's sense to hunt down those in hiding. During that sweep, he had sensed a strong aura of Life Laws coming from one location on the continent of elves, beneath a World Tree.

He had not investigated it in detail then, as his focus was solely on eliminating the devils. He only recognized that the source came from a tree, and since there were many hidden places across the world with wonders not inferior to that one, he had not paid it much attention.

To think that the tree he sensed back then was actually a Tree of Life.

He did not know if the tree in the Verdyn Empire was the same one he had seen in his vision, but the fact remained that these fruits were the real thing—the Fruit of Life. The story of an ancestor who had once comprehended the Life Laws also caught his attention, because there was no way any cultivator here should have been able to comprehend them.

The Life Laws stood on the same level as the Death Laws, which could only be comprehended upon reaching a certain cultivation stage. The First Heaven's limitations made it impossible for anyone to comprehend the Life Laws.

The only explanation he could think of was that the record might be false. Yet it was also possible that it was correct, that the first ancestor of the Verdyn Empire truly was the only one who had ever comprehended the Life Laws. However, they might not have known that ancestor's real identity.

'That ancestor might have been someone like Long Shentian or Feng Xuanyan. Whoever they were, they descended into this heaven, and the people of that time only knew that their ancestor had comprehended the Life Laws, without knowing their true identity,' Aldrian thought.

He did not know who the one to descend had been, but since this was located on the continent of elves, the greatest possibility was that it came from the elven race, or from a being closely connected to them. For example—

'Seralis herself might have descended and planted the sole Tree of Life in this world.'

That was another possibility he could think of. Why would she have done that? Perhaps Seralis had not wanted the Tree of Life to fall into the hands of the invaders and allow them to gain its benefits. These fruits contained various laws, especially the Life Laws. Their core essence was still the Life Laws themselves, carrying an immense concentration of comprehension.

The Life Laws were something that every cultivator desired to grasp, even those who had reached divinity. These fruits could aid them in comprehending the Life Laws, ultimately helping them move one step closer to the Samsara Laws.

Both the fruits and the tree itself were treasures so valuable that even the gods would covet them!

Aldrian, who seemed entranced and astonished after looking at the fruits, left Princess Vaeril satisfied. She thought Aldrian was shocked by the fruits' extraordinary properties and was glad that she had managed to capture his attention. Surely, he must be pleased with her family's gift.

The other noble elves who looked upon the fruits felt envious, though they kept it hidden in their hearts. Luren, however, thought to himself.

'To think Empress Vilena would give the Fruits of Life. They truly spared nothing in order to build a close relationship with this man.' He glanced at Aldrian.

"But be careful when consuming them," Princess Vaeril warned. "A single bite is more than enough to raise cultivation and comprehension even someone at the pseudo-immortal stage. More than that, and it could kill, as one's body may burst from the excessive energy consumed."

Aldrian took a deep breath and nodded.

"Empress Vilena is truly generous to grant me such valuable treasures. It would be rude of me not to accept them."

"We are glad that you like them, Your Majesty," she said as she handed the box to him. Aldrian took it and stored it inside his storage ring.

'So, Princess Vaeril, I know empress Vilena spared nothing to present me with these treasures because she expects something in return. Let us hear it, then, after this.'

Suddenly, a voice transmission came from Aldrian to the princess, leaving her stunned.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 723 - 723: The Problem in the Verdyn Empire

[1,541 words]

Aldrian and the elves conversed for a moment after all of them introduced themselves. After a few moments of conversation, Aldrian then looked at the others beside Princess Vaeril.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you may enjoy your time here for a moment, as there is something I need to discuss privately with the princess. In the meantime..." Aldrian paused as suddenly a figure appeared beside him, which stunned the elves because of the figure's sudden appearance. They could not detect the figure's arrival because it was actually Aldrian who had teleported him there.

The figure was Reiss, and he instantly bowed toward Aldrian after appearing beside him.

"Your Majesty," he said.

At this moment, he was already wearing white and yellow robes, and his aura was much purer. He no longer exuded any devil aura, and his cultivation had already broken through to peak emperor stage.

Aldrian nodded. "For the rest of you, let Reiss accompany you to take a stroll around the palace. It will give you a new experience."

Reiss then stepped forward and gestured with his hand. "This way, esteemed guests. I will guide you to see the palace grounds."

He, who had already learned some basic ethics from Aldrian's family, knew how to act as a proper servant for Aldrian. Not wanting to embarrass his master and wishing to help him, he naturally did his best to learn anything that could be useful, even if it meant being tasked with something as simple as this.

The princess's personal guardian still showed hesitation, but Princess Vaeril only gave a nod, which left him with no choice but to follow Reiss. Luren also seemed reluctant, as though he did not want to go, but seeing that Aldrian himself desired a private conversation, he could not say anything and simply followed along with the others.

To be honest, all of them wondered what Aldrian wanted to discuss with the princess that required such privacy.

Once the rest had left, leaving only Aldrian, Sylphia, and Princess Vaeril, Aldrian turned to the princess.

"Let's move to a more comfortable location."

Suddenly, their surroundings shifted, which shocked the princess, for they were already in a different room. She now stood inside a guest room where comfortable sofas were arranged for them to sit. She truly could not detect anything, nor could she do anything about it, in an instant they had already been transported to another location.

Aldrian instantly sat down, with Sylphia taking her place beside him. The princess could only sigh and stop dwelling on Aldrian's abilities, for she did not know the extent of his power. She seated herself on the sofa across from Aldrian and Sylphia.

"My apologies, Your Majesty. What makes you think that my mother expects something from you based on the gift I gave to you?" Princess Vaeril asked in wonder.

Aldrian showed a smile. "From the way you spoke to me when you presented the gift, you specifically emphasized your mother and the imperial family's wish to build a relationship with me. From the value of the gift itself, I know clearly how precious the Fruit of Life is, and your mother gave us five of them. In my opinion, that is truly too excessive merely as a gesture of goodwill.

"Also, I could sense your strong hope that I would accept this gift, which to me feels like the hope of someone wishing I would aid them in exchange for what I have received."

Hearing Aldrian's answer, the princess sighed once again, realizing she could not hide anything from him.

"Your Majesty, you are truly sharp, so much so that it makes me afraid. But yes, I—no, my family, the imperial family—hope that Your Majesty could support us in exchange for those fruits."

"Support?"

The princess nodded. "Yes, Your Majesty. We ask for your support so that my mother's position as empress does not falter under the pressure of the opposition."

Aldrian nodded as he finally understood something. "I see. So this is a political matter inside the Verdyn Empire. With a troublesome matter like that, it is no wonder your mother gave me those five fruits as enticement, a bond to make me feel a sense of obligation to help your family."

The princess slightly bowed her body. "My apologies, Your Majesty, if that offends you. This is simply our effort to ensure that Your Majesty might aid us in maintaining peace across the continent of elves. With Your Majesty's reputation, we know it will be an easy thing as long as you stand on our side."

"Let's hear your story first, why you need my support. But before you begin, I think I can already guess the bigger picture. It must be that the opposition faction against your mother has strong supporters, and they are pressing for her abdication for one reason or another. You need my support to ensure your mother remains seated on the throne, correct?" Aldrian said.

"I do not know the political situation of your empire, and for all I know your opposition faction may be in the right and your family the one in the wrong. So I want to hear the details first before I make my decision."

The princess straightened her body and took a deep breath.

"My mother has been empress for more than a hundred thousand years, and not once has she governed the empire unjustly. There is an opposing faction led by one of the grand dukes, but in the past they were not strong enough, since my mother's rule was fair and they lacked support from other nobles.

"However, something strange happened more than thirty years ago. Suddenly, the opposition faction's support began to increase, and as time passed their members grew much larger, becoming truly troublesome for my mother. They constantly opposed whatever she tried to do, hindering the empire's development.

"Because of this, many elves became dissatisfied with my mother and began to think she could not control the situation within the empire. That led many to side with the opposition. Although the Verdyn Empire appears peaceful on the surface, inside it is like a volcano that could erupt at any time, which could lead to civil war."

"The volcano almost exploded not long before Your Majesty fought with the immortal. At that time, devils had infiltrated the imperial family's grounds and killed some of the guards, along with a few members of the opposition faction's family who had coincidentally come to the palace."

"Because of that, the opposition force placed the blame on us, and they nearly attacked with brute force, which almost led to civil war."

"However, after Your Majesty defeated the immortal, the opposition faction seemed to abandon their intent, and thus the civil war was avoided. For that, I am truly thankful." She spoke with a slight bow.

Aldrian could not help but grasp something from her story. The signs were already there, and from his perspective, there was no explanation other than—

'The opposition faction must have had some kind of connection to the devils at that time.'

It was clear from Aldrian's perspective, and Sylphia thought the same. Their experience with the devils on the Barisan Continent, who liked to manipulate and infiltrate noble houses, made them instantly realize what had happened in the Verdyn Empire.

"Recently, the pressure from the opposition has continued, and they seem determined to shake my mother's position with the help of public opinion, which has already been shaped for some time. This time, they move more carefully, unlike when the immortal descended. Because the pressure grows heavier, the only thing that could dissolve the situation is outside support, something that could halt the opposition's movement at once," Princess Vaeril continued.

"And we believe the best candidate would be you, Your Majesty. That is because of your strength and the reputation that has already spread. We cannot rely on other powers, for they do not have enough strength to be a deterrent, and they might even take advantage of our weakness."

Aldrian smiled. "What if I also wish to take advantage of your situation? Isn't your mother gambling too much in this regard?"

The princess nodded. "If that happens, then there is nothing we can do. But at least our empire will not fall into the hands of those bastards who seem only greedy for power. The only reason my mother still defends her throne is to prevent it from falling into the opposition's hands, for they appear to care only about the throne's power."

"We will not allow the empire to fall into decline because of their greediness. They are dangerous, and if we let them take the throne, then it is only a matter of time before the empire collapses in the future."

Aldrian nodded. "I see. So that explains why there is one elf in your group who seemed suspicious and wary of you. He hides his ambition and desire for you, that Luren guy... he must be the opposition's pawn, planted in your group after they pressured your mother, right?"

The princess nodded.

"True, Your Majesty."

"I see. Thanks to your story, I now understand the entire picture and the most likely cause of the events in the Verdyn Empire. Well, it seems there will be bloodshed again in the near future. We will need to clean away any remnants of 'their' influence," Aldrian said, which left the princess confused.

"'They,' Your Majesty?"

Who were they that Aldrian was referring to?

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 724 - 724: The Cause of the Change

[1,595 words]

"Excuse me, your majesty, but I don't understand what you mean. Who are 'they'?" Princess Vaeril asked.

"Did your family not find anything suspicious about the opposition faction? Why did they suddenly gain so much momentum and support? Your family must have already investigated something like this, right?" Aldrian asked in return.

Princess Vaeril nodded. "Of course, your majesty. We already investigated them, yet what we found so far does not satisfy us. There seems to be something we missed, and we cannot fathom what it is since we still cannot uncover it. What we did find is that the opposition, led by that one grand duke, managed to persuade other nobles to join their faction."

"However, we know that the sudden spike in the opposition's influence is not without cause. They must have used something to entice the others to join them—and it worked. That something is what we are still searching for, as it could be dangerous."

Aldrian nodded in understanding. "Well, it is expected that your family would find nothing, as their activities are truly hidden in the dark and carried out with great care. Even the imperial family would not uncover anything."

The princess was still confused, which made Aldrian ask her,

"Before I tell you more, do you know about the sudden appearance of the heavenly lightning more than a week ago?"

The princess raised her eyebrows and nodded.

"Yes, I know of it. A strange phenomenon appeared across the continent of elves. In fact, we received reports that the other continents also experienced the same phenomenon. The sudden appearance of heavenly lightning strikes erupted randomly in many places, leaving all powers confused, and it only happened within a single day." She then narrowed her eyes.

"Why does your majesty ask about this strange phenomenon?"

"Did the opposition faction's actions become more rushed after that day?" Aldrian did not answer her question but asked back instead, which left her stunned. Yet she still nodded.

"Yes, their movements seem more rushed, as if they were being pursued by time."

Aldrian smiled when he heard this.

"As expected. Well, to answer Princess Vaeril's question, 'they' are the devils. They are the ones who have been playing behind the scenes. I suspect the opposition forces have a connection with them. I already have much experience with how skillful the devils are at persuading or infiltrating noble houses to do their bidding or working alongside them. Perhaps that is also why the devils were able to enter the imperial palace. Do you really think their sudden appearance there was a coincidence?"

Princess Vaeril narrowed her eyes.

"The devils? To be honest, that was one of our suspicions as well, but we truly could not find any trace of devils among them. What makes your majesty so certain they are the ones behind all of this?" she asked.

"Could they really have pierced so deeply into our ranks? Could they erase even the smallest clue of their dealings with the opposition? The event when the devils killed

some members of the opposition noble houses in the imperial palace back then also left us uncertain about their relationship with the devils."

"Well, they absolutely could do all of that. But you don't have to worry about the devils anymore. The heavenly lightning phenomenon that day was me cleansing the entire world of the devils. Since that day, there has not been a single devil left in the Ancient Blue Gate World, not even in their most secret hiding places," Aldrian said.

Hearing that, Princess Vaeril's heart trembled. The heavenly lightning strikes were caused by him? The phenomenon that appeared across the entire world was his doing? How could that be possible? Just how great was Aldrian's true capability for his power to reach the entire world? How could he achieve such a feat?

Many questions surged through her mind, and her heart grew cold. At this moment, she finally understood that his reputation and the stories about him still did not reveal the full extent of his strength.

He fought against an immortal—that much had already been witnessed by many. Yet for his attack to cover the entire world was another unbelievable, untold story about him. And to think he had killed every devil with such precision... how did he even know who they were?

'What is he? A god?' the princess thought in astonishment.

"Why did the opposition faction's movements become more rushed after that day? It is because they realized their backer was already gone. That forced them to hasten their attempt to seize the throne, as it was their only chance at salvation. Without their backer, their power was greatly diminished, and the only thing they could rely on was the opinion of the masses," Aldrian continued, even as the princess's mind was in turmoil.

"They must seize the throne quickly so they can bury the fact that they were working with the devils. Once they sit on the throne, the truth will no longer matter, and their history with the devils will be erased."

"Like I said, Princess Vaeril, the devils are extremely careful and meticulous in their operations. They will make certain you never find any trace of them. Moreover, they have many helping hands through the traitors, which makes tracking them exceedingly difficult. Even the imperial family could already be infiltrated, and you would not have known it all this time."

The princess's brows furrowed as she pondered Aldrian's words. After a few moments, she looked at him again.

"Your majesty, you said that you already have experience with the devils's craftiness. If this truly is their doing, then we are facing a new method of theirs, one we have never

encountered before. If that is the case, we hope your majesty could help us uncover the truth and reveal it to our people, so the opposition force will lose the support of the masses."

Aldrian nodded. "That can be done, and that is why I said there will be bloodshed again. Those traitors who have already worked with the devils deserve death. They are truly one of the things I despise most."

Hearing that, Princess Vaeril's expression brightened, and she immediately bowed. "I truly thank you, Your Majesty Aldrian. As the representative of the Lavrin imperial family, I sincerely offer my gratitude to you. We will not forget your kindness in helping us."

Aldrian smiled. "It is no problem, Princess. This is also something I wish to do. Uprooting the devils' influence and anything tied to them is something I take great satisfaction in."

Princess Vaeril could not help but feel that his words were chilling, as though what he did was nothing more than a sport. She thought that Aldrian's path was truly drenched in the blood of the devils and of anyone who associated with them along his journey.

Suddenly, Aldrian felt his communication artifact sending an incoming signal. He took it out and activated it, placing it beside his ear so the princess could not hear the words from the other side.

"Your majesty, there is another group requesting an audience. This one comes from the Beast Continent. They consist of the Dragon King, the Phoenix Queen, the Spirit Ancestor, and their entourage," reported the elder from the Xin family.

Hearing that, Aldrian's eyes widened slightly, and a smile appeared on his face.

"Bring them in," he ordered.

"Yes, your majesty," the other side replied before cutting off the communication.

Aldrian stored the communication artifact away and looked at the princess.

"Princess Vaeril, it seems our meeting must come to an end. There are other guests already waiting for me, and I must receive them," he said as he rose to his feet.

"Ah, yes, your majesty. My apologies if I have already taken too much of your time, but once again, I truly thank you for being willing to help us. I will remain in this continent for some time so we may discuss further cooperation in the future," the princess replied as she also stood and offered a handshake, which Aldrian accepted.

"I hope you enjoy your stay in this continent, Princess," he said.

After a few moments, the princess and her group gathered near the teleportation formation. Yet before they could step toward it, the formation shone brightly, and several figures emerged from within.

The moment they saw who appeared, they were utterly shocked, for these were figures well-known across the world.

The Dragon King, the Phoenix Queen, and the Spirit Ancestor, accompanied by their entourage. The fame of the Dragon King and Phoenix Queen had long been spread across the world, as both were leaders of their races and their strength was known everywhere.

The Spirit Ancestor, however, was different. Though her reputation was not as widely recognized outside the Beast Continent, or at least not among the recent generation, she carried a legend of her own.

She was a spirit of the spirit race who could glimpse the secrets of heaven, a truly terrifying ability, especially for the Spirit Ancestor, who was the most powerful Celestial Night Spirit. With her strength, it seemed there was nothing that could be hidden from her.

That was why her kind had been hunted in the past, forcing them to migrate to the Beast Continent—something the entire world knew in the past.

Since that time, the Spirit Ancestor had remained within the Beast Continent, never once stepping outside of it. Princess Vaeril knew of her because she had seen portrait of this legendary figure while studying the knowledge of the world in the past. The old woman before her looked exactly like those portrait.

Yet to think that the Spirit Ancestor would come here personally, accompanied by the most renowned dragon and phoenix, only showed how important Aldrian was to the Beast Continent.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 725 - 725: The Day of the Tournament 1

[1,626 words]

The moment the dragon king and the other leaders' entourage appeared and saw Aldrian, their faces brightened. They ignored the elves' entourage, focusing only on

Aldrian as they walked past, sparing the elves just a brief glance before turning their attention back to him.

However, the elves also seemed to know what kind of beings they were and understood their character, which kept them from feeling offended by how these spiritual beasts acted. These prideful beings were among the strongest in the entire heaven, and with their strength, it was no wonder they carried such arrogance.

The only exception was the Spirit Ancestor, who was accompanied by her guardian and retainer. She stopped for a moment and looked at Princess Vaeril. Smiling at her, she caused the princess to instantly bow before the Spirit Ancestor continued walking. The princess's entourage could only watch as they finally greeted Aldrian with a level of respect that left them astonished.

"Your Majesty, I'm glad to see you again," the dragon king said, cupping his hands. "And I'm truly baffled by this place, Your Majesty. As expected of someone of your status, I expected nothing less."

Aldrian smiled as he nodded. "Well, welcome to my palace, my home. I hope you enjoy your time here." He then looked at the phoenix queen as she also cupped her hands.

"Your Majesty, it's truly a pleasure to meet again," she said, to which Aldrian responded with a nod.

"You too, Phoenix Queen. I hope you enjoy your time here." He then turned his gaze to the Spirit Ancestor. He could not help but feel bad for the old woman, who had made such a long journey just to see him. Although she was a peak pseudo-immortal stage cultivator, her elderly appearance stirred a sense of pity, like watching a warm grandmother who should be resting at home instead of traveling.

"Elder, you must be tired after such a long journey. Let's go inside, where we can settle in a more comfortable place. It would not be good for you to keep standing here in the open," Aldrian said.

"Your Majesty jests. There is no way I could feel fatigue here with such a refreshing atmosphere. This is the densest concentration of energy I have ever experienced in my entire life, and it revitalizes my whole body," the Spirit Ancestor replied.

Aldrian smiled. "Let's go. I will guide you inside," Aldrian said as he led them into the palace.

The elves could only watch them leave. At this moment, it felt as if they were seeing different characters from the figures who usually displayed their arrogance all the time. For the dragons and the phoenixes to show such respect to Aldrian, had they met him in the past? From the way they conversed, it seemed as though they already knew each other.

Suddenly, the Xin family's elder, who had been ignored since earlier, spoke to them.

"Ladies and gentlemen, would you like to come down with me? The formation will be active shortly."

The elves turned to the elder, who was already standing on the teleportation formation. The princess released a slow sigh before stepping onto the formation, followed by the others. The moment they were all ready, the formation shone briefly before they disappeared, teleported to the palace below the floating land.

For the next hour, Aldrian conversed with the groups from the Beast Continent. As with all visitors who came to see him before, they too presented Aldrian with precious gifts. Their conversation was mostly about the Barisan Continent, and since their visit was more of a courteous greeting, they did not stay long before deciding to take their leave.

However, the groups from the Beast Continent would remain for some time, as they also wished to explore the Barisan Continent before returning to their homeland.

After their visits, more delegations arrived from other powers, whether from distant continents or even from different stars. All of them came with the same intent, to build a good relationship with him, and so each brought a gift. Over the last few days, Aldrian had received many gifts from these visiting powers, which made him feel like a bully waiting for deposits from his victims.

However, he did not refuse the gifts. If they could enrich his family, he gladly accepted them, since they were given to him willingly. This continued for the next three days until Aldrian finally paused from receiving guests. The reason was simple, today was a great event for the Barisan Continent, and as its emperor, he could not miss it.

Today was the day of the Grand Tournament.

Across the Barisan Continent, the populace was alive with excitement and festivity for the tournament that was about to commence. They did not know exactly what the tournament would provide, but many believed that whatever it was, it would place the talents of the continent's cultivators in the limelight.

With so many participants, the Grand Tournament was expected to reveal the best of their abilities, the true measure of their strength, and a display of the continent's greatness.

Moreover, with many outsiders from beyond the continent present, they too would witness the tournament. The participants themselves did not want to embarrass their empire or their emperor, who had given them the stage to display their strength.

They would give the best performance they could!

The cities around the core region of the Forest of Eternal Sanctuary had already been completed, and now they functioned normally like any other cities. The influx of people into these cities had begun more than two weeks ago, but the peak came in the last few days, especially in one of the largest cities built near the core region.

That city, called Caelestis, was the city where the vast stadium had been erected, the place where the Grand Tournament would be held. The grand stadium, capable of holding millions, was designed for many purposes, but its main function was to serve as a place of entertainment for the people.

The stadium's design was unlike any other on the Barisan Continent. Its structure was far more sophisticated and advanced, with new technologies embedded into its construction. From above, the building formed an ellipse, with rows of spectator seats encircling a vast arena platform at its center.

The arena itself was strong enough to host even battles between cultivators at the Immortal Transition Realm!

This was possible thanks to the protective formation that Aldrian had personally formed. It surrounded the arena and could withstand even the attacks of a peak pseudo-immortal stage cultivator. With his current strength and mastery of formations, setting up a barrier of that level was no difficult task for him.

Because of this formation, even if the participants unleashed their full power, the spectators near the arena would remain unharmed.

The stadium's grandeur could be seen from hundreds of kilometers away due to its immense scale. Its vastness also allowed for countless possibilities events within, which only added to the excitement surrounding the Grand Tournament.

Caelestis City was packed with people who had arrived long before the tournament began. Many had already entered the stadium and taken their seats after purchasing entrance tickets near the gates.

The outsiders also did not pass up this grand event, as they too wanted to witness the talents of the continent. By now, all of them knew how weak the overall power of the Barisan Continent truly was, and the information that had spread a few weeks earlier had proven to be true.

They had finally learned of the powerful barrier that once covered the continent, which had hindered its growth and development. That same barrier was also the reason none of them had been able to enter the continent in the past.

The only reason this continent had not already fallen into chaos despite the influx of outsiders was the presence of its absolute ruler, Aldrian the Great. Without him, many

believed the continent would quickly descend into disorder, with battles breaking out everywhere, especially among foreign powers coveting its lands.

Still, despite knowing the continent's weakness, these outsiders wished to see its talents and potential. The average cultivation level might be lacking, but the potential and talents of its people could be exceptional. Since this land had given birth to someone like Aldrian the Great, their expectations for the talents of the Barisan Continent remained high.

The stadium grew more crowded as many high-status nobles from across the continent and beyond took their designated seats. The arena also provided numerous VIP rooms for important guests to watch the tournament, with enough rooms to accommodate the many nobles who had come.

The VIP rooms were positioned above the regular seats, fitted with wide glass panels that overlooked the arena. There were also VVIP rooms, far more spacious and luxurious, though fewer in number, situated at an even higher level than the VIP section.

However, the most special location was the vast balcony at the northernmost peak of the stadium. From there, anyone standing on it could see everything below. This balcony was reserved exclusively for the emperor, where Aldrian would watch the tournament alongside his family.

Although it was located in the open, unlike the enclosed VIP and VVIP rooms, the balcony was reinforced with a powerful protective barrier capable of withstanding attacks from even a pseudo-immortal stage cultivator.

Aldrian had also set up an additional protective formation to ensure his family's safety while they watched the tournament. It was a precaution, a safeguard against anyone who might attempt to harm them.

As the stadium grew increasingly crowded, a middle-aged man in a white robe suddenly appeared at the center of the arena. His cultivation at the low emperor stage, could be sensed by everyone present.

Confidence was written across his face as he smiled and raised his voice to address the spectators, stirring their excitement.

"Welcome to the day you have all been waiting for, ladies and gentlemen!"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 726 - 726: The Day of the Tournament 2

[1,616 words]

"Welcome to the day you have all been waiting for, ladies and gentlemen!" the man said. His booming voice echoed across the stadium, and even those outside could hear him.

"UWOO!" The spectators, already filled with excitement, roared with spirit in response to the man's greeting. The man kept his smile as he continued.

"I know that you already can't wait to see the greatest tournament ever held on the Barisan continent! You even came this early, before the schedule began. Your spirit is truly amazing. Your wait is almost over, as the event will be held shortly! The participants and preparations are nearly complete, so keep your excitement high, ladies and gentlemen!"

"UWOO!" the spectators shouted again. The shouts of millions of people, not only from inside the stadium but also from outside, echoed for kilometers away. Their voices reverberated through the entire space, creating a truly spirited atmosphere.

However, the loud voices of the crowd did not disturb those inside the VIP or VVIP rooms. The rooms were equipped with a soundproofing function that could be activated or deactivated at will. For most of them, the soundproofing was kept active whenever there was nothing interesting to hear.

At one of the VVIP rooms, the group from the central continent sat. Inside the room were only the three sect masters of the three great sects, the Sword Maiden, her friend, and the twin red-haired siblings. They had reserved one of these rooms after paying 1,000 peak-level energy stones—something far too excessive just for a place to watch entertainment.

They sat on the comfortable long sofas that circled a large table, with beverages and drinks placed in the middle. The room also had its own retainer outside attending to the guests's needs. In addition, it was equipped with a temperature regulator that could be adjusted manually. The temperature inside could be set as cold as a tundra or as hot as a desert, though for now it was adjusted to normal.

"This stadium is truly magnificent. It is much larger than the arena of the Proving Ground of the Celestial Demon in the central continent. The new technology embedded inside this stadium also makes it quite different from any other arena, even compared to those on other continents," Sect Master Han commented. His words were met with a nod from Sect Master Baek.

"Yes, even more amazingly, the arena itself can withstand a pseudo-immortal stage attack. Many say that His Majesty Aldrian himself created the formation. Did you also sense the complexity of the formation surrounding the arena? It is the kind of great formation that would normally require many people working with precision, and yet they say His Majesty created it by himself."

"Normally, this kind of defense is only reserved for important or strategic places. But for His Majesty to create it here, he truly spared nothing to build the most grand stadium ever constructed," Sect Master Jiang added.

"Still, I cannot wait to see what kind of talents this continent has. Although the average cultivation level of the entire population is low because of the protective barrier in the past, their potential might not be. I heard there are some exceptional figures participating this time," he continued.

The others agreed. The Sword Maiden simply looked at the central arena in a calm manner, while her friend seemed excited as well, influenced by the atmosphere outside.

In another room, the group from the Beast Continent also watched the arena with interest. This group consisted of the Dragon King, the Phoenix Queen, and the Spirit Ancestor with her two companions.

While gazing at the arena, the Dragon King could not help but sigh.

"If only there were still dragon race members on this continent, then I believe we would most likely come out as the winners," he said, which made the Phoenix Queen snort.

"How can you be so confident? The very fact that no dragons survived on this continent in this era is proof that humans are not to be underestimated."

The Dragon King frowned and snorted back. "That is because they were cunning and attacked in groups. I believe that in this kind of setting, the dragons would still emerge as the winners."

He already knew that no dragons had survived on this continent after he looked into their records here, as all of them had gone extinct long ago. The dragons had lost during the battles of territorial disputes between powers not long after the outsiders first arrived on this continent.

There were no phoenixes left either, and the beast race had been forced to scatter into small territories spread across many parts of the continent. All of this continued until Aldrian the Great granted the beast race their own land in the northernmost part of the continent, a territory that had once been ruled by the devils.

"What do you think, Elder Sariel?" the Dragon King suddenly asked the Spirit Ancestor as he turned his head to her, who was seated comfortably on the sofa.

The Spirit Ancestor only showed a gentle smile as she answered. "Just as the Phoenix Queen said, do not underestimate the potential of humans here. Even in a tournament like this, there might be a surprise—one that may surprise even you."

Hearing that, the Phoenix Queen kept her smile while glancing at the Dragon King, who only frowned and continued to look at the vast arena.

Outside, the atmosphere grew even more bustling until finally the lone man in the arena spoke again.

"Alright, ladies and gentlemen, the time has finally come for us to begin the greatest event ever held on the Barisan continent! We will witness the finest talents from across the land. With the participants numbering nearly two hundred thousand, only the very best can emerge as the shining stars who will engrave their names in this stadium's history for the future!"

The spectators grew even wilder as the time for the tournament's finally arrived.

"However, before we proceed, allow me to introduce myself as the one who will guide all of you throughout this event. My name is Orlav Lidovski, and it is my great honor to be entrusted with this task by the kings and by our beloved Great Emperor, His Majesty Aldrian the Great," the man declared.

"Now, for the opening ceremony, let us welcome the participants of this tournament. Behold the talents who may become the pride of this continent in the future, here they are, the future powerhouses of the continent!"

After Orlav said that, lines of participants began entering the arena from beneath the platform. They came from the lower floors located beside the arena, which separated the arena from the spectators' section. The lines of participants continued unbroken for a long time as more and more people filled the arena.

However, even then, it was still not enough to cover the vast space of the arena, not even half of it.

Only after more than twenty minutes had passed were all the participants finally gathered on top of the arena. They instantly became the center of attention, which made many of them feel nervous. The spectators also began discussing among themselves who might emerge as the winners of this grand tournament.

"If the maximum cultivation for this tournament is the Marquess stage, then I think the winner might be the young master of the Strader family. He is already famous for his powerful fire techniques and can even battle across two cultivation levels! Now that he has reached the peak of the Marquess stage, I believe his chances are great," one of the spectators said.

"No, it is not entirely certain," another replied. "There is also the personal disciple of Sword Sage Wang Weijian. I heard she is the most talented disciple he has ever had, and she already comprehended sword intent back at the Earl stage! A truly genius sword cultivator."

"Well, that's true. Then how about the rumor of His Majesty taking in a disciple from the Heavenly Path Academy? Who was he again? Ah, yes—the young man named Zander. I think he might have a great chance in the Earl stage category," another chimed in.

"I heard that too, but I also heard he is still only at the low Earl stage. I don't even know if he is participating in this tournament. I think it's still too early for him. Even if he does participate, he has to face many geniuses with much higher cultivation than him," the other replied.

This kind of discussion could be heard all across the spectators' section, as countless people tried to guess who might become the brightest star of the tournament.

"Alright! I think all participants are already in the arena. Now, next, let us officially open the event with the declaration from our beloved empire's great emperor, His Majesty Aldrian the Great!" Orlav announced.

The moment Orlav finished speaking, the entire bustling atmosphere instantly fell silent. It was as if everyone had become of one mind regarding this matter. The mood shifted from excitement and spirit to solemnity and sacred reverence. Their expressions also changed, from joy and thrill to piety and devotion.

The outsiders who witnessed this were truly amazed by the sudden change in demeanor. It clearly showed how the populace of this continent regarded Aldrian and how deeply they respected him as their ruler.

All eyes turned toward the balcony at the highest section of the stadium. After a few moments of waiting, several figures finally appeared.

Aldrian, clad in his imperial attire that elevated his charisma to the heavens, walked forward accompanied by his women and his parents. The instant his figure appeared and could be clearly seen, the populace shouted in unison,

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

At once, all of them lowered themselves to their knees, many even prostrating before him.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 727 - 727: The Prize for the Winners

[1,505 words]

At this moment, the populace across the entire continent could see what was happening inside the stadium, as the tournament was also shown through the screens across the continent. All of them made the same movement as they went down on their knees, or even prostrated completely towards Aldrian. The silence, full of reverence and worship, filled the air, and none moved as if waiting for the voice of their god.

The outsiders who had not yet met Aldrian also finally saw him directly for the first time. The figure whose reputation had spread across the stars and remained a topic of discussion even to this day.

Aldrian looked at them with a calm expression before he opened his lips.

"At ease." The moment he said that, the populace stood up again and returned to their earlier positions.

Sylphia, Baek Jimin, Aldrey, and Irene then also sat in their designated respectable seats. Their seats were slightly behind Aldrian, with Sylphia and Baek Jimin on his right side, while Aldrey and Irene were on his left side.

Aldrian swept his gaze over the spectators, but his eyes subtly lingered for a moment on the arena where the participants stood, as if he were paying attention to someone, before moving on to the others. After he finished sweeping his gaze, he opened his lips.

"I know that all of you already cannot wait for the tournament. I also wish to see for myself the talents of this continent. You may enjoy this tournament as much as you like. So, without further delay, let us begin. With this, I declare the first edition of the Grand Barisan Tournament open!" His voice echoed throughout the continent.

"UWOO!" The silence suddenly shifted into a festive and spirited atmosphere again after Aldrian's declaration. Amid the roaring voices of the sea of people, Aldrian glanced at Orlav and gave him a nod as a signal.

Orlav, understanding the signal, turned to the spectators.

"Thank you to His Majesty for officially opening this grand event. Now, regarding the tournament, I will explain its format, what to expect, and the rewards for the winners of each category," he said.

"The tournament will be divided into different categories, each based on cultivation, from the Beginner stage to the Marquess stage. The difficulties for each category will, of

course, be differentiated to ensure fairness, but they will still be enough to push all participants to show their best."

"For the first phase of the tournament, we will have a challenge called the Gravity Challenge, where each participant must endure the weight of gravity that has been prepared for their respective category. What you need to do is endure it for a minimum of five minutes. The longer you can hold on, the better your evaluation will be."

"The second phase is the Mental Challenge. Every participant will have to withstand illusions in their mind for at least three minutes. What kind of illusions? Well, the participants will find out, but they will not be pleasant, so be prepared."

"The third phase is Search and Collect. The participants will be transported into a secret realm. Thanks to His Majesty, his esteemed self has already created a secret realm with an environment that can support this phase. What the participants need to do is search for crystals and gather as many as they can. The more they collect, the higher their rank will be decided in the end."

"The last phase is the Normal Battle. The participants who pass through all of the previous phases will face each other until we determine the winners of each category."

"Now, for the prize. For the Beginner stage, they will receive one hundred thousand peak-level energy stones, a low heaven-grade artifact, a cultivation technique personally created by His Majesty. A powerful cultivation technique that will blow your mind once you practice it, a technique that overturns our understanding of cultivation itself."

"There will also be a six-striped pill that can help a cultivator raise their cultivation rapidly, with efficiency surpassing one hundred percent! A pill grade that could only be concocted by His Majesty."

Hearing this, many people widened their eyes in shock. Even the outsiders could not help but feel astonished. The Beginner stage, the very first step of cultivation, was already given such incredible prizes?!

Those who registered in this category were most likely only in their teens, as cultivation at the Beginner stage usually started around the age of fourteen, with some geniuses beginning even earlier.

Many had predicted that this category would be boring, since the participants had not cultivated for long and could not display much. But to think the prize for the weakest cultivation stage was this great... Shouldn't such rewards be reserved for the Marquess stage instead?

With one hundred thousand peak-level energy stones, they could cultivate all the way to the King stage.

As for the artifact, a heaven-grade artifact alone was already more suited for a Duke stage cultivator.

Then came a cultivation technique personally created by Aldrian the Great.

They had heard rumors about a new cultivation technique practiced by some people, those who followed Aldrian the Great as their god. Many said that these techniques were created by Aldrian himself, and that since cultivating them, they had gained much stronger power and advanced in cultivation far more quickly. This cultivation method was said to defy the common knowledge of the cultivation world.

It was claimed that this technique allowed those who wished to switch to it to do so without destroying their foundation. Most who first heard this dismissed it as nonsense, assuming those people simply did not know what they were talking about.

However, as time passed, more and more proof appeared.

Many began to wonder if the words of those who practiced this cultivation technique were true. Unfortunately, no one else could see the technique itself. It came to the practitioners in their dreams and became embedded in their memories, leaving no way for outsiders to understand its depth.

Not everyone had the ability to read memories, and even if they did, they feared offending Aldrian, for this technique seemed to be a gift granted only to those who regarded him as their god.

Now that the cultivation technique created by Aldrian the Great himself was given as one of the prizes, the participants would finally be able to get their hands on it if they could claim victory, and they might at last discover the wonder of this cultivation technique!

As for the six-striped pill, many had already heard of the appearance of this unknown grade of pill in the world. For the people of the Barisan continent, they first learned of it when this pill's grade was auctioned in the past. For the outsiders, they came to know of it when the news spread from the Martal Empire.

Both stories were the same, no one knew who had concocted the pill, as the organizations involved carefully concealed the alchemist's identity.

But now, Orlav had just revealed that the six-striped pills were actually concocted by Aldrian the Great himself, and that he was giving them away as one of the prizes of this tournament?!

This was the first confirmation after so long about the identity of the pill's creator, and it shook the hearts of nearly everyone present. Aldrian the Great's capability was not only

his overwhelming strength, but also an alchemy mastery that shattered the common knowledge of alchemists!

All of these shocking revelations in one announcement caused an uproar among the people, with bustling voices echoing everywhere. The outsiders could not help but reassess Aldrian's true capability. For him to also be an alchemist, and a great one at that, his value in their eyes rose higher and higher.

Only those who already knew what Aldrian was capable of did not seem surprised.

"The prize for the Disciple stage is one hundred and fifty thousand peak-level energy stones, a low heaven-grade artifact, the same cultivation technique, and a six-striped pill," Orlav continued.

"The prize for..."

As Orlav went on listing the rewards for each category, the people grew even more astonished. The prizes became increasingly extravagant, to the point that even cultivators at the King stage drooled with envy. His Majesty was truly generous to bestow such magnificent rewards!

"For the Marquess stage, the prize is five hundred thousand peak-level energy stones, a peak heaven-grade artifact, the same cultivation technique, and three six-striped pills."

Hearing the prize for the last category, the hearts of the populace trembled. All of these rewards were truly beyond the norm for their cultivation level. With so many energy stones, they could advance their cultivation and still have plenty of wealth left to provide for themselves or their families.

Combined with the six-striped pills, their cultivation would soar rapidly, practically guaranteeing smooth progress! And as expected, the participants who heard the prizes for each category felt their hearts thumping with excitement and their spirits surge, they were more determined than ever to fight for them!

They had to obtain those prizes and bring glory to themselves. With such rewards, their lives could be transformed, leaving all competitors far behind!

The burning competitive atmosphere in the arena grew more intense by the moment.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 728 - 728: The First Phase

[1,610 words]

"Now, without further ado, let's start the tournament! For the first phase, participants other than those in the beginner stage, please stand a kilometre away from the beginner stage participants. As for the beginner stage, please stay where you are," Orlav said as he floated higher so he could clearly see all of the participants.

The participants then dispersed as instructed, leaving the thousands of beginner stage cultivators in the center. As expected by many, almost all of the beginner stage participants were still in their teens, with most at the peak of the beginner stage. Only a few were older than twenty, while some appeared to be much younger than fourteen.

There were also those who appeared confident even though they were still only at high beginner stage. The spectators knew most of them were descendants of noble families. Trained from a young age, they were considered geniuses because they could battle across levels.

Once the stage was ready, Orlav spoke again.

"Alright, below you is a gravity field created from a formation that controls gravity. The formation, which contains gravity laws, will test the strength of your body and mind. For this challenge, the gravity has been adjusted for the beginner stage challenge, and the weight of the gravity will vary with each category."

"Just like I said earlier, the participants must endure the gravity for at least five minutes, and you must keep standing! The moment you collapse or your knee touches the ground, you will fail! Everyone who passes the time may instantly stop resisting and will still qualify, but those who can continue enduring may stay in the gravity field until they give up."

"Now, you may position yourselves freely, and I will activate the gravity shortly."

The participants then positioned themselves, taking their most comfortable and strongest stance. After Orlav saw that all of them were ready, he nodded.

"Alright, here we go!" he shouted as he activated the gravity field. The moment the gravity field activated—

Slam! Slam! Slam!

Many participants instantly collapsed under the sudden change, the gravity pressing down on their bodies. Their expressions changed at once as they struggled to endure

the heaviness pressing upon them. It felt as if massive rocks had been placed on their bodies, constantly weighing them down.

Thousands were instantly eliminated the moment the gravity activated, showing just how immense the pressure truly was. Those who collapsed were quickly moved by several staff who had already come near Orlav to assist. They covered the eliminated participants with their energy and carried them outside of the gravity field.

The expressions of the remaining participants were full of struggle as they gritted their teeth to endure. The spectators watching could also sense the heaviness of the gravity, and they could not help but be surprised. Although this level of gravity was relatively easy for those at higher cultivation stages, for the beginner stage it was far too much to endure.

It was no wonder that the moment the gravity field activated, many collapsed instantly.

As time kept ticking, those still standing began to fall one by one. Even before a full minute had passed, fewer than three thousand remained from the more than twenty thousand participants at beginner stage. This phase truly eliminated many all at once.

Those who had been eliminated showed clear regret and disappointment in themselves. However, no one could blame them, as the gravity was truly too heavy for their level. As time passed, the number of collapses kept increasing, though not at the same rapid rate as earlier. More than two thousand participants were still holding on even after three minutes had passed.

This caused many spectators to feel amazed, for with such overwhelming pressure, there were still so many standing. Aldrian, who was observing each of the remaining participants, nodded in appreciation. The gravity this time was enough to make even a low disciple stage cultivator struggle to move. For these beginner stage youths to endure it showed just how strong they truly were.

"Those kids from one of the three great sects of the demon territory, the Black Dragon Pavilion, it's as expected. They have tough bodies from their body cultivation," one of the spectators said as she noticed a group of young men wearing the robe of the Black Dragon Pavilion.

"Yes, but those students from Heavenly Path Academy are also doing really well. Almost all of them come from noble families," another commented.

As the spectators continued discussing the ongoing challenge, time kept moving forward, and finally the five minutes had passed.

"Five minutes have passed! Congratulations to those who successfully completed the first phase!" Orlav shouted. At that exact moment, most of the participants instantly gave up their resistance and dropped to the ground, while the staff nearby quickly

moved them outside the gravity field. Once outside, their expressions showed exhaustion, and sweat drenched their faces.

That had been the most tiring five minutes of their lives!

The staff then handed out energy replenishment pills to restore their condition so they would be fit to face the next phase. Their second phase would begin once all of the other categories had finished their own first phase.

After treating those who had just come out of the field, the staff turned their attention back to the participants still inside. Ten young men remained within the gravity field, stubbornly forcing their bodies to withstand the crushing pressure.

Three of them were from the Black Dragon Pavilion, two from the Buddhist sect, and the rest from noble families, among them, two from the Xin family.

The spectators were truly amazed by their strength and resolve as they kept going. But it was obvious they were almost at their limits, their faces twisted like they were about to take a shit right there in the arena.

After six minutes had passed, the three participants from noble families other than the Xin family collapsed. When seven minutes passed, the two from the Xin family also fell. At the eight-minute mark, one of the Buddhist sect participants collapsed, followed shortly by his companion, leaving only the three from the Black Dragon Pavilion. They endured a little longer but finally collapsed ten seconds after the Buddhist sect's disciples.

Seeing the result, the spectators could not help but be amazed at the strength of the Black Dragon Pavilion's disciples. Their fame as body cultivators soared even higher in that moment.

"As expected of those from the Black Dragon Pavilion. They have bodies strong enough to endure for so long," one spectator said.

"Yeah, it's no wonder they shine in this phase. Their cultivation techniques clearly gave them an advantage in this kind of challenge," another commented.

Others also voiced their thoughts about the results, but then Orlav's voice resounded again.

"As expected of the Black Dragon Pavilion, the ones with bodies as tough and strong as a dragon!"

The dragon spectators who heard this could not help but snort.

"As dragons? If real dragons were here, those kids could in no way be compared to us," one of the dragons in the same group as the Dragon King commented. He was seated outside in the normal section, which allowed him to hear many of the commentators. The moment he spoke, the people around him glanced his way.

Only then did they notice that this man was not human, with dragon horns visible on his forehead. Even so, they still felt offended by his comment. Who was this guy to be so arrogant? Was he a dragon from outside? Although they felt offended, they kept it to themselves, not wanting to cause trouble with someone who seemed so strong.

"Now, let's move on to the next category! Disciple stage cultivators, please enter the gravity field," Orlav announced to the participants in the distance.

The participants obeyed, and their expressions made it clear that they were more prepared after having seen the first phase directly.

Orlav smiled, and after waiting a few moments to make sure all of them were ready, he continued.

"Alright, participants. Same rules. Are you ready? Then I will start now!"

The moment he finished speaking, the gravity field activated, this time far more powerful than the one for the beginner stage!

The moment the gravity field activated, just like in the beginner stage, most of the participants instantly collapsed, eliminating them from the tournament. Those who experienced the field quickly realized that even if their hearts and bodies had been prepared for what was to come, they still could not withstand the sudden change in the weight of gravity.

The difference in difficulty compared to the beginner stage was clear. None of them had expected it to be this hard just to remain standing. The other cultivators watching also noticed how greatly the weight of gravity had spiked compared to the beginner stage.

Those who believed their preparation was enough because they compared themselves to the beginner stage were forced to face the reality that it was not nearly sufficient. Only those who thought their preparation was not enough, and therefore prepared as best they could, were still standing, and even they would have to endure it for five whole minutes.

As time passed, the number of participants kept decreasing, and by the time five minutes had been reached, only a little more than a thousand were still standing out of the more than forty thousand. Only five people, those from the Black Dragon Pavilion and the Buddhist sect, remained standing past the five minute mark before they too collapsed, almost at the same time

Once the gravity field cleared, the next category entered, and the process continued until it finally reached the category of the Earl stage.

Aldrian, who was still observing closely, shifted his gaze toward one of the participants in the group, a figure wearing a robe and a mask that concealed their features.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 729 - 729: The Loophole

[1,690 words]

Aldrian observed one of the participants in the group and couldn't help but slightly smile. Sylphia, who was also observing the participants, couldn't help but ask him,

"Dear, don't you think it will be difficult for Zander to pass this phase? Since earlier, only those at the peak of each stage could pass this challenge. The gravity itself is truly immense even for them, and yet Zander is only at the middle Earl stage."

Aldrian, still looking at the masked participant who was actually Zander, answered her,

"Yes, he will fail before reaching five minutes. At most, I think he won't even last a minute. As a sword cultivator, he has already trained his feet's strength for speed and his body so he can unleash many powerful sword techniques, but he cannot endure that kind of gravity yet."

Hearing his answer, his family raised their eyebrows. If that was the case, why did he send Zander to join the tournament and even expect him to win his category? Wasn't that asking the impossible? That was what ran through their minds as they looked at Aldrian.

"However, he could do something to ease the weight of gravity, and with that I believe he could stand until the end."

The others looked at him in confusion, which made Aldrian turn his eyes to Sylphia.

"What is the rule of this phase?" he asked, which was answered by her.

"As long as the participants do not fall or their knees touch the ground—" Sylphia suddenly widened her eyes as something clicked in her mind.

"I see, so that's why Sir Orlav said it was to test the participants' strength in both body and mind," she said before turning her eyes back to the participants. This one would be interesting to watch.

Zander, who was already standing inside the gravity field, had taken his stance with a solemn expression. He knew this challenge would be extremely difficult for him, perhaps even impossible. But his master believed he could pass this phase, and that belief gave him the confidence that somehow he could succeed.

He took a deep breath as Orlav's voice resounded.

"Ready? Then I will activate... now!"

The moment he spoke, the gravity field activated, and Zander instantly felt his body nearly crushed under the overwhelming force. His knees even bent and almost touched the ground.

"Nghh!" he grunted under his mask from the sudden pressure, as if his body would be crushed in that instant. Fortunately, he had already prepared his stance as best as he could, and he circulated his energy inside his body to the maximum to withstand the gravity. He tried to straighten himself again, but the force was far too much for him.

'No... no... I can't fall here, I can't fall here! Master has already trusted me, I cannot fail!' he thought as panic welled up inside him. But the gravity kept pushing him down, his knee drawing closer and closer to the ground. Zander truly felt that he could not hold on, as this kind of gravity was impossible for someone at his level to endure.

Still, he keep remembered that his master believed he could pass this trial and somehow overcome this heavy phase. There had to be a reason his master thought he could succeed in what seemed like an impossible challenge!

'Think, think, Zander... what is it that I can use to endure this gravity for five minutes?' Zander thought desperately as the crushing weight pressed down on him.

By this time, people had already begun to take note that someone at the middle Earl stage was still standing, while several others at his level had already collapsed the moment the gravity was activated. Their interest grew, but Zander didn't care in the slightest. His mind was consumed with finding a way forward.

Yet no solution came to him, and frustration gnawed at him as he gritted his teeth.

'If only I could cut the gravity...!' Suddenly, his thoughts froze as something clicked inside his mind. He quickly recalled the rules of this phase and remembered that there was no requirement for how they had to endure the gravity for five minutes. In that instant, he discovered the loophole, and a faint smile formed beneath his mask.

'So that's why Sir Orlav said it was to test the strength of body and mind.'

Moments later, several participants near Zander felt a sharp, pricking sensation on their skin, causing them to glance at him in the midst of their struggle against the crushing weight. At first, they had no idea what this masked participant intended, but then their eyes widened slightly, despite the heaviness pressing on them, as they sensed something absurd.

Orlav and the other staff also felt something exuding from Zander, and a subtle smile appeared on their faces. It was as if their expressions said, Finally, someone gets it. Yet what they sensed from Zander also left them astonished.

Even the spectators, who also felt the sudden change in Zander, were struck with astonishment.

They had already seen Zander nearly fall, and most thought he would. But when they sensed the aura exuding from him, they saw him slowly straighten his body, struggling to stand tall once more. The fact that someone at the middle Earl stage could endure this long already left them astonished, but what truly shocked them was—

"Is this... sword intent?" one of the spectators asked in disbelief.

"This is indeed sword intent, albeit a weak one. But how could someone at the Earl stage have already comprehended sword intent?! And why is that figure unleashing it here?" another exclaimed.

"He is unleashing his sword intent to ease the weight of the gravity," a person nearby, who appeared to be a sword cultivator, answered. "His sword intent is protecting him from the laws of gravity. In other words, that figure's sword intent is cutting the gravity itself. Can't you see how he managed to stand again after releasing it?"

Hearing this explanation, the others were even more astonished, and their gazes returned to the masked figure. Was that truly permitted? Many turned their eyes toward Orlav, only to see that he had no intention of stopping the participant. Suddenly, a realization dawned on them.

"I see, so that's how it is... this phase is not only to test our brawn but our brains as well. There are no rules forbidding them from using their own techniques to endure the gravity, as long as they can stand for five minutes," one spectator said.

"This could also be a way for this phase to ensure that not only those at the peak of each stage can pass, but also give a chance to those at lower cultivation levels. Truly a genius idea, to prevent only the higher cultivations from advancing," another commented.

As this line of thinking spread among the crowd, it also took root in the minds of the participants. For those who had already passed, a sense of being tricked surfaced, while for those who had failed, regret weighed even heavier. They had not thought that far ahead, and now the realization stung. If only their minds had been sharper, perhaps they would not have failed so early!

The Earl category participants still enduring the gravity also reached this conclusion. Those who were already at their limit decided to unleash their own elemental laws.

Those who had comprehended the fire laws unleashed flames to cover their bodies, hoping to ease the burden as if trying to burn the gravity itself. Those who had grasped the wind laws used gusts of wind to propel their bodies upward, preventing themselves from collapsing.

The ones who had mastered the earth laws rooted their feet firmly into the ground to keep themselves standing straight. Many other methods were attempted as well, each participant struggling to find a way to lessen the crushing weight of the gravity.

Watching their efforts, Orlav smiled faintly but thought to himself,

'Good... but that still won't be easy.'

True to his thoughts, after three minutes had passed, those who relied on their elemental techniques began to collapse one after another. They looked far more exhausted than the others, a staff quickly rushed in to treat them with energy replacement pills.

'You also have to assess your energy consumption. If you recklessly use your energy, you'll drain your energy dry,' Orlav thought. To maintain control of their elemental laws, they had to constantly feed energy into them for minutes.

It was different from when they unleashed a technique, where they released a certain amount of energy at once and could easily measure their expenditure.

In this case, they had to keep releasing their energy continuously, which was far more exhausting. Because of the heavy gravity, they were forced to use a large quantity of energy just to maintain their techniques for several minutes, and that was something incredibly difficult to endure.

They had to carefully manage their energy, or else they would collapse, not from the gravity itself, but from being drained dry.

As time passed, the number of collapsed participants grew even greater than in the previous categories, which left many spectators astonished. By this point, fewer than a thousand Earl stage participants remained before the five-minute mark was finally reached.

The moment the five minutes ended, Zander instantly retracted his sword intent, and immediately fell. Staff rushed to bring him out of the gravity field and administer treatment.

Though Zander felt exhausted both mentally and physically, he glanced toward Aldrian's direction. Seeing Aldrian smiling at him made him smile as well. He had not unleashed the full extent of his sword intent, keeping his true power hidden for later. But at the very least, it had been enough to ease the gravity to a level he could endure.

To maintain sword intent, he did not need to unleash a large amount of energy, but he did have to maintain constant concentration.

Sword intent was different from elemental laws, as it came from a sword cultivator's comprehension. Using it did not consume nearly as much energy as sustaining an elemental technique.

Zander then looked at the ones still standing within the gravity field, and he felt a sense of amazement. Yet, without realizing it, he himself had already drawn the attention of many, who now regarded him as a rare genius of his generation.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 730 - 730: The Second Phase

[1,575 words]

Many were already talking about Zander, as what they saw had truly shocked them. A middle Earl stage cultivator who had already comprehended sword intent? For the people of the continent, this was the first time they had ever seen such a thing.

For the outsiders, Zander was the closest person to approaching the record of the Sword Maiden, who had comprehended sword intent at the Baron stage!

However, they knew the Sword Maiden possessed a special physique, which made them wonder if Zander also had a special physique related to the sword.

"Who is that? Is there someone like that in our continent?" one of the spectators asked in astonishment.

"I don't know, but with him already comprehending sword intent at his stage, he might become a powerful swordmaster in the future. I wouldn't doubt if he became one of the ten great swordmasters of the continent," another replied.

"Hey, isn't there news that someone from Heavenly Path Academy also comprehended sword intent at the Viscount stage? And that disciple also broke through to the Earl stage, which made him taken in by His Majesty?" someone suddenly asked, causing the people nearby to start thinking.

They couldn't help but think that this masked figure was actually the rumored disciple taken in by Aldrian the Great. The news had spread easily because there were many witnesses at that time who had seen Zander, which made the story believable. It was said that a genius sword cultivator had been taken by His Majesty from the Heavenly Path Academy.

It was also said that this so-called genius had once been considered trash, but his fate had been flipped after hearing Aldrian the Great's lecture.

"It might be, but I heard that disciple was only at the low Earl stage when His Majesty took him in. It hasn't been that long since then, and now that person there is already at the middle Earl stage. Doesn't that not match with that disciple's cultivation? Unless that disciple advanced this quickly, which would make his cultivation speed as absurd as His Majesty's," another gave her opinion.

Many were also confused about the identity of the figure, as there were inconsistencies with the information that had already spread.

The group from the central continent that observed Zander also couldn't help but comment.

"It looks like there is someone here who also has a special physique, just like you, Miss Meilan," Sect Master Han said. "I can sense that he has not unleashed his full sword intent. With such powerful sword intent, it is highly possible he possesses a special physique," he added.

The Sword Maiden nodded her head as she looked at Zander, who was receiving treatment. "He does indeed have a special physique, and his sword intent is truly powerful at his level. He is a remarkable sword cultivator," she said, which made her friend Rei both surprised and smiling.

"Another strong sword cultivator, huh? It seems that lately you've been meeting more cultivators who meet your standards. First His Majesty Aldrian, and now that figure over there. I think this continent is truly a place full of hidden dragons," Rei said.

Although it was still too early to make a final assessment, from their observations since the start of the tournament, the potential of the continent was not bad at all. In fact, it could even be said to be much better than most places outside.

After more than ten minutes, the Earl category finally ended, with the cultivator from the Black Dragon Pavilion standing the longest. His name was Kang Yongjin, the successor of the Black Dragon Pavilion. He was already on the path to inheriting the position of sect master in the future, once Sect Master Kang stepped down.

Many truly commended him for enduring the gravity with only his body strength for about six minutes before he had to use his own comprehension of elemental laws to support himself. Despite being only at the high Earl stage, he lasted the longest, clearly displaying his power.

However, even with that, the one who stole the spotlight was still Zander, even though he had not stood as long as him. Zander's achievement was enough to become the talk even among people from other stars, who now saw that talents like the Sword Maiden also existed on this continent.

Kang Yongjin looked at Zander, who was sitting in meditation to replenish his energy, and couldn't help but feel his competitive spirit ignite even more.

This place was truly the right place for him to train and seek out strong competitors. He needed stimulation to keep growing stronger, as he already had no one left who could challenge him in the Earl stage. Now, with this seemingly strong competitor appearing, even though that figure's cultivation was much lower, it pushed him not to grow complacent.

Zander, who could sense someone observing him intently, opened his eyes and looked at Kang Yongjin. As he observed Kang Yongjin in return, he couldn't help but feel that this man would be a tough opponent for him. However, he was not afraid, and he resolved to give his best if they were to face each other.

This category was truly special, as the ones who drew the most attention were not the peak cultivators of the realm, but rather these two figures at the middle and high Earl stage.

Not long after, it was the turn of the Marquess stage. These participants thought that, since they already knew the trick of this phase, they could pass the challenge easily. Yet the moment the trial began, they quickly realized it was not as easy as they had assumed.

Just like the earlier problem in the Earl stage, many drained their energy before even reaching five minutes. The ones who mostly succeeded were instead those who did not overly depend on their comprehension of elemental laws.

They were the ones who relied primarily on their body strength, or who knew how to cleverly manage their energy expenditure, sometimes relying on their physical endurance, sometimes on their elemental laws, and alternating between the two as needed.

After five minutes had passed, the results showed that more than a thousand still continuing while the others were eliminated. The ones who held on the longest this time were from the Buddhist Sect.

From the beginning, only two sects had dominated the longest-standing times, the Black Dragon Pavilion and the Buddhist Sect.

Many people were not surprised, as these two sects possessed powerful cultivation techniques that specialized in body cultivation. The Black Dragon Pavilion had a body cultivation method said to originate from the Black Dragon, which, according to legend, was the beast mount of the Heavenly Demon. Through it, they gained bodies as strong as the Black Dragon itself.

The Buddhist Sect, on the other hand, had many techniques, but they have famous body-hardening art known as the Buddha's Golden Body. Every monk could use it to some degree. Legend said that if a Buddhist cultivator reached the highest level of this body-hardening technique, nothing in the universe could pierce them.

With such advantages, there was no one who could stand against these two sects in this kind of challenge.

After the Marquess stage ended, Orlav turned his gaze toward the participants.

"Now, for the next phase, those who passed the first phase from the beginner stage, please sit in the same place where you stood during the first challenge. Make yourselves comfortable in your meditation position."

The beginner stage participants who had passed the first phase were still resting and watching, but they obeyed Orlav's instructions and returned to their original positions. They sat down in meditation and looked toward him.

"In this phase, you won't need to use your physical strength, so you can rest your bodies without worry. Instead, this phase will test the strength of your mentality." As Orlav spoke, several staff came forward carrying cauldrons, placing them in a circle around the participants area.

"Soon, all of you will be covered by a barrier, and we will burn a special type of pill provided by the Alchemist Association. The smoke it produces will draw you into a deep illusion. That illusion will show you fearsome things. For the beginner stage, we have already measured a dose appropriate for you, so the sensation will not be as strong as for the other categories."

"What you must do is endure it for three minutes. Once the three minutes pass, we will wake all of you immediately without exception."

"For those who feel they cannot withstand the illusion, all you need to do is move your body and run. You will be awakened shortly after that."

"This challenge may be dangerous, as it might trigger your inner demon that lie deep within your heart. But do not worry, we are here to ensure none of you fall to your inner demon and turn into fiend. Still, because of the terrifying nature of this challenge, we will ask you once more, do you dare to continue?"

"To those who do not wish to continue, please step aside."

Orlav waited for a few moments to see if anyone would move. After several seconds passed and no one left their position, a smile spread across his face.

"Good. I applaud your resolve. This is how cultivators should be, unafraid of challenges."

He then nodded to the staff as a signal. Immediately, they opened the lids of the cauldrons and lit the red-colored pills inside. Once the flames rose, the staff stepped back, while others formed a transparent barrier that enclosed both the participants and the cauldrons.

"The challenge begins! May you succeed, participants!"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 731 - 731: What They Saw

[1,612 words]

From inside the cauldrons, red smoke spread toward the participants and quickly filled the entire area within the barrier. All of the participants inside had already closed their eyes to prepare themselves instantly inhaled the smoke.

The spectators who watched did not know what kind of illusion each participant would face, so they could not understand the true difficulties of this challenge. Still, they believed that considering the quality and difficulty of the previous phase, this one would also be difficult, if not even more so.

For cultivators, it was easy to forget that besides training their bodies, they also had to train their minds and mentality. Stories often told of cultivators with incredible strength, but behind that physical strength there was not always a strong mind or the mental fortitude to withstand an intangible attack.

A cultivator's great physical power was not always matched by mental strength. To train their mentality and minds, cultivators had many methods. For example, they could gain real battle experience, face true life-and-death situations, or endure hardships in life, all of which could ultimately shape their minds and strengthen their mentality.

In the end, mentality emphasized the experience of the cultivators. Of course, cultivation also had a direct effect on the strength of the mind and mentality, because the stronger the cultivation, the more naturally their minds and mental strength would grow. However, the more experience they gained, the stronger their mentality became compared to others with the same cultivation.

For this beginner stage, they naturally would not yet have strong mentality, but still, as cultivators, they possessed a degree of endurance. And because Orlav had said that the staff had already measured the proper dose for the beginner stage, they trusted in that. If the illusion were too strong, there would be no way for this group of beginners to pass this phase.

As the spectators continued to watch, after more than fifteen seconds suddenly—

"UWAAH!" a participant shouted as he stood up from his meditation posture. A staff instantly brought him outside while he was still effected by the illusion he had just experienced. The moment he was removed from the affected area, everyone could see his red eyes as he looked around erratically.

Fear and panic were clear on his face, with sweat dripping from his forehead. His breathing was uneven, as if he had just run as fast as he could. Finally, he realized where he was and let out a sigh. He understood that he had already been eliminated in the second phase.

A moment later, another participant shouted in panic and was also instantly brought out. Then another followed, and another after that, the numbers kept increasing. In less than two minutes, almost a thousand had been eliminated. This left the spectators astonished. At this rate, the phase might end with only a few hundred participants or even less.

Orlav, who was observing the competition, suddenly turned to one of the participants. The participant's aura fluctuated and turned crimson. Without hesitation, Orlav covered him with his energy and forced him outside. The man's body collapsed to the floor, and one of the staff slapped his face, jolting him awake.

"UWAH! Ugh!" he shouted as he instantly looked around at his surroundings. His eyes were much redder than those of the others who had already woken, and the staff continued to help him realize where he was and who he was, lightly slapping him repeatedly. After he finally seemed to regain awareness, a staff immediately gave him treatment with a tranquilizer pill.

"You almost let your inner demon devour you and turn you into a fiend. Calm yourself. Take a deep breath and remember that what you just saw was only an illusion. Do not dwell on it," the staff said, causing the participant to tremble.

A fiend was the term for a cultivator consumed by their inner demon. An inner demon could take many forms, but all of them stemmed from some kind of trauma or terrible experience. If a cultivator's consciousness was overtaken by their inner demon, they would change into a crazed, mindless being with only killing in their thoughts.

They would slaughter anyone without hesitation, regardless of age or gender, truly turning into a mindless killing machine.

For those completely consumed by their inner demon, there was little to no hope of returning to normal. There were stories from the past of a few who had managed to regain themselves after being consumed, but such cases were so rare throughout history and many believed that only a miracle from the heavens could bring them back.

That was why, for most who were overtaken by their inner demon, the only solution was to kill them. Not only was it the simplest way to resolve the problem, but it was also regarded as the most honorable choice, for the consumed to be killed quickly rather than forced to continue living as a mindless killing machine.

After hearing that he had almost been consumed by his own inner demon, the participant felt his heart tremble. He took a deep breath and sighed, truly thankful to the staff for waking him up. Just imagining himself turning into a fiend already terrified him.

The competition continued until the three minutes finally passed. At that moment, the staff closed the lids and then—

CLAP!

Orlav suddenly clapped his hands, and that single clap was enough to wake all of the participants still trapped within the illusion. They jolted and looked around, still disoriented. A slight headache lingered, but they quickly realized where they were.

The barrier had already been lowered, and the red smoke was dispersed by the combined efforts of the staff, who used wind laws and fire laws to burn it away. Orlav smiled at those who remained inside the area, their number now reduced to only one hundred and eight participants of the beginner stage.

From almost three thousand participants down to only one hundred and eight! This phase had truly filtered out the best of the best, and the spectators could not wait for the next stage, eager to see if something even more interesting would happen.

After the beginner stage was completed, the next stage soon followed, beginning with a stronger dose of pills being burned. As the competition started, many participants failed, and as time passed, the number of failures kept increasing.

From among them, one participant suddenly released a blaring aura, which immediately drew Orlav's attention. He nodded to himself.

'She is fighting her illusion with true bravery and firm resolve,' he thought. 'From her robe, she belongs to one of the three great sects of the demon territory, the Thorny Flower Garden.'

Her actions clearly displayed a strong mentality as she confronted her fear, something not easily done within an illusion. Such a feat required immense resolve and bravery, qualities not all cultivators possessed. As she fought against her illusion, her body unconsciously reacted, which was why her aura flared so intensely even though her consciousness was no longer fully present.

When the three minutes finally ended, the results were not far from the beginner stage. Only one hundred and one participants remained to continue.

Then came the next category, and when it ended, the number of survivors decreased even further. Although some tried to resist with the strength of their cultivation, the number who passed was even lower than a hundred participants.

Then the competition continued, and as time passed, it was finally time for the earl stage. Zander, who had already prepared himself, still felt slightly nervous. Since earlier, he had watched the effects of the illusion on the participants. Many more had been eliminated, and he could not help but think about the illusion itself. What kind of illusion would appear within his mind? What kind of terrifying thing would he face?

He took a deep breath to calm his mind and relax his body before settling into a meditation posture.

"Alright, ready?! Then the competition begins!" After Orlav's announcement, the staff did the same as before, burning the pills and stepping back.

The red smoke began to spread, and Zander, who had already closed his eyes, caught a faint trace of the scent in the air. The smell was oddly sweet and relaxing, but he was stunned when his eyes suddenly opened on their own, and he found himself standing in the middle of darkness.

He looked around, but only endless blackness surrounded him. The spot beneath his feet was the only place faintly lit. Realizing he could move, he decided to walk forward.

But then he suddenly felt someone observing him, which made him glance around again. There was nothing in sight, so he tried looking upward. As his gaze lifted, he finally saw it. His eyes froze, his body trembled, and his heart turned cold. Cold sweat quickly dripped down his forehead.

Above him, amidst the darkness, was a giant eye. A colossal eye that had once brought terror to the entire continent. The eye that had caused many deaths and destruction. An eye whose power was far beyond anything he could hope to withstand.

Zander, who had prepared himself so carefully, suddenly forgot everything about the illusion. His first instinct was to escape. This place was dangerous—he had to run away!

Then he heard a whisper, slithering into his ears like the voice of a devil.

"Yes... you should escape. There is nothing you can do here. Just run... run, and your life will be spared."

At first, the whisper was a single voice, but soon more joined in. The voices overlapped, multiplying until it felt as though countless whispers were speaking to him at once.

'I... I have to escape from here! I have to escape! If I stay, I will die!' he thought as he stepped backward.

One step, two steps, his pace grew faster and faster.

Share to your friends

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

[1,606 words]

Zander's steps kept getting faster and faster, and the whispers grew louder and louder.

"Yes, keep running. You are a coward, so just keep being a coward. Keep running like you always did in the past. You don't have to push yourself."

"You are a coward! Trash! Someone worthy only of being cast aside. You are nothing, YOU ARE NOTHING!"

Zander's bad memories resurfaced from his time in the Heavenly Path Academy. He, who was once lifted up as a rare genius, had fallen from his high place as he was left

further and further behind by his peers. His cultivation stagnated, and he was trampled by those stronger than him—especially by the descendants of nobles.

He, who came only from ordinary roots, from an ordinary family, was in no way comparable to those nobles.

He was nothing, and he felt his fate would remain that way for who knows how long. Perhaps his entire life would be miserable. He endured it in silence, but how much longer could he live like that? Even his family at home did not know his struggles, nor how pathetic he truly was.

The only thing they knew was their pride in him, their happiness that he could pursue his dream. Yet that dream seemed farther and farther away, replaced instead with a miserable life.

As Zander's steps grew faster and faster, his memories resurfaced, and with his fear mixed with the whispers clouding his mind, he suddenly felt his feet stuck. Darkness crept up from his legs as if trying to devour him slowly, and his eyes grew redder and redder.

"No, no, stay away from me! Stay away from me!" he shouted in fear as he tried to run again, but his feet would not move.

In his physical body outside, his aura was already fluctuating and beginning to turn red. Orlav, who was observing the competition, looked in his direction and could not help but sigh.

'It seems the illusion is too much for him, or perhaps he has problems from his past that triggered his inner demon. And it is quite a strong inner demon,' he thought. He wanted to bring Zander out, but—

"Let him be."

An incoming voice transmission stopped him, leaving him stunned as he turned to look at Aldrian. He was surprised by Aldrian's order.

"But, Your Majesty—"

"I will take responsibility if something goes wrong. You don't have to worry." Aldrian cut him off, leaving Orlav silent as he turned his gaze back to Zander. Orlav did not know who Zander truly was, which made him wonder what kind of relationship this masked figure had with the emperor for Aldrian the Great to give such an order.

Zander's aura grew more and more ominous, its fluctuations drawing the attention of many spectators. At this moment, they finally realized that Zander was in the process of being devoured by his own inner demon!

This left many astonished, and they turned their eyes toward Orlav and the other staff, wondering why they were not stopping Zander. In truth, the other staff wanted to bring him out when they saw Orlav had not done so yet, but Orlav had ordered them through voice transmission to remain still and focus on the other participants.

This stunned them and stirred the urge to protest, but once they learned that this was the emperor's order, they could only remain silent and grit their teeth in anxiety. Zander was a rare genius who had appeared in the Barisan Continent, and it would be a great loss if something happened to him.

From Aldrian's balcony, he continued to watch Zander with a calm expression. The same could not be said for Sylphia and the others who knew the masked figure was Zander. Sylphia looked at him with worry, then turned her head toward Aldrian.

"Dear, he seems unable to withstand the inner demon. Why are you not stopping him?"

"Not yet," Aldrian answered. "Not yet. He still has that spark inside his heart that could save him. That spark might also bring him great benefit if he can take advantage of it."

"Yes, I can see Zander's spark, the one that symbolizes his spirit and resolve. It is not as strong as his trauma, but it can grow greater at the right moment," Baek Jimin suddenly commented. Her mesmerizing red eyes, which seemed to perceive truths others could not, were fixed on Zander.

"You are waiting to see if Zander can trigger that moment, aren't you?" Baek Jimin asked as she turned her head toward Aldrian. He nodded, his focus still on Zander.

"Then, what if he fails and is consumed by his own inner demon?" she asked again.

"I will stop him." His short reply left the others stunned. Did he mean to kill Zander himself, or did he have some method to wake him up?

Baek Jimin only nodded, then turned her gaze back to Zander. At this moment, his aura grew even more ominous, his body turning redder and redder as he trembled without pause.

Inside Zander's illusion, the darkness that tried to consume him had already reached his upper body. He struggled to escape, to resist the negativity that clung to him, but it refused to let go, embedding itself deeper into his being. His eyes were already blood-red, the whispers digging into his mind as his fear intensified.

"You are destined for nothing, and you will be nothing! You are nothing! YOU ARE NOTHING! There is nothing but disappointment, you are a disappointment to yourself, a disappointment to your family, a disappointment to your master, a disappointment to everyone! You are worth nothing!" the whispers roared.

Yet in that chaos, in what felt like an abyss of despair ready to swallow him whole, a flicker of clarity stirred. A disappointment? Was he truly a disappointment? He remembered the pride in his family's eyes whenever they looked at him, and he remembered his master...

His master had always trusted him, even when he did not trust himself. His master recognized his worth when no one else did, not even himself. Every time he trained under him, his master was satisfied and proud. And that pride gave Zander strength, something he carried deep inside his heart.

There was never disappointment in his master's eyes, except when he doubted himself, when he belittled himself that one time. The moment he lost confidence in his own worth, that was when his master seemed disappointed. Was he truly a disappointment to his master?

No! His master was never disappointed in him as a person. He was disappointed only because Zander carried that tendency to belittle himself before he even tried, in that one moment.

And there was also his family. Although they did not know the depth of his struggles, would they ever be disappointed in him? He knew his family, and he knew they never would.

If none of them were disappointed in him or doubted him, then why did he doubt himself? Why drown in self-doubt? He might be afraid, but he would not give up! If he wanted to uphold their pride in him and not disappoint them, then he had to hold on to his spirit. He had to fight against his doubt and fear!

The darkness had already consumed him up to his neck. In the stadium, those who were watching were certain, Zander was only a step away from becoming a fiend.

"Why have the staff still not brought him out?! Bring him out already!" one of the spectators shouted.

"What are the official thinking?" others wondered. They truly could not comprehend why Zander was not being stopped. He was a rare genius, and it would be a great loss for the Barisan Continent if he turned into a fiend. Moreover, with the Barisan Continent already opened to the world, he was a future talent who could bring honor to its name.

They also could not understand why Aldrian the Great allowed this to continue when it looked as though they were about to lose one of their greatest seedlings at this very moment.

The Sword Maiden, watching from her place, could not help but glance at Aldrian. He must already know Zander's value and the extent of his talent, so why did he not stop this? If this continued, he would lose a great talent from his continent.

Orlav, who kept his eyes fixed on Zander, also gritted his teeth. He felt it was truly a pity, that this seedling seemed to have failed and was on the verge of becoming a fiend.

However, suddenly, he felt something from Zander. His aura, which had been fluctuating and continuously becoming corrupted, abruptly stopped. His body's changes halted, and his trembling ceased. Those who could sense it were stunned. What was happening now?

As they tried to make sense of it, Zander's body suddenly began to exude sword intent! This shocked many, for it had come too suddenly. The sword intent was also far stronger than before, causing many to wonder if such power of sword intent was even possible for an early-stage cultivator

But when they remembered they had an emperor who was even more absurd, they did not dwell too much on it. Still, it was shocking to witness such powerful sword intent coming from an early-stage cultivator. And their astonishment only grew, for his sword intent continued to rise, becoming stronger and stronger.

This sword intent was even far more powerful than most they had sensed from marquess-stage cultivators!

What in the world was happening inside his illusion for him to unleash sword intent of this level? Just moments ago, he had seemed on the brink of becoming a fiend. Yet now, he once again proved himself a rare genius of this continent, a genius with great power.

Aldrian smiled as he observed Zander.

'You did it.'

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 733 - 733: To Be Like Him

[1,717 words]

Inside Zander's illusion, his body, almost completely covered in darkness, halted right before it devoured his face, and a strong sword intent exuded from him. His red eyes regained more clarity, and they slowly started returning to their normal color. He pushed himself to the fullest as he unleashed the full power of his sword intent.

The darkness that had devoured his body suddenly cracked before finally crumbling from his neck down to his feet. His eyes returned to normal, and he instantly collapsed, gasping for breath. There were still many whispers filled with negativity and fear generated by the illusion, but they did not affect him as much as before.

'That was truly dangerous. I almost lost myself and was devoured by my own inner demon!' he thought. 'Thankfully, I managed to gain some clarity earlier.'

He took a deep breath and looked upward at the giant eye staring down at him. The sensation of fear, the pressure on his body, and the negative influence that weighed heavily upon him all felt so real. His soul trembled, and he could not help but remember the day when that eye appeared in the sky above the Barisan Continent.

Although this moment's sensation was not as terrifying as that time, for him, standing in the darkness alone with the massive eye gazing at him still gave a different effect. It felt as if the eye's focus was solely on him, which made the entire situation far more terrifying.

Still, he gritted his teeth, and stood up. His sword intent remained active, and he forced himself to maintain it. He unleashed the full power of his sword intent while keeping his gaze fixed on the eye. It was as if he were challenging the eye itself, and he could not help but remember how his master once faced something like this alone and saved the entire continent.

His master's figure had been so small compared to that eye, yet his back had remained firm and unshaken. Anyone who did not know his master, and who thought with ordinary logic, would have believed he was fighting a hopeless battle. There was no way a single man could face something like that.

But his master shattered the despair of the continent by defeating what seemed impossible for any mortal to overcome. With the prayers of the entire populace of the Barisan Continent placing their hope in him, he accomplished the impossible.

Zander truly admired his master, and he longed to be like him. He wanted to be a person who could be relied upon, someone who would bring pride to the people who had already placed their trust in him.

Zander's face grew solemn. As he looked upward at the eye, he also endured the negative effects of the illusion. In this moment, his belief was firm. There was no doubt or despair inside him. He would be different from his past, and he would stand proudly in the future, continuing forward without being trapped by what had once held him back.

He closed his eyes and concentrated. His sword intent blared against the surrounding darkness, and from it, even the illusion of a translucent sword appeared above him. A few moments later, his sword intent grew stronger and stronger.

'To know my worth is also to know the power of my sword. The sword is me, and I am the sword,' Zander reflected. 'To believe in myself is also to believe in the power of my sword. If I doubt myself, then I doubt my sword. I doubt the way of my sword.'

'What is the way of my sword? What is the will of my sword?'

Zander then once again remembered Aldrian's figure, standing alone against something impossible to face. His master, who never backed down even in front of the strongest adversaries, truly inspired him to be the same.

Since that time, he had always imagined what it would be like to follow in his master's steps. He knew he could never become exactly like him, but at the very least, he wanted to take even a small part of his master into himself.

To face anything in his path, to never take a step back, and to never be deterred by anything—he wanted to be a strong sword that would not bend before any challenge. He wanted to be a strong sword that would not break before any obstacle.

'I want to keep moving forward, to stand strong and never doubt myself again. To keep my head straight and not disappoint anyone who has placed their trust in me.'

'My sword will slash through any obstacle in its path. If I feel doubt, then I will slash my doubt. If I feel fear, then I will slash my fear.'

His sword intent suddenly began to undergo a change. It was not only growing stronger, but a much deeper intent was now imbued within it. It was as if the sword's shape carried its own will, and it made Zander's entire being truly like a sword. His body was a sword, and the sword was him.

In the stadium, the people observing Zander were beyond shocked, they were left utterly speechless. They had already been shaken by the fact that he had comprehended sword intent, and such a powerful one at that. His sword intent was so powerful that it even affected the nearby swords in the spectators' section, causing their swords to tremble.

Now, what they sensed from Zander was something even more unbelievable. His sword intent was not only growing stronger, it was undergoing a transformation, something that many swordmasters instantly recognized.

"He has comprehended a sword will!" one of the swordmasters exclaimed in astonishment.

The spectators' hearts trembled at the sight before them. A cultivator who could comprehend a sword will at earl stage...putting aside Aldrian, whose very existence could not be explained, none of them had ever heard of anyone achieving what Zander had just accomplished.

Even the outsiders could not help but feel astonished by this achievement. This man had successfully broken the record of the Sword Maiden!

The Sword Maiden was said to have comprehended her sword will at the Marquess stage, yet this person had done so one stage earlier.

Sword will was something extremely difficult to comprehend, and it was different from sword intent. It required much deeper comprehension and reflection on what a sword cultivator truly desired for the path of their sword.

What kind of power did they want to imbue into their sword techniques?

What kind of purpose did they seek to achieve through their sword?

How would they walk the path to fulfill that purpose?

Once a sword cultivator truly understood what they sought to achieve, and created a strong resonance with their own soul, only then could they shape their own sword will.

Not all sword cultivators could comprehend a sword will. Many of them did not even know why they chose the sword as their weapon, or what they truly wished to achieve with their sword techniques. They merely followed the flow without a deep understanding of what they intended to accomplish with each strike.

There were sword cultivators who could only comprehend sword intent but never reach sword will. As for those who could touch upon sword will, it usually required a long time before they finally achieved it. Most of the ones who succeeded only did so after reaching the King Stage.

There were geniuses who managed to comprehend it earlier, but none had ever done so below the Duke Stage. The only exceptions were the Sword Maiden and Aldrian the Great.

And now, there was one more. Another person who had managed to comprehend sword will below the Duke Stage.

This made many people from Barisan continent tempted to build a connection with this person. If he had no affiliation, they thought to bring him in. Someone as gifted as him would be far too good to pass up!

The outsiders thought the same, for to them, there was no harm in building a connection with such a promising seedling.

However, they knew there was no way Aldrian the Great would allow a genius of this caliber to fall into the hands of other powers outside the Barisan Continent, so they had

no intention of poaching him. After all, the most important thing was still to establish a good connection with Aldrian the Great.

At this moment, Zander's body had already returned to normal, and his sword will could be clearly sensed by everyone in the stadium. The swords across the entire stadium trembled violently in response to it.

Inside the illusion, Zander opened his eyes and looked directly at the eye. There was no fear in them, only a solemn, focused expression. His resolve was strong, and there was no trace of doubt.

His hand reached for the sword that had always rested at his waist. He closed his eyes again and took a deep breath.

He concentrated, shaping the technique he was about to unleash. He wanted to defeat the thing above. He wanted to be like his master!

He remembered how his master had unleashed that final strike against the eye in the past, the slash that destroyed it. The moment he witnessed that sword technique, he understood that it was a power unique to his master, a technique of pure destruction and annihilation, capable of obliterating anything that stood before it.

It was a sword technique that could shatter any obstacle in its path.

Zander longed to wield a sword technique like that. He could not recreate its true might, but by imitating his master's movements from that time, he could at least capture a fragment of its power.

Slowly, he unsheathed his sword, mirroring his master's stance from that day. Into this strike, he poured his sword will, shaping the technique he was about to unleash for the very first time. No one knew the name of his master's legendary sword attack, and his master had never spoken of it, but that was fine.

This strike would carry its own name, for the sword will imbued within it was his own. Born from the inspiration of his master's movement and power, this was the first technique he had ever created for himself.

'A slash imbued with my will, cutting through anything in its path. Tangible or intangible, it will all be cleaved apart by this technique.'

'A slash that carries my resolve, unshaken and unwavering before anything that stands in my way.'

'Infinite Slash.'

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 734 - 734: Strong Competitor

[1,603 words]

Infinite slash!

Zander opened his eyes as he finally swung his sword toward the massive eye. His movement and the situation right now would remind anyone of Aldrian fighting Tarius at that time. The huge slash energy that resulted from the technique surged toward the eye. Its power was truly tremendous, reaching the level of a full attack at the middle Marquess stage.

A few moments later—

Slash! Crack! Clank!

The slash energy struck the eye directly, and it crumbled like shattered glass. The massive eye that had filled his heart with terror disappeared from sight, leaving the surroundings in silence. The whispers and the negative influence ceased, and the oppressive atmosphere faded into stillness.

Zander kept looking upward and took a deep breath before he collapsed. He breathed heavily, yet he could not help but smile and even chuckle. Covering his face with his palms, he muttered to himself,

"I did it. I defeated my inner demon."

He chuckled again, rubbing his face a few times before shifting into a sitting position. While he was still resting and trying to process his gains, a sudden loud clap startled him awake.

Inside the stadium, his eyes snapped open as his consciousness finally returned to his physical body.

He blinked a few times before finally observing his surroundings. The other participants also still appeared disoriented by the sudden change in scenery. They looked at each other and around them with confused expressions. Only after a few seconds did they finally understand and remember that they were in the middle of the stadium.

"Congratulations. For the participants who passed this phase, you may take a rest for now," Orlav finally announced. The staff then came forward to check each of the participants before escorting them out of the area. The number of those who passed this time was actually less than a hundred.

As Zander moved out of the challenge area, his gaze immediately shifted toward Aldrian's direction. What he saw was his master smiling at him. At that moment, he truly wanted to run to him and say that he had succeeded in defeating his inner demon and brought him pride. He had not brought him shame.

In one of the VIP rooms, Zander's family was also watching him. Knowing he would participate in the tournament, they had decided to come in person. Initially, they wanted to arrive by their own means and watch from the normal spectators' section. However, Aldrian had given them special treatment, offering them a VIP room so they could watch Zander more comfortably.

They had wanted to refuse, but Aldrian insisted, and in the end they could only relent and accept the privilege granted to them by the emperor.

At this moment, Zander's little sister was truly happy, her face bright with excitement as she cheered for her older brother. His parents also wore expressions of pride and emotion, his mother even on the verge of tears at the sight of her son growing into such a strong figure. Zander's grandparents likewise looked on with pride, marveling at how their grandson possessed such incredible talent.

Because of how talented he was, they could not help but feel a pang of regret. For someone like Zander to be born into their ordinary family... if he had been born into a much greater household, perhaps he might have achieved even more than he had now.

"Elder brother is truly great! To think he could make so many people talk about him," Zander's little sister said happily.

"Yes, to think that he could comprehend sword intent and sword will at his stage. Our son truly hid his ability well from us," Zander's father said as he looked at his wife. She only nodded, her eyes already red as she fought back tears.

This was the first time they had truly seen Zander's real talent, and it shocked them to the core. To think that Zander actually possessed such talent was something they had never expected. They knew he had found an unknown cultivation technique that helped him grow stronger, but they never imagined it would allow him to reach this level and achieve something so extraordinary.

Although they were only an ordinary cultivator family, they understood that what Zander had just accomplished was something not everyone could do.

The spectators were still talking about him even after the next category began. The Earl stage participants had finally learned what had happened while they were trapped in their illusions, and many could not help but glance toward Zander again and again. Even those at the peak of the Earl stage could not underestimate this masked figure who stood at a lower cultivation than them.

What he had achieved was truly worthy of being remembered as one of the greatest sword cultivator talents in the history of the continent.

As for Zander himself, he sat alone while he examined his gains. He ignored the attention he had drawn with his display of talent, choosing instead to focus inward. Yet he could not resist the happiness welling inside him, grinning behind his mask. After waking up, he had actually broken through to the High Earl stage!

He truly felt satisfied with his gains. Not only had he finally comprehended sword will, but his cultivation had also increased without him realizing it. He was now many times stronger than his past self. The sword will alone had already boosted the power of his sword techniques severalfold, and with his breakthrough to the High Earl stage, he was stronger than ever before.

While he was still focused on himself, a shadow suddenly fell over him, blocking the sunlight. Zander looked up and saw a figure towering above him. It was a young man with a robust body and tanned skin, his well-defined muscles radiating both strength and intimidation. His short black hair framed his quite handsome face.

The moment Zander saw his face, he instantly recognized him.

'The successor of the Black Dragon Pavilion, Kang Yongjin. What is he here for? Does he want to cause trouble, or—'

Zander's thoughts were cut short when Kang Yongjin suddenly spoke.

"I hope to meet you in the final."

With that, Yongjin turned and walked away. Zander, watching his figure, had thought the man would come to cause him trouble. Although he did not seek conflict, he would welcome it if it came, after all, he wanted to test his newfound power.

Still, to think that the successor of the Black Dragon Pavilion would say something like that... it did not feel bad at all. In fact, it meant that in Kang Yongjin's eyes, he was considered a worthy opponent. Many believed Kang Yongjin to be the most likely candidate to win the Earl stage category, despite being only at the High Earl stage himself.

Although the people outside the demon territory did not fully understand the extent of Kang Yongjin's power, the demon cultivators knew well that he was truly strong. He

could battle across three levels, a feat rare even among geniuses. He had demonstrated this strength in a special competition within the demon territory, where many powerful figures gathered to fight for the prize.

Whether or not he had grown stronger since then remained unknown, but if he had, his combat prowess would be truly terrifying. And now, Kang Yongjin showed no interest in any other participants except for the masked figure, he was the only one who entered his eyes as an opponent.

At first, many thought Kang Yongjin had approached the masked participant to cause trouble. But instead, he had only spoken his mind before leaving. This made it clear, Kang Yongjin hoped that the masked figure would reach the final and face him there. To him, that masked figure was the worthy opponent.

This caused many in the audience to be filled with anticipation. They could not wait for the battle format to begin, hoping earnestly that these two would meet.

The Marquess stage finally concluded with only a hundred participants remaining.

With the competition for the Marquess stage finished, it also marked the end of the second phase.

"What a great performance from our participants here in the second phase. We have seen many outstanding cultivators who will bring pride to the continent in the future. Looking at them, we can truly feel that the Barisan Continent's future is bright!" Orlav said, his gaze sweeping over the participants, lingering on Zander for a brief moment.

"Now, before we enter the third phase, we will have an hour break for the participants to prepare. Please take this time to rest well, because once the third phase begins, you may not be able to rest for quite a while," Orlav continued.

Upon hearing this, many of the participants who had advanced to the next phase began to disperse from the arena. Some went to meet their families or acquaintances, while others chose to remain, cultivating or resting quietly.

For Zander, he chose to meet with his family in the VIP room. He actually wanted to meet with Aldrian, but he knew that at this moment he could not, because of his hidden identity. Aldrian wanted him to enter the tournament as an unknown participant who would shock the world.

Zander already knew which VIP room his family was in, so he made his way there. He did not encounter any trouble along the way, as no one bothered him or tried to stop him.

A few minutes later, he was nearly at his family's room when he turned into the empty hallway where it was located. But then his eyes suddenly widened as he spotted a figure standing there, leaning against the wall.

His face lit up with joy as he rushed toward that figure, stopping right in front of him before giving a deep bow.

"Master!" he shouted.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 735 - 735: The Worst Possibility

[1,587 words]

Aldrian smiled when Zander deeply bowed to him. Zander at this moment was truly different from the time Aldrian picked him up from the Heavenly Path Academy. Right now, he was shining and no longer covered in the mud of being unrecognized, for there was no one who doubted his true worth. Everyone spoke of him with admiration instead of contempt.

From the moment Zander defeated his inner demon, Aldrian knew that this disciple of his had become far more confident and gained greater resolve. He was truly satisfied with Zander's development and how he had erased his pessimistic mind. Now Zander's character was much more worthy of someone who possessed a special physique.

Aldrian touched Zander's shoulder while he was still bowing.

"Good job, Zander. I'm very proud of you. This is what the possessor of the Solar Sword Body Physique is supposed to be. Your resolve and confidence are what saved you from your own inner demon. I'm glad that you succeeded in defeating your negativity. My belief in you did not end up being wrong," he said.

Hearing that, Zander couldn't help but be stunned, and his eyes turned red. He was truly touched, for what his master said was one of the reasons he had succeeded—his master's trust in him.

"Thank you for your guidance and your belief in me, Master. I will not disappoint you, and I will keep working hard," Zander answered as he held back his tears.

Aldrian kept his smile as he tapped Zander's shoulder twice.

"I will be waiting for the time when you step up as the winner," he said, then instantly disappeared.

Zander remained bowing, but his expression turned serious.

"I will bring back the winner's title, Master," he said before straightening his body. He took a deep breath and continued on his way to his family's VIP room, which was already near him. Only after entering his family's VIP room did he remove his mask and spend time with his family.

As for Aldrian, he was already inside the private room connected to the balcony. The private room could be used as a gathering place for his family while waiting for the next phase, or even for staying overnight, as the room itself was quite luxurious, complete with a large bed.

At this moment, Aldrian and his family were sitting around the table, enjoying tea. They also discussed the tournament, especially about Zander. His performance this time was truly shocking. This made Zander the center of attention, the complete opposite of what he had been in the past.

"I truly thought he would fail. If I were you, I would have already stopped him, Aldrian. How could you have so much faith in him to succeed on his own? What if he had turned into a fiend instead? I really couldn't gamble with his life. Fortunately, he managed to defeat his inner demon," Irene said to Aldrian.

Aldrian smiled. "Well, I just believed he could do it, and he did as expected. Even if he failed, I could still help him regain himself."

"This event truly attracted many outsiders to watch. They seem very interested in gauging the potential of this continent," Aldrey commented. "But don't you worry it may not be good if you reveal too much of Zander's ability in front of those outsiders? What if they grow greedy or try to do something to him? At this moment, his identity is unknown, and no one knows he is your disciple."

"Well, that would be true if I couldn't ensure Zander's safety or if my reputation weren't already spread widely enough. I have both strength and reputation, so anyone who dares to move against Zander will have to consider me first," Aldrian answered.

"At this moment, those people will think that the emperor, having seen such a talent, will not let him go. They will assume I will protect him as one of the great talents of the continent."

Sylphia smiled upon hearing his answer. "As expected of our emperor, confidence to the fullest."

While Aldrian and his family enjoyed their time, elsewhere inside one of the VIP rooms, four people were gathered, three men and one woman. They wore plain white robes without any insignia to show where they had come from.

The woman had a young, beautiful face and long black hair. She was the strongest among the group, her cultivation at the peak of the pseudo-immortal establishment stage. At this moment, she was gazing at the arena through the glass, lost in thought, when suddenly the door to their room opened.

Another woman entered. The moment she stepped inside, the black-haired woman turned her head toward the newcomer.

"How?" she asked.

The newcomer, a woman with short blue hair, shook her head.

"I did not sense Elder Vars or his subordinates. It seems they did not come to watch this tournament," the blue-haired woman answered.

Her words made the black-haired woman frown as she turned her gaze back to the arena.

"Ma'am, don't you think there is something strange about the situation regarding Elder Vars? Ever since he could no longer be contacted, I've felt that something was amiss with him and his entire group," the blue-haired woman said.

"Even more so after we landed on this continent and learned more about Aldrian the Great. Not just recently, but even back when Elder Vars was still sending his weekly reports, I always felt that something was wrong with them and the entire situation," she added.

The black-haired woman did not answer, lost in thought. She and her group were envoys from the Barevisk family, sent here with the purpose of learning about this continent and establishing a connection with the man who had fought an immortal, the man they had finally come to know as the emperor himself.

However, their intent to build a connection with him leaned toward ill intent. What they sought was not a genuine good relationship, but rather to learn everything they could about him in order to exploit it. This was different from others who wished to build a good relationship with Aldrian for mutual benefit.

They had yet to meet Aldrian, choosing first to observe what kind of person this emperor was and the true extent of his power. Yet the more they learned, the more they realized he was nothing but bad news for anyone who stood against him. His strength and abilities were absurd, leaving him with no weaknesses to exploit.

Her family, which clearly did not hold good intentions toward him, would surely face its doom if they ever went against him directly. That was the only conclusion she reached after learning more about him.

She had actually wanted to meet with one of their elder's groups that had infiltrated this continent much earlier, but since she and her own group landed here, they had been unable to contact them.

She did not know if something had gone wrong, but after learning in detail about Aldrian's strength and abilities from the people of this continent, the strange silence of Elder Vars's group gave her a bad feeling. It was as if they had already been drawn into a situation unknown to the Barevisk family, and that thought truly unsettled her.

What made her doubt even more was a simple question: how could Elder Vars have sent those reports back to the main family when Aldrian supposedly possessed abilities that covered the entire continent?

The populace of this land spoke with certainty, Aldrian's senses could stretch across the continent. They said he could detect any outsiders who attempted to infiltrate, which was why he had been able to slaughter every last one of those fools who had tried to sneak in before.

If that was true, then how had Elder Vars escaped Aldrian the Great's senses? How had he managed to send reports week after week?

The only guesses she could think of were two. First, Aldrian had somehow failed to detect Elder Vars's infiltration. Or second, this was the possibility she disliked, and if it were true, it meant the worst.

That was, Aldrian had already known about Elder Vars's group and had deliberately let them in. All of the information they had been sending back to the family was already within Aldrian's grasp, and he had simply allowed it.

If that was the case, then Aldrian not only knew of the Barevisk family's hidden intent toward him, he might have already considered them an enemy, knowing full well that the spread of information originated from them.

And with the current situation, where Elder Vars and his group could no longer be contacted, there were only two possibilities left.

First, they had already been killed by Aldrian.

Second—

'They betrayed us.'

This was the worst outcome. If they had betrayed the family, then they had been clever enough to cut contact completely and switch sides to Aldrian. They must have believed they would be safe here, and that the Barevisk family would not pursue them on this continent.

Arriving at this conclusion, she gritted her teeth and looked toward her group.

"It looks like our visit here may truly be dangerous for us. If my guess is correct, we might lose our lives once we meet Aldrian the Great."

She then explained her reasoning to her group, and once she finished, their expressions turned solemn. What their leader said made sense, and they could not help but think that it was the most likely conclusion.

One of the men looked at the black-haired woman.

"So what will we do from now?" he asked.

"For now, I will report everything to my father, the current situation and my analysis. Our faction must know of this grim possibility before it's too late."

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 736 - 736: The Third Phase

[1,629 words]

As the time for the next round finally came, the participants started to return to the arena. After waiting for a few moments, they finally gathered. The ones who passed into this phase were now fewer than seven hundred. From almost two hundred thousand to less than seven hundred, this showed not only the difficulty of the challenge but also the talent of these participants.

Once they had gathered again in the arena, Orlav, who was already floating above, observed the participants for a moment before he began to speak.

"Welcome back, participants. I think the break time was enough for you to rest, and now we will continue the tournament." He paused slightly.

"Now, I will tell you about the next phase of the tournament, and it will be much more fun for you, as this one will truly test your ability to survive. You will push both your body and mind if you wish to succeed in this phase," Orlav continued.

Suddenly, in the middle of the arena, a spatial portal appeared. The portal had a circular shape and a purple color. This caused the participants to look at it in wonder, while the spectators began to discuss it among themselves.

"I can sense complex space laws within that portal. That must be the portal to the secret realm that was mentioned earlier, but how could I not sense any spatial disturbance there earlier? If that portal is connected to the secret realm, there should have been some kind of sign I could detect." One of the outsiders spoke.

"I don't know, but since Aldrian the Great is said to be the one who created the secret realm, he might have done something so we can't sense the portal. Still, I wonder what kind of secret realm this is. I can't sense any energy leaking from inside." Another answered.

As the discussion continued, Orlav also carried on with his explanation.

"We give our thanks to His Majesty, Emperor Aldrian, who created this secret realm for us to use as the challenge ground. In this challenge, just like the earlier phase, each category will take turns. The participants must enter the secret realm, and inside, your task is quite simple." Orlav's smile grew brighter.

"What you need to do is collect as many crystals as possible within the time limit of two hours. The crystals you can gather are of different values, black crystals are worth 10 points, brown crystals 20 points, white crystals 30 points, red crystals 40 points, and yellow crystals 50 points."

"These crystals are spread across the secret realm, and you will find them in many places. Some may be easy to spot, while others could be hidden, forcing you to use your abilities to obtain them. We will also give you this bracelet..." Orlav then took out a bracelet from his pocket, engraved with intricate patterns.

"This bracelet has spatial storage, which functions as the place where you put your crystals. You must store any crystals you collect inside it."

"This bracelet also serves as your protection. Protection against what? Against anything. For example, the wild beasts inside. There are many kinds of wild beasts we have placed there, and they will be quite dangerous for you, so be careful."

"This bracelet can protect you from one fatal attack, but once that happens, you will be teleported out of the secret realm. In other words, you are considered 'dead' inside the secret realm and eliminated. This also applies if you are trapped by something, since the environment inside is not always friendly."

"This bracelet also has a manual teleportation function, which will instantly bring you out of the secret realm if you wish to give up, or if you feel that what you have gathered is enough and are confident about it, even before the time is up. But remember, only the top twenty will be able to continue to the next phase."

As Orlav said this, the staff began distributing the bracelets to the participants.

Zander also received his bracelet. He examined the silver-colored band, noticing the patterns engraved on it, which he believed to be formations. To be honest, he was truly amazed by this kind of artifact, as the creator had managed to engrave such small formations onto a bracelet. Just as Orlav had said, he could sense the teleportation function, and he realized he only needed to inject a small portion of his energy to activate it.

The other participants were also checking their bracelets, and when Orlav saw that each of them had received one, he continued.

"Once you enter the secret realm, there will be many projectors showing your movements, so everyone will be able to watch your performance inside. So do your best, participants!"

The participants' fighting spirit ignited once again as their eyes turned toward the portal.

"Alright, without waiting any longer, participants of the beginner stage may enter first. As for the rest, you may watch to get an idea of what awaits you. However, believe me when I say that trying to memorize the terrain of the secret realm through the projector will be useless for your challenge later. That is because we have already prepared a different secret realm for each category."

Hearing this, the spectators were astonished. Creating a secret realm itself was no easy task, and depending on the terrain or environment inside, the difficulty might increase sharply. They began to wonder what kind of environments these secret realms contained.

The beginner stage participants had already stood up and were approaching the portal. A few moments later, the first participant finally stepped into it, followed by the others. Once all of the beginner stage participants had entered, projectors suddenly appeared near the top of the stadium, allowing everyone to finally see what was happening inside.

The projectors clearly displayed the environment of the secret realm. It was a mountainous range, covered by dense forest. The realm also appeared vast, as the spectators could see the terrain stretching all the way to the horizon. Above it was a blue sky with clouds and even a sun, making the secret realm appear like its own separate world.

This left many in shock. The environment of the secret realm was identical to the outside world, which was truly astonishing. To create something like this, a cultivator would need to comprehend many laws, and even those at the peak of the pseudo-immortal stage could not accomplish such a feat.

At most, cultivators could only combine a few laws into a secret realm, enough for themselves or others to cultivate, to remain there for a time in hiding, or for other purposes, as long as they did not intend to live there permanently. Living inside a secret realm permanently was not recommended because of the lack of a fully supporting environment.

Unless the creator of the secret realm could duplicate the entire cycle of nature like in the outside world, there was no way anyone could remain there permanently. Yet to create something like that, the creator would need a profound comprehension of many laws and the ability to shape an artificial cycle of nature within the realm.

That was something nearly impossible, for mortals had limitations on how many laws they could comprehend and how deep their comprehension could reach.

That was why, when outsiders came to the Barisan Continent and discovered that many secret realms within the Eternal Sanctuary Forest resembled the outside world itself, they could not help but be shocked. Many said that these secret realms had been created by gods who descended to the continent in the past, and the outsiders believed this, for the stories of gods descending were also known among the outsiders.

If it were gods, perhaps they truly could accomplish such a feat, after all, they were gods.

But for Aldrian the Great to create something like those gods, how had he done it?

How many laws had that man comprehended? How deep was his comprehension?

Many questions began to rise, but the spectators quickly set them aside as the projectors finally displayed some of the participants. They appeared to be placed randomly once they entered the portal, each separated into different parts of the secret realm, with distances between them quite far.

The participants seemed to be checking their surroundings before slowly moving in different directions. Before long, one participant discovered a black crystal. He stored it in his bracelet before continuing his search.

Soon after, other participants also began to find crystals, with most of their first discoveries being black crystals. As time passed, some participants finally encountered the wild beasts within the secret realm.

"That is a Silver Armoured Rhino. From the looks of it, this one is still not fully mature, yet its power is already a threat to the Disciple stage. This level of beast is far too much for the beginner stage!" one of the spectators said.

"That is a Purple Stinger Scorpion. Its poison could even kill a Disciple stage! These beginner kids will be dead if they're stung even once!" another commented.

Many spectators began to think that this challenge was truly brutal, with beasts far stronger than the beginner stage roaming freely. The only way for the participants to avoid elimination was to escape as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, some who accidentally encountered these beasts had no time to run. The beginner stage participants stood no chance, as even a single attack from the beasts was enough to "kill" them. Because of this, the first few participants were soon teleported out of the secret realm.

The moment they reappeared outside, their frustration was clear for all to see. They had been truly unlucky to meet such beasts. The monsters' speed was far too great for them to evade, leaving them with no choice but to take the fatal blow.

As time passed and thirty minutes had gone by, the first couple of participants finally encountered each other.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 737 - 737: Tight Competition

[1,613 words]

The two participants finally met each other as they stood on the top of a tree branch, not far from one another. One of them was a blonde-haired young man with a sword at his waist, at the peak of the beginner stage, while the other was a brown-haired young man with a spear on his back at the same cultivation stage.

"That kid with the sword is Irvan Herlion, the youngest son of Grand Duke Herlion of the Doria Kingdom. The other one is the rising genius of Raklis Dukedom from the Vindas Kingdom, Oliver Raklis," a spectator explained to the one beside him, who seemed clueless about the identities of the two youths.

"This will be a good show. I believe there is no rule against fighting in the secret realm, and they can take crystals from other participants," another spectator said.

Inside the secret realm, the two youths looked at each other warily. They seemed reluctant to fight, as neither felt confident about securing victory.

"Let's just take different paths. It's too soon for us to fight at this moment. There is still plenty of time, and you don't want us to drain our energy too early in such a dangerous place, right?" Oliver said.

"Agree," Irvan replied, and without another word they moved in opposite directions. The spectators, who had expected confrontation and action, felt disappointed, but they understood that the reasoning made sense. It was too early for them to fight each other when there was still more than an hour and a half left.

It was much better to use their energy to search for the scattered crystals in the secret realm. That was the wisest choice, especially when there were many hidden dangers in the secret realm. They did not want to run out of energy when danger came upon them.

That kind of thinking also seemed to be in the minds of the other participants. They preferred not to fight and simply continued on their way. Some unfortunate ones, however, encountered beasts and were eliminated. Others were trapped by nature's dangers, such as swamps that swallowed anyone who stepped into them.

As time passed, the number of participants actually dropped below fifty, though those inside the secret realm were unaware of it. They continued searching for crystals in many places without having to fight one another.

This made the spectators grow quite bored with the lack of action. Only a few participants drew attention, those who managed to collect many crystals while also escaping from the beasts. These were the geniuses showing sharp instincts and quick decision-making, making them not only geniuses in their foundation but also in real battle experience.

But after the time reached an hour and forty-five minutes, the spectators finally saw action. When the time was almost up, it was the moment for a more radical approach. Since they did not know how many participants were left in the secret realm, the quickest way to ensure a spot in the top twenty was to take crystals from others if they crossed paths.

That was exactly what happened when one participant attacked another with his sword. The other blocked with his blade, and the two fought fiercely. Since they were still at the beginner stage, they did not possess many techniques and mostly depended on martial skills.

Still, this kind of action had its own appeal, drawing the spectators' full attention to the fight. The battle might not have been as intricate as that of high-level cultivators, but it still provided entertainment. It was also a chance to gauge the battle sense of these youths in real combat.

Fights broke out in several places, growing more intense as the time drew closer to the end. The families of the participants, watching through the projectors, shouted their support from afar, even though their voices could not be heard inside the secret realm.

Some of them lost to their opponents and had to let their crystals be taken. A few were even eliminated as they were "killed" in battle. Although their crystals could not be taken, since the bracelet teleported them outside along with their belongings, their elimination still reduced the number of competitors.

The most important thing was still entering the top twenty, not who held the greatest quantity of crystals. Collecting more was one way to pass this phase, but if many competitors were eliminated, then in the end quantity meant nothing and the top twenty would be secured.

However, there were also those who chose to leave with what they had gathered, teleporting outside on their own. They wanted to make sure not to fight until the last phase of the tournament, as some of them preferred not to reveal their battle prowess at this stage.

After a while, the time was finally up. The bracelets on their arms blinked several times, signaling the end of the competition. The participants understood the meaning of the sign, and one by one they were teleported outside.

The moment they came out, the portal of the secret realm closed, and the staff approached to collect the bracelets. The participants would not know the results until the officials announced who would continue to the next phase of the tournament.

After all the bracelets were gathered, they were handed to Orlav, who stood at the side of the arena with a table already prepared in front of him, several staff also at his side. Together, they began counting the crystals stored inside each bracelet, which already carried the identity of its owner.

As the counting went on, the participants could only wait nervously for the results. They could only hope that what they had gathered was enough to secure a place in the top twenty.

After a while, the staff finished counting and handed Orlav a scroll containing the list of participants who would move on to the next phase.

"Alright," Orlav announced, "from this phase, thirty-three participants came out of the secret realm without being eliminated. All of them either teleported out on their own or remained until the time was up. As I said earlier, we only need twenty. After counting the crystals of each participant, we have determined the top twenty who will advance to the next phase of the tournament."

He then opened the scroll and began to read, his voice carrying clearly for all to hear.

"I will start with the one who gathered the most crystals. The first position is achieved by Alexi Bourbon, with a total of one thousand crystal points."

The other participants instantly turned to look at the first-ranked, a black-haired teen with twin swords on his back. He was the son of a noble family in the Atria Kingdom, which in the past had stood in the opposing faction to Prince Wilmar. Although his family suffered heavily during the civil war, this youth seemed unaffected. Instead, he had grown stronger because of it.

"The second place is Aelther Sylvaris, with a total of eight hundred and eighty crystal points."

This one was a male elf. The spectators were not surprised at his performance. As an elf, the forest was essentially his domain. Elves were more sensitive and more adaptable to such environments, which greatly helped them survive many dangers. His abilities also helped him locate many crystals.

"The third place is..."

Orlav continued to announce the names of those who had passed the third phase. When the twentieth participant was finally called, disappointment and regret spread across the faces of those who had failed.

"Alright, that's the top twenty. Congratulations to those who passed this phase. The next phase, which is the final phase, will be held tomorrow morning, when the sun is as high as an incense stick above the horizon. Please gather at that time, because if you are late, you will be eliminated," Orlav announced.

"Now, for the next category, the Disciple Stage. Please be ready, as the competition will begin in a few moments," he added.

Suddenly, a portal appeared once again. The projectors connected to the ceiling of the stadium had already disappeared, as the connection to the earlier secret realm was cut off to make room for the new one.

"Alright, participants, the same rules apply. You may now enter the secret realm. I wish you success!" Orlav said.

The participants at the Disciple Stage stepped into the portal. Once they entered, the projectors lit up again, revealing the new environment. This time, the terrain was quite different from the earlier one.

In this secret realm, there was still an area of dense jungle, but there was also a body of water, such as a river, that split the terrain. There was also a mountain range, with some of its peaks reaching the clouds. Once again, it amazed many people because of

the complexity of the secret realm. Some outsiders were even tempted to request Aldrian to create a secret realm for their own territories.

What was stored inside this secret realm was not much different from the beginner stage, except the beasts were slightly stronger and the number of natural traps scattered throughout the area was much greater than in the beginner stage secret realm.

As for the other participants who were still waiting for their categories, many simply decided to use their time to cultivate. After watching the first category's competition, they more or less knew what to expect, so it was better to take advantage of the time before their turn to strengthen themselves.

This was also the case for Zander, who chose to cultivate as well. After observing the earlier competition, he had a clearer idea of what to expect and what to do inside the secret realm. He would use the waiting time until his category was called to stabilize his cultivation, since he had not had the chance to do so earlier.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 738 - 738: Battle Against Stronger Being

[1,541 words]

The tournament proceeded normally without much trouble. The competition grew fiercer with each rise in category, as the battles became more intense. The spectators watching also grew more excited, especially when participants fought each other as the round was about to end.

With stronger cultivation, the battles grew more varied and much stronger, and their attacks could even destroy the surroundings.

However, although the participants became stronger, the challenges inside the secret realm were not forgiving. Many still "died," reducing the number of participants at a fast rate.

This happened in every category, and at this moment, when the viscount stage category had just ended, the participants who passed to the next phase were even less than twenty. Once they left the secret realm, these participants would directly proceed to the next round.

However, although these people were already confirmed for the next round, the staff still counted their crystals to determine the ranking for their achievements in this phase. After all of that was completed and the ranking announced, it was finally time for the next category, the earl stage.

"Alright, for the next category, the earl stage participants, please prepare yourselves. The competition will begin shortly," Orlav announced.

Zander, who was still in cultivation, slowly opened his eyes as a trace of sword intent leaked out before he retracted it. He took a deep breath and looked at the portal that had already formed, then stood up and stretched his body to relax his muscles.

"Alright, participants, you may enter the secret realm. I wish you good luck!" Orlav said.

As soon as his words fell, many participants instantly stepped into the portal. They rushed inside as if unwilling to be left behind or let the crystals be taken by others. Zander, who walked calmly toward the portal, could sense some participants glancing at him before entering. They were clearly wary of him, knowing he was a powerful competitor.

Zander ignored their looks and instead noticed Kang Yongjin, who gave him a brief nod before stepping inside. Not taking too long himself, Zander finally entered the portal. The moment he stepped through, he felt the distortion of space for a split second before suddenly appearing in a new environment.

He blinked a few times, still feeling the slight aftereffects, though they did not truly disturb him. At last, he looked around, and what he saw was—a desert. He stood atop a mountain of sand with nothing else in sight. Raising his head, he saw the sun blazing brightly above. The scorching heat he felt made it seem as if the burning rays were striking directly from the sun itself.

In the outside world, the sun should already be leaning toward the western sky, yet here in the secret realm it hung high overhead, as if it were still midday. This alone showed that the sun here was different from the one outside. In fact, he could not even be sure that the light shining in this secret realm was truly the sun.

All of this made him admire his master even more. To be able to create such a place, he was beginning to believe his master might truly be a god. Such ability was far beyond his comprehension.

Pushing aside his admiration, Zander started walking in one direction. He did not know where in the secret realm he had landed, but his first goal was to search for crystals. At the same time, he remained alert to any dangers that might lurk within this desert, spreading his senses and keeping his focus sharp.

He kept walking for the next fifteen minutes, yet he saw nothing. Not even his senses detected the presence of anything. Still, he pressed onward until, at last, something entered his sense. Without hesitation, he dashed toward it at high speed.

But then, he suddenly felt a disturbance and swiftly stepped aside, using his movement technique. A split second later, a monster burst out from beneath the sand, its massive mouth wide open as if it wanted to swallow him whole.

Zander finally saw what it was, and the sight left him astonished. It was a giant worm with crimson skin. Its circular mouth was lined with countless sharp teeth, and before he could observe further, the worm lunged at him with shocking speed.

Its maw gaped fully open, releasing a strange gurgling sound as it tried to devour him. The attack came so fast it nearly caught him, and Zander barely evaded in time, gritting his teeth at the narrow escape. Before he could counterattack, the worm had already burrowed back beneath the sand.

'This worm has the aura of a middle marquess stage. This will be tough,' he thought.

But he was not deterred. He instantly unsheathed his sword and moved quickly toward a thing his sense had picked up. However, he shifted direction again as the worm erupted from beneath him once more. Zander evaded, but this time he also slashed at the worm's body, imbuing his strike with his sword will.

Slash!

The attack left only a shallow wound, making him frown.

'Its body is tough. It looks like I'll need to use more power to cut deeper.'

The worm turned its head toward him and lunged again, maw wide open. Zander evaded by a narrow margin once more, his expression tightening. The creature's speed could not be underestimated. After all, it was almost an entire stage stronger than him. The worm burrowed back into the sand again, which made things truly troublesome.

For the next two minutes, he dodged, attack, dodged again, then attack again, matching the creature's simple attack pattern. Fortunately, although the worm possessed marquess-stage strength, its mind was not clever, it moved purely by instinct. Zander used this to his advantage, focusing his strikes on the same spot each time in an effort to break through its hardened defense.

Luckily, the worm did not seem to have strong regeneration. The wounds he inflicted remained, and as they grew deeper and more severe, the worm finally reacted, a pained sound erupted from its maw.

Grhooo!

Then, without warning, the worm spat out a blob of liquid from its mouth. The projectile shot forward with terrifying speed, like a cannon blast. Zander instantly evaded, and the moment the liquid struck the sand—

Psshhh!

The sand melted on contact, and parts of it were scorched black. Seeing this, Zander could only think of one thing—acid. The worm could actually spit acid, and now, enraged, it was using abilities other than its simple charges.

It continued spitting from its mouth, but with sharp focus, Zander evaded each blast, steadily closing the distance between them. His eyes shifted to the deep wound carved into the worm's body, and a faint smile tugged at his lips.

'I think it's enough.'

Standing near the worm's massive form, he moved swiftly into position. With a single breath, he took his stance, imbuing his blade with sword will before unleashing his technique.

Meteorite Slash!

His sword swung, and a streak of slash energy tore through the air, aimed precisely at the wound. A split second later—

Slash!

The slash energy cleanly cut through the worm's body. Green, corrosive blood sprayed from the worm's severed body as the creature collapsed, sending up a cloud of dust. Zander had already taken some distance, watching the fallen worm for a moment before exhaling deeply. He then sat down to adjust his breathing.

To be honest, he still felt nervous. This was his first battle against a being much stronger than himself, and the first time he had managed to kill such a creature. The experience he gained as an adventurer had proven useful, and combined with his master's training and his own growth, it enabled him to face a stronger opponent like this.

A small chuckle escaped him as he stood up again. If it had been in the past, he never would have imagined being able to face such an opponent. Taking another deep breath, he turned his gaze in one direction and resumed his journey toward the presence he had sensed earlier.

Meanwhile, in the stadium, the spectators were left in awe of his performance. Many could not help but marvel at the battle prowess Zander had just displayed.

"Amazing! That's a Giant Sandworm we're talking about! Judging by its size, it must have been at the marquess stage. To think that man defeated it while still at the high earl stage, truly amazing!" one spectator exclaimed.

"A Giant Sandworm... one of the strongest creatures in the desert environment. Back when the beast continent was under the devils, they were among the most feared in the desert regions of the devil territory. Their ambushes in the sand are deadly," another added.

"Doesn't that mean he can fight across at least three levels? And we still don't know the true limit of his power," someone else chimed in.

The discussion about Zander's performance quickly spread through the stadium. Aldrian, watching it all, could not help but smile.

Back inside the secret realm, after a short while of traveling, Zander finally arrived at the source of what he had sensed earlier. Something glimmered beneath the sunlight, half-buried in the sand.

He stepped closer and brushed the sand aside until its form became clear. The moment he uncovered it, his eyes lit up. His first find was a jackpot, and the sight brought a smile to his face.

'Yellow Crystals... and there are several of them.'

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 739 - 739: Ambush

[1,519 words]

In another place within the secret realm, a young man was fighting a beast, a massive creature far larger than his body. His short black hair flailed in the wind as the shockwave of his punch swept through the air. His muscles truly displayed their power as explosive strength burst forth.

The beast he punched was a silver-colored bear with red eyes. Its aura was at the low marquess stage, blaring with pressure, yet the young man, who only had high earl stage cultivation, managed to injure it severely with his strikes.

He did not stop, throwing another punch until he finally killed the bear. His blow pierced through the beast's body, leaving a gaping hole. The massive frame collapsed, while the young man's face and body were slightly dirtied by the beast's blood.

The young man, Kang Yongjin, then turned his gaze in one direction. He had spotted several yellow-colored crystals embedded near a tree. This place was clearly the bear's territory, earlier he discovered the yellow crystals, which were a jackpot for him.

Normally, participants would escape or even avoid this kind of area, as it was much better and safer to search for crystals in other locations. Although yellow crystals were tempting, they had to ensure they were not killed first. This bear was something they would avoid, as facing it was the same as receiving a death sentence for normal participants.

However, Kang Yongjin, who enjoyed fighting, actually decided to battle the bear that was much stronger than him in terms of cultivation. He was confident in his strength, and this was proven when he managed to defeat the beast.

He then took four yellow crystals and stored them in his bracelet. After that, he continued his hunt, deciding to approach the high mountainous range to look for more crystals. In the middle of his journey, a male participant suddenly saw him, and upon recognizing who he was, that participant instantly fled.

Kang Yongjin had already sensed him but simply let him go.

'Tch, what a coward,' he thought with disdain.

He maintained his pace and kept thinking about the time when he would face Zander. Finding someone with great strength within the same realm as him truly excited him, and he could not wait to have a good fight.

An hour later, Zander had already left the desert region and entered the forest. Along the way, he had already found many crystals in different places, some of them even near strong beasts. He also took advantage of those moments to train his swordsmanship by killing stronger beasts.

The only exception was when he encountered a beast higher than the middle marquess stage. Against such opponents, he chose to avoid and escape, as he was not yet confident in fighting at that level.

As he kept battling, his skill and battle sense grew sharper.

At this very moment, he was facing a giant snake at the middle marquess stage, fighting it head-on. The snake was much more aggressive and faster compared to the giant sandworm, yet he was still able to evade its attacks.

The snake already bore several slash wounds across its body, the most severe one just before its head. Zander used the same strategy he had employed against the sandworm, striking the same spot repeatedly to break through its tough scales.

A few moments later, he leapt forward and delivered a strong, clean slash that instantly decapitated the snake. He landed beside its massive body and took a deep breath before continuing his search for crystals. As he moved on, he occasionally encountered other participants, but the moment they saw him, they immediately fled.

He did not pursue them and simply continued on his way.

However, a few minutes later, he sensed something beneath his feet. Suddenly the connection to the surrounding heaven and earth energy abruptly vanished, leaving him weakened, and at the same time his legs sank into the ground as if trapped.

Before he could think of the reason, he sensed danger from the side and tilted his head slightly, narrowly dodging. An arrow whizzed past, aimed directly at his head, making him instantly turn toward the direction it had come from.

But before he could see who had shot the arrow, he sensed another presence behind him and responded with a swift kick.

"Ugh." A groan escaped as Zander turned to look behind him. What he saw was a man who had managed to block his kick. However, before he could think any further, another arrow came flying from the same direction. He frowned as he finally unsheathed his sword and intercepted the incoming shot.

Almost immediately, he sensed another arrow, but just as he prepared to block it with his sword, he caught signs of other attacks. From behind, he felt fire laws surging toward him, while from his left side came a strike infused with wind laws. He was surrounded from all sides, and each of these attacks would be fatal if they landed. If they struck, he knew he would be instantly eliminated!

With no other choice, he decided to go all out. Unleashing his sword will, he swung his blade in a sweeping motion. The strike looked simple, but the power behind it was overwhelming, tearing through the surrounding area and shattering everything caught in its path.

The surrounding trees were cut down, the incoming elemental attacks were destroyed, the arrows shattered, and even the ground that had trapped him cracked and broke apart under the force of his sword will.

"Watch out!" one of the attackers shouted. The man who had blocked Zander's earlier kick also understood immediately and dodged the sweeping strike. Two kilometers in the direction of Zander's slash, every tree was sliced cleanly apart, leaving the area much brighter as nothing remained to block the sunlight.

The attackers who witnessed this felt their hearts tremble. To think that a single swing of Zander's sword could unleash such power! If they had not evaded, they would have been instantly eliminated.

As Zander destroyed his surroundings, he once again felt the flow of heaven and earth energy returning to him. He steadied his stance and fixed his gaze on one of the attackers—a man in a white robe. Deciding to counterattack, he activated his movement technique and closed the distance in an instant.

But another arrow shot toward him, which made him irritated. With another powerful sweep of his sword, he focused all his strength in one direction. The result was utterly devastating.

Whoosh!

The attack concentrated at one point was far more devastating. The incoming arrow was instantly destroyed, and the slash energy shot forward at great speed toward the one who had released it. A kilometer away, an elf who had been attacking Zander from the start sensed danger directly in front of him and quickly dodged to the side.

He rolled as the slash energy tore past him, continuing far into the distance and devastating everything in its path.

The elf then heard one of his collaborators shout from afar, which made him glance back toward Zander.

"Block him! Uagh!"

One of his comrades had received Zander's direct strike, his own attack cut down with ease. Even when another rushed to help, Zander simply swung his sword, without employing any specific technique, and it was enough to shatter every attack they threw at him.

Looking at the situation, the elf gritted his teeth, thinking how truly unfair this was. At their level, they were forced to face someone who had comprehended sword will, and not just normal sword will, but a powerful one. That alone was enough for that swordmaster to sweep through most participants, as sword will greatly amplified the power of each strike.

At their level, going against someone like Zander, who wielded such a strong sword will, was like kicking a towering iron wall. No matter how hard they struck, they would leave no mark. Without some special power equal to Zander's, they had no chance of victory.

For someone at the early stage to comprehend sword intent was already cheating. But for him to possess such a powerful sword will on top of that made this masked man unstoppable. Their ambush had become meaningless, as each of his strikes shattered their plans with ease.

The elf gritted his teeth and decided to escape as he heard a pained shout.

"Argh!"

Zander had tried to cut off one of the attacker's heads, but a thin barrier appeared to protect him. It shattered instantly, and the man disappeared. The other attacker also tried to escape, but Zander did not allow it.

With a single swing of his sword, his strike landed, or rather, it should have. A thin barrier appeared at the man's neck, but it too broke apart immediately, and he vanished as well.

Having eliminated two of them, Zander glanced toward the escaping elf but chose not to pursue. He took a deep breath, surveyed his surroundings one last time, and continued his search for crystals. Unfortunately, the crystals carried by the participants he had "killed" did not drop, leaving him empty-handed. Still, he did not dwell on it.

'Well, at least I reduced the number of participants,' he thought.

In the stadium, the two attackers had already reappeared, one of them hitting the floor in frustration.

"Damn it!"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 740 - 740: Not the Time Yet

[1,646 words]

"Pfft! To think they were foolishly attacking with only that manpower. They truly did not understand the gap between them, did they?" one of the spectators said, almost laughing as he saw the attackers being teleported out of the secret realm.

"Aish, but can you blame them? I might have thought the same, to gang up on that sword cultivator. He has already comprehended sword will, after all. If they attacked him directly, they would have been instantly obliterated," another answered.

"However, as expected, with that kind of power, if someone wants to stop him, then they have to gather many more cultivators or even ask Kang Yongjin to fight him," another commented.

"Young master Kang? No way he would join those weaklings to gang up on someone. If he wants to face that sword cultivator, he will do so directly in a fair and square setting. He is not the cowardly type," a demon cultivator responded with a slight mock in his tone.

"Kang Yongjin is also truly powerful. To think he could kill a giant silver bear, he is someone who could dominate this category easily without the appearance of that swordsman," another also commented. "It looks like the title of this category's winner will be fought between those two," he added.

While the spectators were discussing the event that had just happened in the secret realm, inside the arena—

"Damn it!" one of Zander's attackers cursed as he struck the floor of the arena. He, who had planned the ambush on Zander, truly did not expect the gap in strength to be so huge that their plan would be broken so easily.

He already knew that sword will was a truly powerful force that could amplify a sword strike. As the son of a noble, he had already met some swordmasters who had comprehended sword will. However, Zander's sword will was far stronger than some of sword will he had sensed in the past.

'Didn't they all say he had only just comprehended sword will in the second phase? How is it possible for his sword will to already be that powerful?' he thought.

He had heard the absurd news about Zander during the break time, which said that Zander had comprehended sword will, and had finally tried to gather information about him. Zander had already achieved something extremely difficult—almost impossible—by comprehending sword intent, but now he had also comprehended sword will?

Zander's threat spiked greatly, to the point that he now stood on the same level as the successor of the Black Dragon Pavilion, Kang Yongjin. That dangerous man was already a terrifying opponent, and now another had appeared. He finally decided to think of a way to eliminate Zander in the third phase of the tournament.

He knew that if he tried this alone, he would not succeed, so he would need help from other participants. Those who had advanced to this phase were all absolute geniuses with great talent, and they would be a great asset to his plan.

Inside the secret realm, he began asking everyone he met to join in an ambush, reasoning with them about why Zander needed to be eliminated first. The reason was simple, this was the only phase where they had the chance to eliminate someone as strong as Zander together.

In fact, if his plan worked, he might even target the successor of the Black Dragon Pavilion. This phase, where cooperation was still possible, was the most appropriate time to try eliminating one of the strongest competitors, with full awareness that it would be nearly impossible to win in a one-on-one fight in the final phase of the tournament.

However, the problem was that not all of the participants wanted to follow his plan, and many chose their own way. Even as time passed, only two participants agreed to follow him. This left him frustrated, as those idiots refused to get rid of the strong competitors together when they had such a good chance.

But the reality was that what he did was meaningless. Zander's battle prowess was truly immense, and the gap could not be closed with only a few men and the limited resources inside the secret realm. To get rid of the masked man, he would need far more personnel and resources. Even his trapping formation, which could restrain a low Marquess stage cultivator, was broken under the force of that man's sword will.

At last, he released a deep sigh and looked at the projector that displayed Zander's figure. In the end, he could only accept that he had already been eliminated and that Zander was truly someone worthy to advance to the next phase. Although what he did was not commendable, it was still one of the strategies to increase his chances of becoming the winner in this category.

However, unbeknownst to him, he was not the only one with such thoughts. There were others inside the secret realm who shared the same mindset. At that very moment, they too were forming groups with like-minded participants, aiming to eliminate Kang Yongjin

He slightly widened his eyes as he saw one of the projectors showing Kang Yongjin actually surrounded by a few participants. They too seemed intent on working together to eliminate a strong opponent first.

Back inside the secret realm, Zander had already found another set of crystals, this time red crystals. He had collected many, and his points had already exceeded a thousand. Thanks to his refusal to cower in the face of strong beasts, he was able to obtain many yellow crystals, most of which were located near such creatures.

While he continued his journey in search of crystals, he suddenly heard a rumbling sound in the distance, followed by a slight tremble in the ground. This made him stop atop a tree to see what was happening.

When he finally saw the source of the sound, he was astonished.

What lay in the distance was a scene of destruction. An entire area had been flattened by some kind of force. Trees were uprooted from the ground and hurled in one direction. Zander tried to focus, attempting to discern what was happening and what had caused such devastation.

He finally saw it, and the sight left him speechless.

It was actually Kang Yongjin, surrounded by seven participants. They were ganging up on him, yet he seemed perfectly fine—and was even enjoying it. They tried to attack Kang Yongjin from every side, aiming for fatal blows, but nothing was working.

None of their attacks could reach his body, as every one of his punches shattered anything that flew toward him. His punches and kicks were deadly, each one creating shockwaves. Even though Kang Yongjin's cultivation was only at the high Earl stage, every attack of his already carried the power of a low Marquess stage.

Zander couldn't help but find the scene amusing. It looked just like a group of adventurers on a beast subjugation mission. But in this case, Kang Yongjin was the beast.

"Fuck! How are we supposed to beat this monster!" one of the participants shouted as he barely avoided Kang Yongjin's fist, quickly retreating. His heart trembled, knowing that even a single hit would mean instant elimination.

He was a peak Earl stage cultivator, yet he struggled to defeat someone supposedly much weaker in cultivation, even though they had already ganged up on the target.

"Watch out!" one of his comrades shouted as Kang Yongjin released a punch toward him. The strike created compressed air that shot forward at high speed in his direction. He managed to evade, but the devastation left behind was immense. The trees behind them collapsed, and the entire area was flattened.

A powerful wind followed, as if a storm trailed behind the punch. It made them lose focus and even struggle to stand. Kang Yongjin, who seemed completely unaffected, followed up with a kick that directly struck one of them, eliminating him instantly.

Without pause, he unleashed another punch in one direction, the force of it making the space tremble. The blow struck two more participants at once, instantly eliminating them as well.

Seeing the situation turn from grim to hopeless, one of the participants shouted to the others,

"Escape! Escape!"

The moment he cried out, the others didn't wait any longer. They scattered in different directions in a desperate attempt to flee.

But Kang Yongjin had no intention of letting them go. The ground beneath his feet suddenly cracked, and in the next instant his figure vanished, leaving behind a crater where he had stepped. His body appeared above one of the fleeing participants, the man's back completely exposed. Kang Yongjin's elbow came crashing down.

Crack!

"Uwack!" the participant groaned as Kang Yongjin's elbow struck his spine. Although the barrier still protected him from a fatal blow, the sheer force of the attack caused intense pain. If this had been a real battle without protection, his spine would have broken instantly and his internal organs would have burst.

The participant disappeared, and Kang Yongjin did not pause for even a moment before pursuing the others. With his incredible speed and precise attacks, he "killed" them all before finally stopping.

Zander, watching it all, felt his spirit ignite and his competitive side burn. Kang Yongjin was the greatest hurdle he would have to overcome if he wanted to win the tournament, and he wondered if his sword techniques could defeat such a monster.

As he observed Kang Yongjin, he suddenly saw him turn his head in his direction. It seemed Kang Yongjin knew he was there, standing and watching. Zander couldn't help but smile behind his mask before deciding to move in another direction.

Kang Yongjin smirked and also chose a different path.

Not yet. It was not the time yet for their battle.

The round continued without incident. Zander encountered no further trouble for the rest of the time. At last, the two-hour time limit expired, and all remaining participants inside the secret realm were teleported out. The third phase for the Earl category had finally come to an end.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 741 - 741: The End of the First Day of Tournament

[1,531 words]

When Zander teleported out from the secret realm, the sky had already turned dark. However, the festive spirit of the spectators remained high as they had just witnessed an entertaining spectacle. Zander took a deep breath, and a moment later, a staff member came to him to retrieve his bracelet. After that, he moved further away to take a rest.

Although it lasted only two hours, he felt quite tired because of the intense fights inside the secret realm. The battles against some of the beasts were what truly drained him compared to when he faced an ambush from other participants. He had only a little time to replenish his energy before he had to search for the crystals.

The others looked at him with various expressions. Many showed admiration, some envy, and others even hatred. However, he ignored them and sat quietly farther away from the portal. The other participants also seemed to maintain their distance from him.

He decided to meditate to replenish his energy while also waiting for the announcement from Orlav.

After waiting for less than a minute, Orlav finally made an announcement.

"Alright, I will announce the result of the Earl category. The participants that passed are fewer than twenty. To be exact, only eighteen participants passed. Now, for the ranking of points from the lowest to the highest. In eighteenth place is Wilhem Droze with three hundred forty points, in seventeenth..." Orlav continued announcing the ranks until finally reaching the top two.

"For second place." Orlav glanced at Kang Yongjin and Zander for a moment before continuing. "The second place is Kang Yongjin with one thousand one hundred fifty points. And lastly, the first place is Mister Z with one thousand two hundred points." Orlav then rolled up the scroll.

"Congratulations to all of the participants who passed to the next stage, which will be held tomorrow. Remember, do not be late for tomorrow's event, or you will be disqualified," he added.

"Wow, the competition is quite tight, with first and second place having only a small gap in their points," one of the spectators commented.

"Well, they are truly strong and dared to challenge the powerful beasts guarding the yellow crystals nearby," another answered.

Zander smiled as he secured first place in this phase. Still, the most important event was tomorrow, when he might finally have the chance to meet Kang Yongjin.

The tournament then continued to the last category. Although the sky outside was already dark, the world inside the secret realm remained bright, with sunlight illuminating the entire realm. The contrast truly made the secret realm and the outside world seem like separate worlds with different suns.

The Marquess stage was no less tense compared to the Earl stage. In fact, it was much more chaotic and intense. With their stronger cultivation and greater experience, their battles were far more devastating yet also more balanced. There were no overpowered figures in the Marquess stage like Zander or Kang Yongjin.

All of them were equally powerful, and their clashes became the most entertaining when the time was nearly up. It was also clear that these cultivators were not using their full strength. Everyone knew that the participants were saving their true power for tomorrow's event.

After two hours passed and the Marquess stage challenge came to an end, thirty-two participants had passed. Once Orlav finished announcing the names of those who advanced, the first day of the tournament finally came to a close. Tomorrow would be far more interesting and intense, with battles in a one-on-one format.

"Alright, ladies and gentlemen, that's it for today's tournament. We hope you will return tomorrow to watch the battles of the talents who have made it this far. I'm sure you must be as excited as I am, since I also can't wait to see the true abilities of these talents," Orlav said with excitement.

"I, Orlav, on behalf of all the officials of the tournament, thank you for your enthusiasm and cooperation. See you tomorrow!"

After that, many spectators and participants began leaving the stadium.

Aldrian and his family also left the stadium, intending to stay in the city for the night. A residence had been specially reserved for them whenever they chose to remain in the city, located in the exclusive district where a manor was prepared for his imperial household.

Although Aldrian could have simply slept in the stadium, since they provided the facilities there, he thought it would be better to stay in the special residence designated for him and his family in the city. Moreover, they could also take a closer look at the newly built city during the journey from the stadium to the special manor.

Aldrian and his family rode in a carriage, escorted by a convoy of troops as they left the stadium.

"Today was quite exciting and intense. Tomorrow will be even more festive, as it is the last day of the tournament and the format everyone has been waiting for," Irene commented.

"For the first edition, this tournament has been both exciting and truly intense. Unfortunately, it only lasts for two days. Still, with rewards of this level, the participants will give their best to win, which makes the competition all the more intense," Aldrey said.

"Well, this is just the first edition. We can develop it further in the next one and make it much more exciting, with greater challenges and a longer duration. This first tournament could be seen as a testing ground for future events," Aldrian said with a smile.

Fortunately, there had been no problems today, and the tournament proceeded according to their initial plans and expectations. From the experience gained here, they could make the next tournament even more colorful and on a grander scale.

As Aldrian and his family continued their journey to the special manor, he suddenly received an incoming voice transmission.

"Master, my apologies for disturbing you, but I have something to discuss. Could I meet you? I am also in this city with some of my men," the voice belonged to Vars.

Aldrian raised his eyebrows, wondering what Vars wanted to discuss that required meeting in person. He spread his domain sense, scanning the entire city for Vars, and after a few moments, he finally located him. Yet, during his sweep, he also noticed a few people who caught his interest.

Still, he set that aside for now. What Vars wanted came first.

"Look for a private place and wait for me there. I will come to you once you've found one," Aldrian ordered.

At this moment, Vars was still blending into the bustling streets, accompanied by some of his men nearby.

"Yes, Master," Vars replied before cutting off the connection.

No one around Aldrian realized he had just communicated with Vars, since he displayed no outward sign and the exchange was swift.

More than fifteen minutes later, Vars's voice returned.

"Master, I've reserved a private room at the Veryon Teahouse, in the room—"

"I already know where you are. Wait there," Aldrian interrupted before Vars could finish.

The sudden reply left Vars stunned.

A few minutes later, Aldrian finally arrived at the special manor prepared for the imperial family in this city. The manor was truly vast, located in a secluded part of the city. Besides the reason of security, its placement also ensured a serene atmosphere, allowing Aldrian and his family to feel comfortable during their stay.

After Aldrian stepped down from the carriage, he and his family were instantly greeted by the head butler of the manor and a line of maids.

"To the brightest star and eternal light, we greet Your Majesty and all the members of the imperial family," the head butler, a middle-aged man with a moustache, said as he knelt, with the maids following his example.

Aldrian gave a slight nod. "At ease," he said, prompting the head butler to rise, though he bowed again respectfully to Aldrian.

"Once again, welcome, Your Majesty. I am Ilsak Tyron, the head butler of this manor, ready to serve Your Majesty and the imperial family to the best of my ability," the butler said before straightening his posture.

Aldrian smiled faintly. "Alright, Butler Ilsak. I would like you to attend to my family first and show them their rooms. As for me, I have somewhere to go. I will return later."

At those words, the others raised their eyebrows, while Butler Ilsak stunned for a moment. Still, he lowered his head slightly and replied, "As you command, Your Majesty."

Aldrian nodded and looked at the others with a smile. "You can rest first. I'll return later after I finish my business."

The others wondered where Aldrian intended to go, especially Sylphia and Baek Jimin. However, they chose not to cling to him for now. They knew he would tell them later, so they only nodded.

"Mhm, be careful, dear," Sylphia said. Although she did not know where he was going, it was her way of showing concern.

Aldrian simply smiled, nodded, and then suddenly disappeared.

Inside a private room of one of the city's luxurious teahouses, Vars was already waiting with drinks on the table. His expression was anxious, and his body seemed restless.

As he continued waiting for Aldrian, he nearly jumped out of his seat when Aldrian suddenly appeared beside the table, and taking the vacant seat across from him.

Shaken by the sudden arrival, Vars quickly stood up and bowed.

"Master!"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 742 - 742: Vars's Plea

[1,571 words]

"At ease. So, what is it that you want to discuss with me, since we had to meet with each other?" Aldrian asked as he picked up the cup of tea already prepared on the table in front of him. He sipped it while looking at Vars, who seemed nervous and restless.

After a few seconds of hesitation, Vars suddenly kowtowed to Aldrian.

"Master, please let me join your empire!" he shouted, which made Aldrian raise his eyebrows in surprise. He then smiled, finding this amusing, and placed the cup of tea back on the table.

"What makes you suddenly want to join me? Does that mean you have finally chosen to betray your family entirely? Is it because of the group from the Barevisk family that came to this continent?" he asked.

When he spread his domain's sense earlier and scanned the entire city, he also found a group of cultivators from the Barevisk family. He knew it because, from what he had read in the system, they used the same cultivation technique, and one of the group members had the surname Barevisk in their name.

Vars was stunned that his master already knew about his family's envoy arriving on the continent. But then he was not truly surprised, as his master's ability was beyond his comprehension, and it seemed he might really know everything that happened and everyone within the continent.

Vars took a deep breath and nodded before taking a seat again.

"Yes, master, or well, mostly because of that. No offense, master, but to be honest, my men and I truly have no other choice. For the last few days, we have been trying to avoid the Barevisk family's envoy, which is actually led by the patriarch's niece. As you know, master, if we meet with them, then sooner or later they will find out that something is wrong with us—no, even at this moment, I believe they might already know something is amiss."

"With them realizing that we are no longer truly loyal to them, we have basically made the entire family our enemy. Their power is immense, and they will surely pursue us if they consider us to have betrayed them."

"So, after much consideration and discussion with my men, we decided the most logical choice was to take your side, master." Vars nervously looked at Aldrian's calm expression.

"So please, master, I beseech you to take me and my men into your empire. We will work hard for your cause, for we still hold value that you could make use of. I know you lack manpower in the Mortal Transition Realm, and we will gladly become your support. So I hope you could grant my plea." He implored, suddenly kowtowing to Aldrian beside the table.

Aldrian continued to look at him without saying anything, but he understood the full picture of why Vars had finally made this decision.

The slave seal, the Everlasting Demonic Follower, was the reason their choice was truly limited to this path.

With the Everlasting Demonic Follower still embedded in their souls, Vars and the others could not give anything to the Barevisk family that might harm him and his empire. If they provided false information or anything that gave advantage to Aldrian, it would be no different from betraying the family, and sooner or later they would realize it and brand them as traitors.

The fate of traitors in such a family would never be good, and without protection or backing, they would spend their entire lives being pursued. Aldrian could imagine the Barevisk family, one of the strongest families in the Akares Star, would never allow traitors to go unpunished, even if they escaped to another part of the first heaven.

Vars and his men also could not commit suicide or kill each other because the slave seal prevented them. Aldrian had set that rule so they could not end their own lives, forcing them to remain bound to him, which in the end left them with only one choice—to fully join his empire.

By joining his empire, they would gain protection, and his reputation alone was enough to make the Barevisk family cautious about recklessly attempting to take them back. Vars, in his desperation, also tried to prove his worth, something Aldrian understood.

Vars worried that Aldrian might not truly need him and would simply let the Barevisk family capture him.

But what if Vars and his men chose another path? What if they sought out other powers to serve, or secluded themselves to escape both Aldrian and the Barevisk family's reach?

That would be a foolish move, as there was no way anyone would accept them, especially since they came from the Barevisk family. No one would willingly invite unnecessary trouble by making an enemy of them. The benefit would be far less than what those powers would lose just by taking them in.

And once again, even if someone did take them in, there would be no way to sever Aldrian's influence over them because of the Everlasting Demonic Follower.

Aldrian could not help but smile slightly, for what Vars said was true. He had already been considering taking in more manpower to strengthen the weak points of his empire. At this moment, the empire lacked cultivators in the Mortal Transition Realm.

With the influx of outsiders, this shortage was limiting their standard procedures in case an issue arose that involved cultivators of that realm. The cultivators from the Barisan Continent were not strong enough to handle such problems on their own without Aldrian's presence.

With someone like Vars and his men, the Barisan Continent would gain the strength needed to deal with these matters if any arose during a time when he was absent from the empire.

'I may as well use this chance to shape my own imperial force,' Aldrian thought. He remembered Sylphia's suggestion and knew this might be the right time.

Vars was still kowtowing, not moving an inch as he waited for Aldrian's answer.

After a few seconds—

"Alright, I'll take you in."

Hearing Aldrian's words, Vars raised his head to see Aldrian looking at him with a slight smile. He instantly slammed his head to the floor.

"Thank you, master, for your generosity. I will surely not let you down," he shouted.

"Rise," Aldrian said, and Vars obeyed.

"Although I am taking you in, I will not release my seal on you or any of your men until I believe all of you have earned the trust of me or my family," Aldrian added.

"That is to be expected, master. I have no problem with it. I will work hard to gain the trust of you and your family," Vars answered.

Aldrian nodded. "So, while we are here discussing the matter of your fate and your family, I want to ask about the envoy sent by the Barevisk family."

Vars then took his seat and said to Aldrian, "Please ask, master. I will gladly answer."

"The woman named Ilona Barevisk, is she the one you called the patriarch's niece?"

Vars nodded. "Yes, master, she is the one."

He thought that since Aldrian already knew about the Barevisk family's presence on the continent, it was natural for him to investigate their identity, so he was not surprised. What confused him, however, was why his master asked if she was truly the patriarch's niece, because that was something he believed Aldrian would already know from his investigation.

Still, he did not dwell on it.

Aldrian nodded again. "If I were to do something to her, would the patriarch of the Barevisk family feel rage, or be affected in any way?"

Vars was stunned, then his eyes widened. With Aldrian asking such a question, it was clear he would likely begin making his move against the Barevisk family based on his answer. Vars's heart trembled as the family he had served for most of his life was about to face the most dangerous tribulation they had ever known.

Aldrian smiled as he looked at Vars.

"Do you still hold lingering feelings for the family you have served for so long?" he asked, which made Vars's heart turn cold. He instantly lowered his head.

"No, master. It is only that I can lament their fate for offending you. I would not dare to harbor any lingering feelings toward your enemy," he said.

Aldrian kept smiling as he picked up the cup of tea from the table.

"You don't have to be so tense. I understand that letting go of lingering feelings for the family you served most of your life is not easy. I am not angry or anything like that. Even though the Barevisk family holds ill intent toward me, my actions will only be directed at those who target me or my interests," he said before sipping his tea.

Vars raised his head and wiped the sweat dripping from his forehead. He was truly relieved that his master understood and was not the type of man with a volatile temperament. He took a deep breath before speaking.

"Well, if master wishes to do something to Miss Ilona, I don't think the patriarch would feel much about it, other than using it as a reason for the Barevisk family to establish hostility toward you or this empire. From the beginning, the patriarch and Miss Ilona's relationship has not been good."

Aldrian suddenly found this interesting and set the cup of tea back down.

"Why is that?" he asked.

"That is because the relationship between Miss Ilona's father, who is the patriarch's younger brother, and the patriarch himself has never been good. It has something to do with their past," Vars answered.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 743 - 743: Classic Situation That Can Be Taken Advantage Of

[1,667 words]

"The patriarch of the Barevisk family, Patriarch Munez Barevisk, has a little brother who at this moment serves as one of the elders of the Barevisk family. His name is Ferix Barevisk. Their relationship has not been good for a long time, or more precisely, it turned sour when their father, the past patriarch, chose the successor," Vars explained.

"I know it will sound classic, but just like how noble families' descendants fight for the title of successor, they have to use everything to make themselves chosen. They do not care if they harm each other, and the Barevisk family at that time was no different."

"At that time, the past patriarch actually leaned towards the little brother. He was a much more talented and genius cultivator compared to the older brother. However, because of one accident in the past, the decision of the past patriarch truly changed," Vars released a sigh.

"Sir Ferix suddenly could not advance any further in his cultivation after an accident, and his cultivation even slightly regressed. I do not know the details, but because of that, the past patriarch finally leaned towards the elder brother, and in the end, he chose him as the successor."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows. He could not help but think this was a classic scenario, and the only thing that came to his mind was that it had been caused by the current patriarch's machinations.

"Did the current patriarch cause his little brother to end up like that?" Aldrian asked.

"Well, that was what many people inside our family thought at that time. It was seen as a kind of conspiracy, because there was no way we could believe there was no foul play when the successor battle was ongoing and suddenly an accident occurred to one of the candidates. However, the problem was that there was no proof of the current patriarch's involvement in that accident," Vars answered.

"Of course, the past patriarch was also suspicious about it, but in the end he could not do much, as the current patriarch had great support and the little brother had suddenly run into problems in his cultivation. Even when our family called a famous physician of our star to check what had really happened to Sir Ferix, he could only conclude that Sir Ferix's dantian was damaged because of a mistake in his cultivation."

"The family already tried many ways to heal it, but nothing could cure Sir Ferix's condition. All the elixirs and medicines used to repair his dantian did not work, and the situation has not changed until today."

"After the current patriarch took the reins, he simply threw his little brother into one of the remote regions of our territory as an elder representing the Barevisk family. The current patriarch could not do much to Sir Ferix besides sending him far from the center of power and giving him a title, because Sir Ferix still had many followers, and their number was quite large. If the current patriarch did something excessive, there might be chaos, which was undesirable." Vars then stopped.

Aldrian thought for a moment and finally asked, "If that is the case, then in your opinion, why would Patriarch Barevisk send an envoy led by people from a faction that opposed him to represent the family on this continent? It is his niece, whose father was likely harmed by him. Does that not seem strange? Also, does she have any status inside the family?"

Vars thought for a moment, then shook his head.

"This is also what confuses me, master. If the patriarch wanted to build a good connection with you, then he would have sent someone he trusted the most, not someone from the opposing side. However, because of the patriarch's dubious intent toward master all this time, I truly do not know what he was thinking by sending his niece on this mission," he said.

"As for her status, Miss Ilona is one of the guardian pavilion masters of the family. Although from the outside there seems to be nothing wrong with this, in truth the current patriarch still does not want to loosen his grip over his little brother."

"To prevent any rebellion, so he chose his little brother's daughter as one of the pavilion masters. Although the current patriarch gave her a position, in fact he treats her as a hostage kept close to him."

"Sir Ferix also could not do anything when his daughter was chosen, because if either she or he refused, it would be seen as an act of rebellion, and public opinion would worsen as well. Moreover, the accident that befell Sir Ferix's wife made him much more passive, and he could only follow his older brother's orders."

"What happened to Sir Ferix's wife?" Aldrian asked.

"I don't know the details, but it seems she had an accident while traveling to an unknown location with a group of cultivators. When she returned, she had already fallen into a coma, and most of her group's members were dead. Even to this day, she still has not awakened," Vars replied.

Aldrian nodded in understanding. But then he could not help but smile. It seemed he had found something he could take advantage of. If he played it right, he might gain a proxy in the Akares star and cut one of the Valroy family's powers.

Aldrian looked at Vars for a moment and spoke.

"Why don't you take advantage of the situation and meet with her? She does not have a good relationship with the patriarch, and you could persuade her to join hands with me in taking revenge. You could even explain your circumstances to her," he said. But Vars shook his head in response.

"That would be too risky, master. I don't know how she would react if she knew my circumstances, or her opinion about you. Moreover, I don't have any assurance from master that I won't be abandoned in the future before I truly join master's empire," he added with some embarrassment.

Aldrian nodded. "That's true." He then picked up the teacup and took one last sip before setting it down.

"Alright, I think I've heard enough. For the rest, I will meet with her directly. There may be details she knows that you do not," he said, which made Vars raise his eyebrows.

"You will meet with her right now, master?"

Aldrian responded with a nod. "Anyway, I will go first. The day after tomorrow, I will call you to officially accept you all into my forces. There will be another group besides yours joining as well.

"You can tell your men about it," he added.

Vars nodded in response. "Yes, master, I will tell them."

"Good. Then see you two days later," Aldrian said before disappearing.

After he vanished, Vars slumped back against his seat and let out a sigh of relief. Fortunately, his master had truly decided to take him in, and his greatest worry had been resolved just like that. Still, he could not help but think about the fate of the Barevisk family in the days to come.

He could only hope that there would not be news of the destruction of one of the greatest noble families in the Akares star in the future.

Inside one of the rooms of a luxurious inn in Caelistis City, a beautiful woman sat in her seat with a table in front of her, gazing out through the open window. Beyond the window lay the breathtaking scenery of the city, with the glimmer of stars scattered across the night sky.

She wore a black nightgown that accentuated her alluring figure. Her long black hair, swept by the cool night wind drifting in from the window, added another layer to her beauty.

Holding a glass of wine in her hand, she seemed lost in thought, a faint look of confusion crossing her face. She let out a quiet sigh and murmured to herself.

"What should I do now?"

"Why don't we have a conversation?"

The sudden voice of an unknown man from behind her startled her to the core. Without even looking to see who it was, she immediately prepared to strike. Whoever this intruder was, he had appeared inside her room without her detecting a single trace!

But then she was shocked once again as she realized she could not move her body! She tried to force herself, but it was futile, her body felt as if it were bound by an unseen force, unable to move even an inch!

However, she quickly understood what had happened.

'Space laws... he locked me using space laws!'

Panic rose within her as she tried to speak, only to discover that even her lips would not move. Her heart turned cold as she realized she could do nothing but shift her eyes.

In that instant, she understood. Whoever stood behind her was far stronger than her, by many times.

As panic continued to grip her, she heard footsteps approaching from behind. Her heartbeat quickened. At this moment, she felt truly vulnerable, powerless to do anything but wait for the man to reveal himself.

After a few moments, from the corner of her vision she finally caught sight of a figure. Since her head was fixed slightly lowered, even when she forced her eyes upward she still could not see the man's face. She watched as he pulled the vacant seat in front of her, turned it toward her, and finally sat down.

Only then, when his face entered her line of sight, did she see him clearly. The instant his reflection appeared in her eyes, she was struck with shock.

The man before her was the one spoken of everywhere, hailed as the most powerful cultivator to ever exist. His very existence was a deterrent, a presence that no one dared to test lightly.

The man her family seemed to harbor ill intent toward... and the man she wanted most to avoid at this very moment.

'Aldrian the Great!' she screamed within her mind.

She could not comprehend how this man had appeared here, seemingly for her specifically. Did he come because he somehow knew of her family's schemes?

If that was the case, then she might truly die here tonight.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 744 - 744: Hatred

[1,648 words]

Aldrian showed his smile as he kept looking at her face. Ilona, who could clearly see his expression, tensed, and a coldness ran through her because she truly couldn't do anything. Moreover, Aldrian's blue eyes, which seemed to shine under the dim light of the room, made her unsettled.

Although those eyes were truly beautiful, at this moment she did not share that opinion. What she saw were the eyes that would become the last thing she would see before she died.

She really did not understand why Aldrian the Great had come to her. Did he already know that she was from the Barevisk family, and because of that he came to her? Did he already know that the Barevisk family seemed to harbor ill intent toward him, so he came here to interrogate her? Did he intend to kill her?

'No, I still have something to do before I die!' she thought in panic.

"Miss Ilona, my visit here is only for conversation, and I don't intend to kill you. Because if I did have that intent, you would already be dead before you realized it," Aldrian said, which stunned Ilona, though she still felt the chill.

She did not think much about how he could know her name. What he said was also the truth, and if he wanted her dead, she would already be dead. Finally, she experiences for herself the gap of power between her and Aldrian.

All this time, she had only heard about his reputation and strength, a strength that could even battle an immortal. She actually still felt a little doubt in her heart because of how absurd his ability and power were.

However, the stories from many people from this star could not simply be discarded or ignored. At this moment, when she could not do anything in front of him, she finally tested a part of his power. Was this young man an existence at the peak pseudo immortal stage? Many said he was only at the low pseudo immortal establishment stage, which for her was truly absurd.

"I will release my space lock on you, and I hope we can converse with courtesy, like civilized people. I will not kill you, but the way I treat you in the future will be based on the result of our conversation," Aldrian said before he finally released the spatial lock from Ilona.

The moment the spatial lock was released, she could finally move her body again, which made her gasp for breath as she looked at herself. After making sure she could move all parts of her body normally, she looked at Aldrian again with a wary expression.

Although inside she felt tense, she still braved herself to open her lips.

"So what is it that brings His Majesty, the great emperor of this empire, to visit my humble self for a conversation? We have never met each other, and I don't think I have anything that would grant Your Majesty reason to visit me personally," Ilona asked carefully.

Aldrian still showed his smile as he finally answered.

"Well, we have never met each other, Miss Ilona, but your family is the one that 'voluntarily' came to me and even did something that could potentially endanger my empire. So how could I not visit you, the envoy from that family? You are wrong to think you have nothing that would grant me reason for a personal visit. It is precisely because you have it that I came to you personally."

Ilona's heart skipped a beat, and a coldness spread through her again. As she had guessed, this young emperor already knew about her family's dubious actions against him. Her mind quickly turned to one of the possibilities that had already formed within her thoughts since earlier.

Aldrian must have already known about the Barevisk family's activities from Elder Vars's group that infiltrated the continent.

If that was the case, then something had happened to them, and this emperor was truly playing with them! He must have done something to Elder Vars's group, and all the while her family, communicating with Elder Vars, must have been under the watch of Aldrian the Great.

Without anyone realizing it, her family and maybe even the Valroy family, had already been played into the palm of his hand.

She wanted to deny everything that came from Aldrian's lips, but after a quick consideration, she decided against it. He had said that the way he treated her would depend on the result of their conversation. If he already seemed to know about her family's actions and she still denied it, then she would be insulting his intellect.

She tried to bury her anxiousness and keep her composure as she released a long breath.

"Good choice, because if you denied what I said then my opinion of you would drop, and I don't have much patience for those who come from a family that harbors ill intent toward me and my empire," Aldrian suddenly said, which made her freeze inside. Could he read her mind or something?

Terrifying, truly terrifying!

"Uhm, what would Your Majesty like to converse about? Just to be clear, I am only here as an envoy from the Barevisk family under the order of the patriarch. We hope to build a relationship with Your Majesty, but I don't really know much about what the patriarch is planning," Ilona said.

Aldrian nodded. "I expected as much. After all, I heard that you don't have a good relationship with the current patriarch of the Barevisk family."

Ilona was stunned. This man knew the true nature of her relationship with the patriarch? Once again, her mind turned toward Elder Vars. Gathering her courage, she finally asked him,

"Your Majesty, did you do something to Elder Vars? I mean the group from the Barevisk family that came to this continent more than a month ago."

Aldrian still smiled. "Of course I know him and his men. I already made them my slaves, and they keep feeding your family the information that I approve for them to deliver, which your family then spreads across the stars. Do you think he could have entered this continent without me knowing?"

Hearing his answer, Ilona felt her heart turn cold.

'His slaves? As expected, something happened to Elder Vars's group, which allowed them to send all of that information unhindered. To think all of them had already fallen into this man's hand! Then I have to assume that this man already knows many things about us, even some of our secrets,' she thought.

'Doesn't that mean I could end up like them? Slaved by this man?'

The moment this thought appeared, she wanted to escape, but she knew there was no way she could. Panic gripped her, and as a woman, the word slave was something she feared.

Slave and woman in the same sentence was the fate she truly hoped never to experience. Most slave women suffered a fate worse than death, and she had already seen many examples of it throughout her life. She did not want to experience that kind of fate!

Aldrian simply let her mind turn in turmoil with her own thoughts and imagination, which was quite amusing for him. She kept silent, and after a few seconds, Aldrian finally opened his lips again.

"Miss Ilona, what do you think about the current patriarch of your family? Although I heard that you don't have a good relationship with him, just how bad is it? I want to know if you hold any good intention toward that man."

Hearing that, the panic and coldness inside her heart suddenly stopped. Her tense expression shifted into a frown, and then into anger. Her feelings changed from fear and despair to one full of rage. The flame of hatred raging inside her heart burned away every other emotion.

Aldrian, sensing it, smiled inwardly.

'Her hatred and rage are truly immense. With this kind of intensity, I must commend this woman for still being able to hold herself back from attacking, or at least attempting to kill, the patriarch,' he thought to himself.

'Well, this will be much easier then.'

At this moment, Ilona gritted her teeth as her expression shifted to one of restrained fury.

"Do I have any bit of good intention toward that bastard?! I would rather die! How could I have good intention toward the person who made my father's life miserable and even drove my mother into a coma?" She glared at Aldrian fiercely.

"Your Majesty asked how bad my relationship is with that bastard? I want him dead! No, I want him to suffer the same torment my father endured all his life. I want to watch him grovel, I want him to live in humiliation! I wish to see him under my feet, dying a dog's death!"

She stopped, her eyes still burning with ferocity, unwavering as she kept her gaze locked on him. Aldrian's blue eyes met hers, seeing the hatred that filled them, a hatred so strong it seemed it could set her ablaze in her path of revenge against the patriarch.

However, after a few seconds of silence, Ilona seemed to realize what she had just done. She drew a deep breath before lowering her head.

"My apologies, Your Majesty, but I truly couldn't control myself. If you wish to punish me for it, I am ready."

There was no fear or hesitation in her heart or words. It was much different from earlier, when she had felt fear and despair in front of a man she knew she could not escape. Her rage had truly neutralized all of those negative feelings.

She kept her posture like that until she heard Aldrian's voice again.

"I already know about your father and mother's condition. What if I told you that I could heal them completely, and even grant them additional benefits?"

Hearing that, Ilona's eyes and heart trembled. She instantly raised her head, looking at Aldrian with trembling eyes, and couldn't help but ask,

"Is Your Majesty serious? Do you truly have a way to heal my parents?"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 745 - 745: The Reason for Helping

[1,599 words]

Responding to Ilona's question, Aldrian just nodded. This made her heart want to burst with happiness, but then, as if the bubble popped, she was brought back to the ground again. She suppressed her happiness as she took a deep breath and looked at Aldrian, frowning.

"Your Majesty, how can you be so sure you could heal my parents? Even if you heard about their condition from Elder Vars, I don't think you could diagnose what happened to them just from his explanation. My parents—especially my father's condition—is peculiar, which even made the famous physician confused," she said.

"Moreover, why do you want to help me, or more specifically, my parents, who come from a family that has bad intent toward you or your empire?"

Aldrian kept his smile.

"Before I answer your question, I would like to ask something about the current condition of the Barevisk family, because my answer has something to do with it," he said, which was met with a nod from Ilona.

"I heard that the Barevisk family has a strong connection to the Valroy family and is even said to be one of their vassal families. From what I know, the movements of the Barevisk family regarding me and the Barisan continent are tightly decided by the Valroy family," he continued.

"To be honest, at this moment, the one I suspect the most is the Valroy family, which might be the true mastermind behind the scenes. Your family has allowed themselves to be ordered by the Valroy family, which leads me to my question, do you have any opposition faction inside the family regarding this matter? I mean, those who do not agree with how the Valroy family is controlling your family like a puppet."

Ilona frowned as she felt slight irritation at how the Barevisk family had become, but then she took a deep breath to calm herself.

"Yes, Your Majesty, of course there is an opposition faction. They are mostly the past loyalists of my father when he was still a candidate for the position of patriarch. They are also dissatisfied with the current decisions made by the patriarch, but their voice is too small and does not really change anything. The influence of the current patriarch is too strong and, with the support of the Valroy family, he is basically unshakable," she explained.

"However, I must clarify something, Your Majesty. My family has not always been a vassal of the Valroy family. That kind of impression has only been built since the current patriarch took the reins of the family."

Aldrian raised his eyebrows. This was something new to him.

"Tell me more about it," he said.

Ilona nodded. "Well, this is a story from before I was born, back in the time of the past patriarch, my grandfather. Actually, in the past, our family was already strong on its own and did not need to be under any other family. However, the moment the current patriarch took the reins, the policies of the family suddenly had to fall in line with those of the Valroy family."

"What the Valroy family asked, my family, or more specifically the patriarch obeyed, and even his supporters simply followed his decisions. The voices of opposition grew smaller as the current patriarch and his faction gained so much power that the opposition no longer had any real influence."

"As time passed, because of the current patriarch's policies that turned our family into something like a lapdog of the Valroy family, the impression of being their vassal family became more and more ingrained. Until today, the reputation of the Barevisk family remains stained as nothing more than a vassal of the Valroy family."

Ilona gritted her teeth. "That bastard must have had secret dealings with the Valroy family to make our family like this. Many in the opposition suspect that the current patriarch was already directly supported by the Valroy family back when he was still a candidate, but we have no proof, which leaves it as nothing more than a story of conspiracy."

Aldrian nodded. "I see. From your explanation, your family is not really a lost cause, and it could still be salvaged," he said.

Ilona looked at Aldrian in confusion. "What do you mean, Your Majesty?"

He looked at her calmly. "I want the opposition faction—more specifically, your father to replace the current patriarch. I want him to lead the Barevisk family and detach your family from the Valroy family's influence."

Ilona's eyes widened in shock at Aldrian's words. To make her father the patriarch, replacing the current one?

"Excuse me?" she asked unconsciously, which made Aldrian repeat himself.

"I want your father to take the position of patriarch, replace the current one, and erase any trace of Valroy's influence from your family."

Ilona now knew this man was serious, and she could not help but ask him,

"My apologies, Your Majesty. Let's put aside the matter of whether you can really heal my father. At this moment, my father has no real power or influence anywhere near that of the current patriarch. How could he possibly withstand the patriarch's forces? I can only imagine we would be barraged from all sides if we tried to take the seat of patriarch by force."

"Not to mention, my father's cultivation is truly lacking compared to the current patriarch and even some of the elders or grand elders. There is no way we could seize the position of patriarch with his strength, even with the support of the other opposition members."

Hearing her concern, Aldrian's expression did not change.

"If you lack the strength within your family, then seek support from outside it," he said.

Ilona kept frowning. "Asking for outside help? Even if my father or anyone in the opposition faction agreed, there is no one who would join hands with him under the current circumstances. Who would dare meddle in the problems of the Barevisk family, especially with the Valroy family backing the current patriarch? That alone ensures no one would want to help us. So I don't think that is even an option, Your Majesty," she said, slightly shaking her head.

Aldrian could not help but show a slight smile.

"Are you sure there is no one who would help you?" he asked, which made Ilona frown in confusion. She did not really understand why he was asking this, but then she froze as realization struck her. Her eyes widened slightly at what Aldrian was implying.

"Your Majesty, do you mean... do you mean you want to support us in seizing the patriarch's position?" she asked in astonishment.

Aldrian only smiled, but that alone was enough of an answer for her—and it shocked her even more.

"So, to answer your earlier question about why I want to help your parents—this is the reason. I need someone to replace the current patriarch, who seems far too close to the Valroy family, with someone of more integrity and neutrality. This is also to prevent me from having to shed excessive blood within your family, which could lead to its destruction," Aldrian said.

Ilona's heart trembled, but then another thought came to her mind, and she could not help but ask him,

"Your Majesty, I know you would not do all this out of pure generosity. You must have something in mind. My guess is... do you intend to use my father as your proxy in the Akares Star? To use the Barevisk family as your proxy?"

"Well, that is correct. But I do not intend to use the Barevisk family like a vassal that I constantly order around. What I need is a family I can count on if something arises from the Akares Star. I also want to reduce the Valroy family's influence there. The Valroys are the ones moving in the background, always using the Barevisk family to provoke me. So why not have the Barevisk family leave them?" Aldrian replied.

Ilona contemplated Aldrian's answer. Although she disliked the idea of seeking outside help to seize the patriarch's seat, there was not much they could do with their own power. The current patriarch was strong, not only in cultivation but also in influence, and with his faction behind him, he was practically unshakable.

However, she set aside the matter of seizing the patriarch's seat for the moment and returned to what weighed most on her heart, her parents. If Aldrian truly could heal them, then it would be the best outcome. She could already imagine her father returning the favor, even serving as Aldrian's proxy.

Ilona bit her lip. If this was the only way for her parents to be healed, and in the end, for that bastard to face his karma, then she would take it.

Ilona then looked at Aldrian.

"Then what is your plan, Your Majesty? You don't intend to just barge into the Barevisk family manor and kill the current patriarch, right? If you do so without any provocation, the other powers would look at you warily, and it would greatly affect your image."

"Well, to be honest, that is exactly what I planned, to barge into your family and punish those who dared to harm my interests and my empire," Aldrian said casually, which made Ilona's eyes widen in shock.

"Are you serious, Your Majesty?" she asked in astonishment. "Even if you came to them with the intent of reciprocating their dubious actions against you, all of that happened behind the scenes. Others will not see it positively. They will only see you as invading another power unprovoked."

"Of course I am serious. And as for the reason I can show to the world..." Aldrian pointed at her. "You will be a good reason—one I can take advantage of to get to those people."

Ilona blinked several times in confusion.

"Me?"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 746 - 746: The Last Day of the Tournament

[1,653 words]

"Me?" Ilona asked in confusion.

Aldrian nodded. "Yes, you. Now I want to ask, why did the patriarch send you, the one he knows is from the side that hates you, here as envoy?"

Ilona was stunned, but then she answered. "To be honest, that was also my question at first. But after I thought it through, I think I can guess what is in that bastard's mind."

"I suppose he sent someone he could discard if something went wrong with this trip. He already seemed to sense that something was wrong with Elder Vars, so he sent me to test the waters. If something went wrong and something happened to me, he would not lose anything, and he could even use this event as proof that their actions all this time were already known to Your Majesty, which would then allow them to look for a way to solve it."

"They might even use that as a reason to make Your Majesty look bad in front of the other powers in the future. Basically, they are trying to smear your image. This also will incite my father's animosity toward Your Majesty, which in the end will only benefit the current patriarch."

"However, if nothing happens to me, then they will take advantage of the connection and look for any hole they could exploit for their future plans."

Aldrian admired her analysis. She was smart, and what she said was quite the same as what he had in mind. After thinking it over, the most likely reason the patriarch sent her to lead the envoy was to test the waters. Munez Barevisk must have already sensed something strange with Vars's group and sent Ilona to see if there truly was something wrong.

Munez must have thought that if their past actions had already been discovered, then he, as the emperor of this continent, would do something to her. She was basically a pawn that could be sacrificed.

"You are truly smart, and yes, that is what I have in mind as well. Your patriarch must have already sensed that something is wrong, and that is why he sent you. Are the

members of your group all from your side? Is there anyone who could be an eye or ear for the patriarch?" Aldrian asked.

Ilona shook her head. "I don't think there is a spy for the patriarch in my group. I chose the members myself, and from what I know, none of them are affiliated with the patriarch or his faction. All of them belong to the opposition faction."

"Is that so? But in my opinion, Munez must still have someone to observe what you do here, even if it is only one person. There is no way he would let you act without someone watching."

Hearing that, Ilona frowned. What he said made sense. Was there really a spy within her group?

"Anyway, that problem can be taken care of later. Just don't think about it too much, or your movements might look suspicious to the spy. Act as normal, and I will handle the spy problem later. With my ability, it will be faster that way," Aldrian said.

He then stood up from his seat. "In any case, we can discuss this matter more thoroughly another time. You may visit my palace in the future after the tournament ends. It is already quite late, and it is not proper for a man and woman to be in the same room at this hour."

Hearing that, Ilona couldn't help but show a slight smile. How could he say that when he was the one who had come to her first? But then she suddenly asked, "Your Majesty, why do you think you can trust me with everything we have discussed just now? What if what I said is truth mixed with lies? What if what we have talked about instead reaches the patriarch?" She paused slightly before continuing.

"You did not place a seal or anything on me to ensure our discussion will not leak to others. You seem quite confident in me or believe in me enough to speak of such things with me. You seem certain that I would accept your help."

Aldrian showed a smile that made him even more charming. "With you asking that question, it is already proof that there is no lie in the information you have given me. I can also feel your hatred—hatred so strong that I want to give you a word of advice. Do not be too consumed by revenge, Miss Ilona. You might end up hurting yourself, and even the people you love."

"With hatred that deep, you will take any help that brings you closer to your goal, which is revenge. You would not be so stupid as to tell the person you hated most about our discussion. At the same time, it is in my interest to build a good relationship with the future Barevisk family. A good relationship is based on trust, and I trust that you and your family will choose wisely regarding everything we have discussed. And in return, you will trust in what I have told you."

Ilona was stunned, and before she could say anything, Aldrian spoke one last time.

"See you next time, Miss Ilona. Have a good night."

He then disappeared, leaving the lone beauty in the room. The wind from the open window swept through her long hair, only adding to her charm. Her face remained turned toward the spot where Aldrian had just stood, and after a few seconds, she released a long sigh.

"Father, Mother, I think I've found someone who could help all of us," she mumbled. Although she still did not know what kind of person Aldrian the Great truly was, her intuition told her that this was her greatest chance to achieve her goals and hopes.

That man with so many abilities would likely be able to cure her parents, and with his tremendous power, he could help her take revenge. She couldn't help but recall his handsome face, which brought a slight flush to her cheeks before she quickly sipped the wine in front of her.

He was truly a danger to any woman. His face and charm could draw women in without him doing anything at all.

'No wonder he is so popular among the women of this continent. Still so young, handsome, and—' She cut off her own thought and shook her head.

'What am I thinking?' She took another sip of wine and looked out at the night sky. Her heart felt more serene and relaxed than before, as if she could already see the light on the path ahead.

The next day, the last day of the tournament, the day that many had been waiting for, finally arrived. The stadium was already packed with people even before the tournament began. The battle format was what everyone always looked forward to, for it was the most entertaining part for them.

As the time drew nearer, the participants gathered beneath the arena, waiting for Orlav to call them. Zander glanced around at the other participants in his category.

In his opinion, there was no one who could be a tough opponent for him other than Kang Yongjin. However, he would not lower his guard. This was the final stage, and the other participants would give their all to win. He too would give his best, for he was so close to the winner's title. He only needed to be careful not to lose.

Zander then looked toward the balcony where Aldrian observed the tournament. Aldrian and his family had just arrived, and not long after, Orlav's voice echoed across the arena.

"Alright, all participants, you may enter the arena!"

After he said that, the participants stepped onto the arena. Zander took a deep breath, and his face beneath the mask grew solemn.

'I will win.'

The moment the participants set foot on the arena, the voices of the spectators grew louder with excitement. In fact, the number of spectators, both inside the stadium and gathered around it, had increased compared to yesterday. It was not surprising, since the final phase of the tournament was what people most wanted to see.

The atmosphere was already festive, and the time had finally come. Standing at the side of the arena, Orlav looked at Aldrian, who gave a small nod in response. Orlav then rose into the air above the arena and shouted for all to hear:

"Welcome to the day you have been waiting for, ladies and gentlemen! This is the day we will finally discover who is worthy to claim all the rewards, whose names will be written in the history of the tournament as the winners of the first Grand Barisan Tournament!"

"UWOO!" The spectators grew even more lively, and after a few moments, Orlav continued.

"Alright, alright! I know you can't wait for the third phase of the tournament and neither can I. So let's get started. I will now explain the rules for the third phase, which will be in a one-on-one battle format."

"Participants are forbidden from using talismans. As for artifacts, only those registered by the participants may be used, with a maximum of Heaven grade. Only offensive and defensive artifacts may be used and you are strictly forbidden from using sealing or curse artifacts."

"It is FORBIDDEN to kill other participants. Of course, injuries may happen, since no protective talismans are allowed. The winner of each round will be decided if the opponent surrenders, is incapacitated, or loses consciousness."

"I also reserve the right to stop the battle if I judge that there is excessive action against an opponent. Any participant who fails to follow these rules will be instantly eliminated."

"As for the drawing to determine each participant's opponent, it will be held shortly. So be ready for anyone you might face!"

As Orlav said this, several projectors appeared on the stadium's ceiling, showing the still-empty slots for the upcoming draw. Each projector displayed the categories separately.

"Alright, without further ado, let us begin the third phase!" Orlav shouted.

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 747 - 747: First Fight

[1,426 words]

The moment Orlav announced the opening of phase three of the tournament, the spectators shouted once again in excitement.

"Alright, for the battles later, as usual, we will start from the beginner stage first. The battles will be held one at a time, so the entire arena will be for the contestant's use. It will remain that way until the semifinals, before we move on to the next category. Once all of the categories have their finalists, we will proceed to the final rounds." Orlav explained as he looked at the participants, of which only 106 remained across all categories.

"Now, let's begin with drawing opponents." From his storage ring, Orlav took out a box with a hole on top of it and set it down not far from the participants.

"Beginner stage participants, you will pick a ball with a number inside this box. The number on your ball will decide your slot." The participants then approached Orlav, and one by one they took balls from inside the box. They looked at their number first before showing it to Orlav.

Each time Orlav saw the number, he shouted the name of the participant and their assigned slot.

"Erik Sachfield, number ten."

"Anthony Rugerio Deliva, number three."

"Zein..." Orlav continued announcing their slots until finally all of them were filled. The spectators who watched the draw were truly festive, especially some of the families of the contestants. The families, after knowing who their member would fight against, showed varied expressions.

Some were quite happy because they believed the opponent was much easier, while others felt solemn because the opponent their member would face was quite tough.

"Damn it, he will meet that kid Erik! It will be tough for him!"

"Yes! Not too heavy an opponent for the first fight. He'll likely win!"

"Damn, his opponent is a counter for his ability. I heard she comprehended two elements when she started her cultivation journey."

Those kinds of conversations could be heard among the families of the participants after seeing the results of the draw. For most observers, however, they did not care who faced who this time. What they wanted was to see a fight!

Because these participants were still in the beginner stage, they had not yet made their names, and not many people knew them. However, some of the participants came from famous noble families or sects, so the spectators held certain expectations for them.

After the results of the draw were shown, Orlav addressed all the participants.

"For all participants, please step down from the arena, except for the holders of numbers one and two, Ravin Redstone and Bodan Whiteblade."

All the participants obeyed and left the arena area, leaving two young men facing each other in the vast arena. All the projectors now focused on them.

One of them was a blonde-haired young man, while the other was brown-haired. Both of them were at the peak beginner stage, and each carried their own artifacts. The blonde-haired youth wielded an earth-grade sword, while the brown-haired one carried two earth-grade short blades strapped behind his back.

They faced each other from a distance of a hundred meters, their expressions solemn and focused, as if unwilling to miss even the slightest movement from the other. Orlav, watching the two, gave a nod and finally shouted,

"To the contestants on the arena, are you ready?!"

"I'm ready!"

"Ready!"

Both answered as they unsheathed their sword and blades.

Orlav glanced at them once more before declaring,

"The battle begins!"

The moment his words fell, the two contestants instantly dashed toward each other, and a moment later—

Tring!

Their artifacts clashed. Ravin's sword was blocked by Bodan's twin blades, which were in fact special blades forged from white iron, famed as one of the hardest materials on the continent. It was the signature weapon of the Whiteblade family, who chose white iron because it was abundant in their territory.

The spectators grew even more bustling the moment the two artifacts clashed. The participants did not remain in the same position for long, as they unleashed a series of their own movements. Ravin's swordplay was truly marvelous despite being at the beginner stage, while Bodan's blades were unpredictable even in the eyes of cultivators at the same realm.

Tink! Trank! Trink! Trink! Tang!

They exchanged countless clashes of their artifacts, and even while attacking or defending, they kept shifting their positions. From the very start, both gave their all, making the battle intensely fierce.

"Yeah! Keep pushing him! Don't give him any chance!"

"Bodan, don't be too reckless while attacking him!"

"Ravin, keep attacking! Don't give his twin blades a chance to counterattack!"

The family members of the two contestants shouted anything they could to help their fighters overcome the other.

After a few moments, Ravin suddenly pulled back, creating distance. A flame then appeared on his free hand, the one not holding his sword. He raised his palm toward Bodan, and from it, a flame shaped like a palm shot forward.

Bodan was not deterred by it. Instead, he dashed forward, intent on facing the flame technique head-on. Crossing his two blades, he unleashed a combined slash in the shape of an X. The flame palm that nearly reached him was instantly destroyed by the strike, leaving Ravin slightly stunned. But Ravin quickly used another trick, his sword suddenly became covered in flame.

He charged at Bodan, and the two clashed directly once more. The fire coating Ravin's sword began to take effect, as Bodan could feel the heat disrupting his senses and concentration. Ravin pressed his advantage, attacking relentlessly, and with each clash, sparks of flame scattered. Any of them could injure Bodan if they touched him.

Yet Bodan did not panic. He continued to block every strike effectively, refusing to yield. This persistence caused Ravin to frown as he kept up his assault. After a few moments,

he finally revealed another trick. In the midst of his relentless strikes, his free hand suddenly unleashed another flame palm.

Bodan was slightly caught off guard by the sudden attack from Ravin's other hand, and he instantly used one blade to slash through the flame. However, moving his arm to the side created a small opening at his chest, which Ravin immediately exploited. Covering his foot with flame, Ravin kicked Bodan square in the chest.

Unable to react in time, Bodan took the full force of the strike. His lungs burned with pain, and for a moment it felt as though they were on fire. Staggering back several steps, he nearly spat blood. Before he could regain his balance, Ravin was already upon him, thrusting his sword straight toward Bodan's chest.

However, before Ravin's sword could touch Bodan's body, Bodan suddenly dropped to the floor to evade the stab, causing the blade to pass harmlessly over his chest. Ravin's eyes widened, and a split second later his body was flung to the side as Bodan counterattacked with a sweeping kick.

Bodan's strike took Ravin's legs out from under him, sending him crashing to the ground.

'No, I'm in a dangerous position!' Ravin thought.

He quickly swept with his sword, and true enough, the moment he swung, one of Bodan's blades almost reached him. His sweep blocked the strike, but then another blade was already coming.

Before he could do anything, Bodan's other blade was already upon him, stopping at Ravin's neck, the edge close enough to graze his skin.

Ravin's eyes trembled as the blade hovered at his neck. He gritted his teeth, realizing just how careless he had been to fall into such a situation. After a brief silence, he exhaled and said,

"I lost."

The moment the words left his mouth, Orlav, acting as observer and referee, immediately announced the result.

"The first battle of this round is won by Bodan Whiteblade!"

The spectators erupted in excitement at the declaration. Although the battle was relatively short and quite simple, it had been entertaining enough. For a beginner stage fight, it was already intense and far above the usual level.

The speed and power of these two participants were truly different from normal beginner stage cultivators. Calling their battle one that had already reached the level of the low disciple stage was not an exaggeration.

Zander, who was observing the fight from the waiting area beside the arena reserved for participants, felt the battle was both intense and impressive.

After the result was announced, the two participants stepped down from the arena.

"Alright, we will continue with the next fight! Slot numbers three and four, Anthony Rugerio Deliva and Lauren Verito, please step onto the arena."

A few moments later, after both arrived on the stage, Orlav looked at them and asked the same question he had asked before the previous fight. "Are you ready?"

"I'm ready!"

"I'm ready!"

Both participants shouted in response.

"Then, the battle begins!"

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 748 - 748: The Lurking Danger?

[1,610 words]

The beginner stage third phase continued with raging battles in each round. The competition was quite intense as each of them showed their best to take down their opponents. The spectators were also entertained by the performance of the participants. At the very least, their performance did not bring shame to the Barisan continent in front of the outsiders.

Even for the outsiders, the talent shown in the continent was not inferior and even much higher compared to other continents or even stars. In fact, many outsiders started to consider the Barisan continent as one of the strongest in the future, with the potential these participants had shown since yesterday.

If cultivators at such a low level could display this much, then what about those with higher cultivation?

The number of geniuses was indeed quite large, and many began to wonder if there was a true secret within the continent that allowed it to give birth to so many talented cultivators.

If the Barisan continent had not been limited in the past and had possessed the same power as other continents, then with someone like Aldrian the Great leading its entire strength, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Barisan continent was the strongest continent in the Central Star Cluster.

Still, the future remained uncertain, as these talents and other cultivators from the Barisan continent needed time to catch up in cultivation with those from outside. For now, they had to rely on Aldrian the Great as both a deterrent force and the key factor that made external powers regard them with the same status as the other strong continents.

The battle of the beginner stage, which was less complex than the other categories, lasted for almost two hours before finally reaching the final. It was a relatively quick round for a tournament, as they lacked the stamina and complex techniques possessed by higher-level cultivators.

"Congratulations to Erik Sachfield and Sun Meilin for advancing as the finalists of the beginner stage. The finalists may take a break, as we will now move on to the other categories first," Orlav shouted, his voice met with excited cheers from the spectators.

The two finalists were a handsome young man with short black hair, who used a sword as his artifact, and a beautiful young woman with blue hair. At her waist hung a finely crafted sword, its pure white blade and scabbard giving the impression of a weapon forged from snow and ice.

The two of them looked at each other calmly, yet a blazing spirit of competition burned beneath their gazes. This was the final, and they were only a step away from the reward that would guarantee a smooth cultivation path in the future.

They left the arena as Orlav raised his voice again to announce the beginning of the next category.

"For the Disciple stage participants, you may now enter the arena and take the number balls from the box." The same box as before appeared in front of him. As earlier, each participant picked one ball, and Orlav announced the number on the ball along with the participant's slot. The spectators eagerly discussed the pairings and the possible outcomes of the battles.

However, among the spectators observing the tournament, there were some individuals who did not seem too interested in the matches themselves but instead focused on something else. In one of the VIP rooms, five figures—three men and two women—appeared to be enjoying the sight of the crowd, while one of them kept his gaze fixed on the arena where the draws were still taking place.

The one watching the arena, the strongest among them, was a man at the middle pseudo-immortal stage. His face remained expressionless, yet he sent a voice transmission to the others.

"How is the investigation going?"

"I have discovered some useful information, my lord. It might aid us in our mission. We could use it as a distraction, and with many of our assassins having arrived not long ago, I believe the success rate is quite high," one of the men replied.

"I have found many weaknesses in the target's security, as well as many parts we could take advantage of..." One by one they answered the leader, and after all of them gave their reports, one of the women offered her opinion.

"He seems full of openings we could take advantage of, but I don't think it is that simple. His ability is what truly worries me. I have a feeling that although the target and his family's safety appear full of gaps, it is more like a trap meant to lure anyone who dares to attack them directly."

"I also think the same. For an emperor, his security seems quite lax and full of holes. So I believe there are two possibilities here. Either the security is truly that poor, or the emperor is so confident in his strength that he knows he will remain safe even with such defenses. In my opinion, the second one is the more likely option," another man commented.

There was a silence after they shared their opinions. The leader seemed to be pondering something as he continued to observe the arena. From time to time, his gaze flicked toward the balcony where Aldrian sat, lingering only for a second before shifting elsewhere.

"I understand, and I also think the same," the leader finally said. "His lack of security feels more like confidence that nothing will happen, even with such obvious flaws. Moreover, the story of his attack ability that could reach the entire continent cannot be verified, as we have found no eyewitness who has directly seen the emperor use it."

"We do not know whether that power comes from a large-scale formation or from his own innate ability, which leaves us uncertain about the true limits of that man's strength."

"The current influx of outside powers has also been quite orderly, without causing much disturbance. Those who might wish to cause trouble must be hesitating because of the emperor's reputation, and because of that there has never been any clear proof to confirm whether his ability is real or not."

"What we need is proof—a guinea pig to test whether what people say is real. If he truly has that ability, then I already have a plan in mind. But if not..." The leader paused.

"Then this mission might be much easier than we expected."

The others looked at the leader with curiosity, until one of the men finally asked him—

"What do you have in mind, my lord?"

The leader kept his gaze fixed outside as he answered. "I received some interesting information. The Spirit Ancestor, whom so many have been searching for, has finally left the Beast Continent and is now visiting this continent. We will use her as the main distraction, while striking in several other places at the same time. If Aldrian the Great truly has an ability that can cover the entire continent, then he will likely be forced to act personally, and almost all at once."

The others who heard him seemed surprised, but one of the women frowned. "The Spirit Ancestor? If she is truly on this continent right now, then I imagine she is under heavy protection. I have only heard about the arrival of the Dragon King and the Phoenix Queen. If they are here, then they may very well be her protectors," she said.

"My lord, with those two as her guards, I do not think using the Spirit Ancestor even as a distraction will be easy. To truly overwhelm her and whoever else might be protecting her, we would need a tremendous force. The Dragon King alone is terrifying, and now with the Phoenix Queen and possibly others as well." She added.

The leader showed a cunning smile. "Then we will stir up those forces that want the Spirit Ancestor dead. That old woman and her race were hunted by many powers in the past, and those who would seize this chance to kill her are not few. All we need to do is spread information about her whereabouts and let them do the work. We can manipulate them into attacking her in a coordinated manner."

"As for us, our assassins will create trouble elsewhere. Once we confirm Emperor Aldrian's ability, we will execute the plan I have in mind. That way, we can strike him while he is caught off guard."

"What is your plan, my lord?" one of the men asked.

Still wearing his cunning smile, the leader replied, "In a week, or two weeks at most, there will be a huge event that will draw the attention of many powers. Before that event

begins, we will launch the distraction operation, and afterward, we will carry out my plan. If we succeed, we will be able to escape from this continent unharmed."

The others exchanged glances, still confused by their leader's ambiguous plan.

"What is the event you are talking about, my lord? What will happen in the near future?" one of them asked.

The leader finally turned his head and looked at the others.

"A great war. There will be a war so large it will engulf this entire star."

The tournament proceeded normally, with even more exciting battles as the disciple stage cultivators displayed far more complex and varied techniques. The spirit of the participants did not waver, even after witnessing the strength of their opponents.

After two hours, the disciple stage category finally came to an end, and the two finalists were decided before Orlav continued the tournament with the next category.

As the time for his category drew closer, Zander's heart beat faster, not only from nervousness but also from excitement. He took a deep breath to calm himself.

'Focus, focus, don't let anything distract you.' His eyes grew sharper.

'Stay focused. Be the winner!'

Share to your friends

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

- Chapter 749 - 749: The Earl Stage Battle

Chapter 749 - 749: The Earl Stage Battle

[1,541 words]

The sun was already high in the sky, and the heat from it was quite strong. This month had already entered summer, so it was not surprising that the sun felt much hotter than in previous months. However, despite the heat, it did not lessen the enthusiasm of the people surrounding the stadium or those across the continent who were watching the tournament.

The large projectors that displayed the tournament were always placed in wide open grounds so people could gather to watch together. Not all of them had something to shield themselves from the sun's heat. For cultivators, they could adjust their bodies to adapt to the hot temperature, but for mortals without cultivation, they could only endure the heat normally.

The ones inside the stadium were the most comfortable, as they were covered by the roof, and the stadium also had a temperature regulator that could adjust the entire arena's climate. At this moment, the stadium had already reached its full capacity in both the normal spectators' area and the VIP section.

There were still a few vacant VVIP rooms, but those were truly expensive, and not many people could afford them. With the situation like this, those who managed to reserve a place inside the stadium were considered the lucky ones.

Their spirited cheers echoed across the stadium as the viscount category came to an end and the earl stage category was finally about to begin.

"To the earl stage participants, please step onto the arena and pick your number." Orlav's voice resounded, followed by another wave of cheers from the crowd. The bustling voices of the many spectators, along with the announcement, stirred Zander from his cultivation. He slowly opened his eyes and looked toward the arena.

He took a deep breath before making one huge leap, landing directly in the arena. Walking calmly toward the box placed in front of Orlav, he cast a glance at Kang Yongjin, who was already much closer to the box, waiting for his turn to draw a number. Zander wondered if he would have to face this man much earlier than expected.

He then turned his eyes to the other participants. Their expressions seemed tense as they waited for their turns to draw. One after another, they reached into the box, pulled out a ball, and showed it to Orlav. As usual, Orlav announced the number along with the name of the participant. After some time, it was finally Kang Yongjin's turn.

He seemed not to care and simply put his hand inside the box. However, all of the participants were watching him with even more tense expressions. Their faces seemed to say that none of them wanted to face this monster yet. Their hearts beat faster, and when Kang Yongjin showed the ball to Orlav, Orlav shouted,

"Kang Yongjin, number Seventeen!"

One of the projectors displaying the draw results immediately showed Kang Yongjin in slot number Seventeen, and he already had an opponent waiting in that slot. The spectators who saw it grew even more excited, while the participants let out sighs of relief, except for a man.

The moment he realized who his opponent was, his heart turned cold, and he cursed his bad luck. Of all people, he had to face Kang Yongjin in the very first battle. It was truly infuriating!

Kang Yongjin's opponent was from the Vanreimer family, a noble house of the Vindas Kingdom. His father was one of the dukes, renowned throughout the kingdom. The family was known for using spears as their signature weapons, which was why a spear was strapped across his back.

He knew his limits, and from the beginning he had truly hoped not to be paired with Kang Yongjin or that masked man called Mister Z. However, as if the heavens wanted him to face hardship from the start, his very first opponent turned out to be Kang Yongjin.

Still, he kept his displeasure to himself. Although he was facing a giant wall in his first fight, he would not bring shame to his family. He would give his best, and maybe, just maybe, he could break through that wall called Kang Yongjin.

The spectators, meanwhile, grew more uproarious. Most of them did not want Kang Yongjin and Zander to meet so early. In their minds, many already considered the two of them as finalists. For such a fight to happen at this stage felt disappointing. They wanted to see them clash in the final, where both would truly unleash everything they had to seize the champion's title.

Zander, who glanced at the projector and saw that Kang Yongjin already had an opponent, did not react much. However, deep down he felt relieved that he would not have to face Kang Yongjin so soon. If they met earlier, he imagined he would be forced to use every hidden card he had, which would put him at a disadvantage in the later rounds.

There was always the possibility that he might lose, but even if he won, his next opponent would already know what he was capable of. On top of that, his condition might not be as fresh as before. He knew that fighting Kang Yongjin would not be easy, and his body would have to endure Kang Yongjin's powerful strikes. If that happened, his next opponent could take advantage of his weakened state.

He turned his head forward again as it was almost time for his turn. The participant before him drew a number, and then at last, it was his turn. Zander stepped in front of the box, and without hesitation, he reached in and took out a ball.

At this moment, only two vacant slots remained, number three and number thirteen, which meant Zander would already have an opponent no matter which slot he drew. His two possible opponents waited with tense expressions, their eyes fixed on Zander without a blink.

When he pulled out the ball and showed it to Orlav, both of their hearts skipped a beat before Orlav's voice resounded through the arena.

"Mister Z, number three!" The moment Orlav announced it, one of the participants let out a sigh of relief, while the other could only sigh in resignation. The one who would face Zander was a descendant of Duke Arim from the Atria Kingdom.

His family had stood among the opposition forces of the former Prince Wilmar, and he himself possessed extensive battle experience. During the civil war, he had fought alongside his family and gained plenty of battlefield knowledge.

However, despite his experience, he still had to admit that this battle against Mister Z would be far more difficult. In the war, he had faced many kinds of strong opponents, yet most of them could be dealt with through strategy and troop coordination.

Facing someone who had already comprehended sword will in a one-on-one battle was an entirely different challenge. This would be his first time fighting such an opponent in this kind of setting.

After a few moments, all of the earl stage participants had finally drawn their slots.

"Alright, let's begin the round of the earl stage category! Other than number one, Rick Saymond, and number two, Arentinus Corelis, please leave the arena," Orlav announced.

After the other participants left the arena, only the two fighters remained. Zander, seated in the waiting area, focused on observing the match that was about to begin. The two contestants stood at a distance of five hundred meters from each other.

Both Rick and Arentinus wielded swords, though of different kinds. Rick carried a one-handed arming sword, while Arentinus used a longsword. Their expressions were solemn, and the moment Orlav gave the signal—

"The battle begins!"

—they instantly vanished from their positions and reappeared at the center of their battle area.

TRANG!

Their swords clashed, releasing a violent gust of wind that swept through their surroundings. Yet neither stopped. Both pressed forward, and moments later their strikes flowed without pause. With his arming sword, Rick held the advantage in speed and attack variation over Arentinus. That much was expected, since a longsword was heavier and larger than an arming sword.

However, Arentinus could still swing his sword with surprising speed despite its size. His bulky frame also helped him control the weapon easily, and the power behind each of his strikes far exceeded Rick's.

Feeling that he did not have a significant advantage, Rick decided to use his elemental comprehension. While continuing his sword attacks, he suddenly stomped the ground, and a wave of earth surging forward. The impact caused Arentinus to nearly lose his footing as the ground beneath him shifted.

But Arentinus quickly countered, using his mastery of wind laws to propel himself into the air while lifting his sword with both hands. Rick followed him into the air, unleashing another strike mid-leap.

Storm Bringer!

Sky Sword First Form: Splitting Air!

Arentinus unleashed a massive slash energy, sending a wave of wind so strong that it could injure anyone caught in it. Rick, meanwhile, slashed repeatedly in quick succession, a few of his own slash energy colliding with Arentinus's attack.

A moment later, their attacks met.

Dung!

Whooosh!

A dull sound rang out at the initial impact. Arentinus's slash energy still pushed forward, but with each clash against Rick's, it gradually lost momentum until it finally dissipated.

Arentinus landed on the ground as his attack neutralized. Rick followed swiftly using his movement technique, closing the distance instantly.

Their battle was far from over!

Share to your friends

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

Chapter 750 - 750: Zander's Fight

[1,614 words]

The battle between Rick and Arentinus continued, and as time passed, it grew more intense, with increasingly varied techniques unleashed. As expected, their fight was far more destructive than any that had come before. The arena floor was littered with destroyed ground and craters, the result of their clashes and powerful techniques.

The arena floor was designed so that any contestant who comprehended earth laws could control it like normal ground, which is why destruction spread so easily across the arena. After the battle, the staff would return the arena to normal, as if nothing had happened.

Rick and Arentinus continued to clash swords, their movements so fast that cultivators weaker than them could not follow.

Trang! Tring! Trang! Donk! Rumble! Rumble!

With each clash, the ground beneath them shattered, and the wind swept across the battlefield. Wind and earth elemental attacks raged everywhere as both of them used everything at their disposal to gain an advantage over the other.

After ten minutes, one of them finally saw an opening. Arentinus, who seemed to be pushed back by Rick's relentless attacks, retaliated with one massive slash. Rick, knowing how powerful Arentinus's attack was, evaded it by a slight margin and took a step back to put some distance between them.

However, he suddenly stunned Arentinus, letting go of his sword and dashing at him with a speed he had never shown before.

He intended to use his movement technique, but Arentinus quickly closed the distance. With his palm already clenched, Rick had no time to react and took Arentinus's fist squarely in the gut.

"Ugh!" he spat out saliva as he struggled to breathe. The direct hit was devastating, with Arentinus's burly frame, his raw power was tremendous.

Rick immediately dropped to his knees, clutching his gut. In that moment, his fate seemed sealed. Arentinus struck again, hitting Rick directly in the face and sending him flying to the side. His body rolled several times before coming to a stop. Staff rushed over to check on him, but Rick was already unconscious by the time they arrived.

Orlav, who had already sensed Rick's condition, nodded to himself and shouted to announce the result of the battle.

"Because one of the participants is unable to continue the battle, the first match between Rick Saymond and Arentinus Corelis is won by Arentinus!" The spectators erupted in cheers. The battle had been intense, and Arentinus, who had initially seemed more passive, emerged as the victor.

Despite his victory, Arentinus showed little expression. He took a deep breath and stepped out of the arena. He knew he still had another battle ahead, and the fight he had just endured had been tough even for him. He had nearly unleashed his trump card, a technique he reserved for only the most necessary moments, as it took a heavy toll on his body. Fortunately, he had found a small opening in his opponent that he could exploit.

Arentinus then left the stage, while Rick was brought outside for treatment, and the arena returned to normal, ready for the next round.

"For the next battle, let us greet with cheers our next contestants, number three and number four: Mister Z and Tristan Arim! Contestants, please enter the arena!" Orlav shouted in excitement, and the spectators responded with an uproar so loud it caused the stadium to tremble slightly.

The battle they had been waiting for, the one involving one of the figures everyone had anticipated, was finally about to begin.

Zander and Tristan were already in their positions. Zander had unsheathed his sword, while Tristan had taken his stance with his spear. Zander's expression was focused but still relatively relaxed, while Tristan's expression was solemn. Unnoticed by him, a bead of sweat had already rolled down the side of his forehead.

Although Tristan's cultivation was stronger, at peak early stage, he did not take Zander lightly. He was wary of Zander's swordplay, combined with his sword intent or even his sword will. He considered his strategy for facing this abnormal cultivator and thought of using his ultimate move much sooner. However, he decided to test the man's skill first before surprising him with his ultimate technique.

"For the contestants, are you ready?!" Orlav asked energetically.

"I'm ready," Tristan answered, while Zander simply nodded.

"Alright, the battle begins!"

Without any warning, Tristan thrust his spear, having vanished from the spot where he had just stood. His speed was even faster than Rick or Arentinus, shocking the spectators. For anyone unable to follow his movement, all they saw was that he had disappeared.

However, for Zander, Tristan's movement was still within his capability to track. Although Tristan was incredibly fast, Zander was used to it, allowing him to follow his movement.

How could he not be used to it, when Aldrian himself had taught him about speed and how to counter it?

'This kind of speed is nothing compared to Master,' Zander thought. Sometimes, his master would show his true speed, which was impossible to follow. Most of the time, however, his master reduced his speed so Zander could train against quick opponents. If his master moved at full speed, Zander would not have been able to learn anything.

When the spear nearly reached him—

Tang!

He blocked it with his Jian sword, a peak Heaven-grade artifact. Since yesterday, many had assumed Zander came from a noble family, not only because of his talent but also because of the sword he wielded. Normally, only someone from a noble family could be so extravagant with their artifact in an event like this.

Tristan was slightly taken aback as his attack was blocked, but he was not too shocked and immediately attacked again. He directed his spear toward Zander's chest. Zander blocked it, but Tristan followed up with a kick aimed at Zander's body, trying to make him lose balance.

Zander evaded the kick with his nimble body, taking a quick step back. Tristan pursued him with another spear attack, raising the weapon with both hands and delivering a chopping motion toward Zander. His movements were faster now, and strands of lightning appeared around his body, accompanied by the crackling sound of electricity.

Seeing the powerful and rapid attack, Zander jumped backward before it could reach him.

Rumble! Crack! Crack!

The spear smashed into the ground, creating a crater with a diameter of five hundred meters. Strands of lightning spread outward, forming a wall that threatened anyone within its range. The sheer power of this strike had already reached a low Marquess-level attack!

Seeing the strike, Zander decided to stop retreating. He focused his power into his sword and finally unleashed his technique.

Meteorite Slash!

He slashed with his sword, and the slash energy effortlessly cut through the incoming lightning. Tristan, seeing this, was shocked, not only by how easily his technique had been sliced, but also by the sheer power behind Zander's attack. This incoming slash energy was actually nearly equivalent to the attack power of a middle Marquess-stage cultivator!

Tristan instantly dodged to the side, but Zander followed with his speed. The slash passed Tristan by only a small margin, and Zander was already closing in. It was now his turn to attack. Tristan gritted his teeth and decided to use his trump card. Although it was earlier than he had planned, with how agile and strong the masked man was, this might be his only chance.

Suddenly, his body burst with lightning, forcing Zander to halt his advance. Tristan channeled his energy into his spear, which began to glow with a brilliant blue light. The air grew heavy, and the crackling of lightning echoed throughout the stadium. The ground of the arena trembled under the pressure of the technique, and even the weather outside was slightly affected, turning the sky slightly cloudy.

Tristan lifted his spear with both hands, its power already reaching the level of a middle Marquess-stage cultivator. Zander, who had almost prepared to strike, fixed his gaze on him with sharp focus. Pointing his sword forward, he slowly closed his eyes.

Spear of Thunder Judgment: The Lightning of Destruction!

Tristan finally unleashed his technique, sweeping his spear toward Zander. Countless bolts of lightning, each carrying the force of a middle Marquess-stage attack, shot toward him. Yet Zander remained calm, still focused.

A split second later, he suddenly opened his eyes, and his sword intent erupted, filling the arena with its overwhelming presence. In that instant, he unleashed his technique.

Third Movement of the Valiant Sword: Severing Spirit!

He delivered three slashes with his sword, and each one carried power greater than the incoming lightning strikes. The first slash tore through every bolt it touched, opening a path for the slashes behind it. The energy traveled at frightening speed, and Tristan could only stare in shock as his ultimate technique was shattered with ease.

A chill ran down his spine as the slashes nearly reached him.

'I have to evade!' He knew this strike was truly dangerous and tried to jump away, but his body refused to move. It was as if he were frozen in place, forced to stare at the incoming attack.

'No!' He wanted to shout, but before the slash energy could reach him, it suddenly dissipated. His legs gave out, and he slumped to the ground, feeling weak. He could move his body again, and sweat was already pouring down his face.

Gasping for breath, he looked at Zander with trembling eyes. He had almost died! If that strike had landed, it would have cut him down with ease. And from the way the masked man had unleashed it so effortlessly, it was clear he possessed techniques far stronger than this.

Tristan let out a weary sigh. It was simply too much for him to fight against this man.

"I lost," he admitted, his words met by an uproar from the spectators.

Orlav smiled as he raised his hand.

"The winner of this battle is Mister Z!"

"UWOO!"

Share to your friends

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