

Village Head 1001

Chapter 1001: Defeating The Commander Of The Trekking Flamingo Runaway City

Commander Edmar swiftly arrived before the mysterious individual hovering at the same level. He took in the individual's appearance: a bright, fiery red robe adorned with one-to three-star Vylkr vine engravings and matching orange shirt and trousers embellished with beautiful golden embroidery.

The attire glowed within the half-oval of molten magma, emanating a faint, overbearing energy that gave him a tyrannical look.

Edmar's eyes were drawn to the man's sleeve, where the faint structure of a metallic bracelet encircled his right wrist.

Is he a god's chosen?

Edmar doubted his initial thoughts. The bracelet appeared far less bulky than the devourers', and it was well known that utilizing Vylkr energy to cast techniques was nearly impossible due to its ferocious and wild nature, rendering the complex structure of any method useless.

Reaching this level of mastery and casting a technique of such grandeur meant that the mysterious figure was harnessing another kind of energy, further ruling out the assumption that he was a god chosen.

Despite his ability to harness and utilize draconic energy-one of the few higher-ranked and most domineering energies-Edmar still felt an oppressive presence from the man before him. He realized this figure wasn't only powerful but also wielded a high-ranking energy. As a god's chosen with Vylkr energy flowing through his veins, Edmar shouldn't feel such a terrifying sense of oppression. It simply didn't make any sense!

"I am Commander Edmar, a Sentinel Rank god's chosen, Commander of the god's chosens and Chief of Security of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. Can I know who you are and why you have chosen to interfere with our battle?" Commander Edmar introduced himself before swiftly posing his question.

Unlike the Vylkr warriors, whose rankings were similar to the Vylkr vines' distinct levels of power to avoid confusion, the gods chosen had their own distinct ranks: Warden, Guardian, Sentinel, Ascendant, and Champion. These ranks had been explained to them by Patriarch Rylan and others.

Seth was also aware there might be other ranks since they only knew there was a 5-star rank once Stronghold Leader Zogar attained it. However, that didn't mean they cared little about such matters. With the Energy Mask Spectrometer, all that mattered was the enemy's base energy level; everything else might as well be irrelevant.

Seth amplified his voice with the Vylkr energy coursing through him, responding, "I am Seth, one of the Key Leaders of Paradise." Though his words were brief, they carried an unmistakable authority.

"Without permission, you entered Paradise's territory, dared to threaten those under its protection, and even waged war on its forces. Your actions are something we will not condone. While Paradise is against ruthless killing, your offences are intolerable. You have two choices: surrender and plead for mercy, or face death and the inevitable fall of your Runaway City into our grasp."

His voice then echoed even louder, "Do you concede?"

"We are only here to retrieve the Divine Artefact that Patriarch Rylan currently possesses without the authority of its rightful owners, our allies, the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City. If Paradise is willing to make an exchange, we will leave once we have collected the Divine Artefact," Commander Edmar responded sternly.

Seth snorted. "Paradise will not negotiate with anyone, regardless of who they are or who is behind them. You have two choices, and I will not repeat myself."

All the orange-reddish scorching forged bladed weapons pointed toward Commander Edmar instantly.

The battle below had ceased, with everyone's attention from all three Runaway Cities focused upward, understanding that the imminent confrontation would ultimately decide the winner of this war.

"If that's the case, then I'll leave you no choice but to fight and show us the true might of Paradise, to see if it matches that of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City," Commander Edmar responded, his voice echoing across the battleground. He extended his left arm by his side.

Instantly, a Gearweaver Spear shot out from the top of the tower on the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, heading toward him. As it reached his side, he grabbed it, halting its ascent.

"Boost," Commander Edmar uttered.

The gears on his Devourer's bracelet began to shift rapidly, pumping more Vylkr energy into his veins. Countless inky black strands of Vylkr energy burst out of his body, extending toward the Gearweaver Spear. Its gears shifted, amplifying the surge of Vylkr energy pouring into it. Within seconds, Commander Edmar and the weapon in his hands were enveloped in a surging mass of inky black energy that extended outward like a blazing flame.

"Energy Level - 1,998 BEM."

The words flashed before Seth's eyes. To any of the gods' chosens below, such a massive surge of Vylkr energy conveyed Commander Edmar's strength, detectable in its oppressive and ferocious aura that rivalled their own from a distance.

However, to Seth, it appeared as nothing more than vastly diluted Vylkr energy, which was insignificant compared to the pure Vylkr energy he controlled.

Observing the mysterious individual's calmly collected posture, Commander Edmar aimed his spear, poised to strike. He couldn't utilize dragonic energy for techniques in this form, as it would conflict with his Vylkr energy. Nonetheless, he remained free of doubt because this was his strongest form.

With a single flap of his wings, Commander Edmar lunged towards Seth, his right hand thrusting the Gearweaver Spear forward.

BANNGG!! BOOMM!!!

A bladed weapon from the strings of molten magma below surpassed Edmar's speed, striking his spear out of his grasp. His hand twisted at an unnatural angle with a sickening 'Crack' before the bladed weapon exploded, engulfing half of Edmar's body and half of his leathery wing in searing flames.

The fire easily burnt through his tough skin, charring his inner organs.

"ARRGGGHHHHHHH!!!" Edmar's agonized scream echoed across the silent battlefield. He tried to articulate his pain-his twisted arms, burnt skin, seared wings-but only screams of anguish escaped his lips.

With his wings no longer able to support his body in the air, Commander Edmar swiftly descended down to the earth.

Chapter 1002: Sudden Insight

BOOMMM!!!

His body collapsed onto the rugged earth, creating a 14-meter crater and billowing dust clouds that expanded into the distance, shrouding his defeated figure.

On the battlefield, from the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City to the Sleeping Fox Runaway City and the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, an aura of silence enveloped their surroundings. Inwardly, their hearts shook with turbulent emotions as they gradually processed what had transpired.

They all knew Commander Edmar's strength, having simultaneously subdued commanders from two Grade One Runaway Cities. His prowess was undeniable. Yet, the fact that he hadn't been defeated by an opponent who hadn't even lifted a finger was an astonishing scene that left them all incredulous.

What kind of horrifying technique was this?

For the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City and the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, there was a mix of disbelief, fear, and relief knowing the monstrous being stood on their side. But horror, disbelief, and dread filled the expressions of those with the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City as they faced such a frightening adversary.

A single thought suddenly struck them all, filling them with a growing fear and unease!

This was just one of Paradise's Key Leaders! There were potentially many more with such extraordinary strength!!

This realisation alone sent a chilling wave of terror down their spines.

For Eleanora, Lakul, and several others who knew of the Village Chief to whom such a terrifying individual answered, the chill crept down their bodies and into their souls. Unknowingly, their resistance against Paradise's control began to weaken slowly.

In this desolate world where survival meant utilising every method, including piling mountains of corpses. Only the strong endured. Should they encounter anyone stronger, their fate would likely mirror Commander Edmar's.

As Seth glanced at Commander Edmar's defeated and scarred body, ensuring he hadn't killed him but had inflicted enough injury to leave a lasting mental and physical mark, he shifted his focus forward to a cloaked figure emerging from the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City.

Soon, the cloaked figure stood before him. In the shimmering sunlight filtering through the web-like strands of molten lava above, Seth could make out the mask adorned with the depiction of an unknown beast and pointed furry ears on either side.

"Energy Level - 2,100 BEM!"

Seth narrowed his gaze, studying the information before him. This was the highest energy level he had seen since Edmar's own.

Could this be the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City's trump card?

As Seth pondered, he agreed with his thoughts. While the rain of arrows and the individuals who launched them could also be considered a trump card, witnessing their Commander's defeat must have made them realise they needed someone more powerful to weaken or defeat him while they prepared their true ace.

Indeed, the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City was clearly above a Grade One Runaway City. Nevertheless, he believed the cloaked figure before him couldn't be it!

"If you would be so kind, I would like to know the alliance you hail from. Surely, you cannot be situated deep within this dreadful region alone," a sharp masculine voice flowed out of the mask, resonating.

Unlike before, the cloaked figure's carefree tone was now replaced with seriousness. Judging by the technique the mysterious individual had cast and the immense aura emanating from him, he recognised the mysterious individual before him as a formidable opponent.

However, he had never expected it to the extent that Commander Edmar could only withstand one attack before being brutally defeated.

Of course, that didn't mean he couldn't also defeat Commander Edmar with a single attack himself. He had emerged because retrieving the Divine Artefact would surely become an issue if it truly rested within Paradise's grasp, and this was just one of their leaders, not counting those under their command.

Therefore, he had no choice but to no longer sit back and watch the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City embarrass themselves against such a formidable force.

Firstly, he needed to know which alliance they aligned with before he acted.

Seth frowned beneath his mask upon hearing the cloaked individual's voice. He was here to assess the full prowess of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, and this incessant talking was beginning to grate on his nerves.

The cloaked figure misunderstood Seth's silence as deliberation and careful choice of words. "I am a god" chosen from the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City," he added. "Since you are one of the Key Leaders of Paradise, you should be able to make decisions independently and understand the value of a Divine Artefact. If you are willing to discuss this further, I can propose compensation to Paradise in exchange for the artefact's worth."

His voice resonated across their surroundings, reaching the ears of those below.

Eleanora and the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City leaders clenched their fists in anger as they suddenly realised the truth.

The Journeying Jaguar Runaway City had offered the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City to retrieve the Divine Artefact from them, suspecting that the Sleeping Fox Runaway City might still be aligned with the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City. Little did they know, the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City had completely withdrawn their offer because they had found a stronger force capable of retrieving the Divine Artefact for them.

This manoeuvre ensured that if either Runaway City acquired the Divine Artefact and Patriarch Rylan, they would inevitably clash, weakening their forces. This created the perfect opportunity for the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City and their allies to swoop in and seize the Divine artefact for themselves.

They seethed with rage, and their emotions stirred violently as they unravelled the truth before it instantly subsided.

They were powerless against just two Grade Two Runaway Cities, a sobering realisation that left them weak and helpless.

Even Lakul and the Sleeping Fox Runaway City leaders reached the same sobering conclusion.

Everything had been meticulously planned between the two Grade Two Runaway Cities, and either could have succeeded in their schemes, potentially exterminating their forces and burying the information about the Divine Artefact. However, they had failed to consider one

mysterious entity...

Paradise!

Chapter 1003: The Mysterious Cloaked Figure's Power Revealed

A look of realization appeared on Seth's face. "So you were sent here by the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City?" he asked, his voice filled with curiosity.

The cloaked figure misinterpreted this as Seth being startled by mentioning the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City.

"Yes. Since you recognize us then--" the cloaked figure began, but Seth swiftly interrupted him. "The Divine Artefact is now under Paradise's protection. We don't need your compensation," he responded firmly.

Protection? The cloaked figure couldn't help but feel his lips twitch behind his mask. It would have been better if Seth had been straightforward and admitted that they were also interested in the Divine Artefact.

How else could they protect it without utilizing it?

As Seth prepared to attack the cloaked figure, Orion's voice resonated through his mask, "Don't capture him yet. Let's use this opportunity to test the strength of the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City's gods' chosens. We can also draw out more if they are still hiding."

"Okay," Seth responded, inwardly nodding in understanding. He realized this was the most efficient way of gathering more information from their opponents before capturing them.

Seth swiftly added, "However, I will return it under one condition."

The cloaked figure, searching for what to say next, exhaled in relief upon hearing Seth's words. As expected, the mysterious individual took his words to heart but merely put on airs to avoid looking like he was giving in too quickly. It was reasonable; he was in their territory, with several people observing their interaction.

"I am willing to handle any condition as long as it's one the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City can manage," responded the cloaked figure, his tone filled with confidence.

Below, Eleanora, Lakul, and the leaders of their respective Runaway Cities couldn't help but frown upon hearing Seth's words.

Was Paradise afraid of the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City?

They couldn't help but feel a pang of disappointment in their hearts because, for a moment, they had thought that Paradise possessed more unfathomable strength than the Journeying Jaguar Runaway City and the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City.

However, it appeared that wasn't the case. As an overpowering sensation of weakness and defeat filled their bodies, Seth's voice sounded again, surprising them.

"I am interested in the strength of the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City, so its gods chosen can help satisfy my curiosity. You only have three chances to attack me. If you can defeat me with three attacks or severely injure me, I'll hand over the Divine Artefact to you. However, if you cannot, you'll suffer the same consequences as the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City," Seth stated, hovering out from the half-oval forged from molten lava and closing the distance before the cloaked figure. "You may begin."

The leaders of the Sleeping Fox Runaway City and the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City couldn't help but feel uneasy as they observed the scene.

Emperor Greroth narrowed his eyes at the mysterious individual hovering in the sky, a deep frown etched on his face.

Everyone within earshot could sense the unmistakable arrogance in Seth's voice, including the cloaked man to whom these words were directed. A fierce expression appeared on his masked face.

"Alright. If you're that curious, I'll show you what it means to be gods chosen of the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City," the cloaked figure responded, "I just hope you don't go back on your promise."

Seth nodded firmly, "I'll keep my word. You have nothing to worry about."

The cloaked figure nodded back. Without uttering another word, he surged towards Seth. His hands emerged from his cloak, revealing surprising paw-like appendages with long, glinting claws.

Blood Rampage Fury - Savage Claw!

A gleaming, bloodlike paw resembling that of a savage beast materialized behind his own, lunging its sharp claws towards Seth's throat with deadly intent.

Ding!!

The cloaked figure's smile faltered as Seth's skin resisted his technique. The invisible beast's claws pressed against Seth's neck without drawing blood or causing injury. In fact, it felt as though he had struck a solid piece of metal.

Without hesitation, he immediately withdrew his hand and retreated, increasing the distance between himself and Seth. Behind his mask, he stared at Seth in disbelief.

He had just employed a Rare Rank Technique of the Wolfkin Race, designed to penetrate and tear through an enemy's vital organs with a single grip. Despite its simplicity, it was known for its effectiveness and immense power.

"Two more chances. I advise you to take this seriously if you truly want to retrieve the Divine Artefact," Seth said, his tone indifferent.

Upon hearing this, the cloaked figure's expression contorted into a scowl, his lips twitching. He reached into his cloak and drew out a small dagger. Its edges were sharp, but what caught Seth's attention were the visible spinning gears and intricate conduits running down to its handle—a Gearweaver dagger.

When he unsheathed the dagger, he activated his Devourer's bracelet, channelling Vylkr energy into his veins. "Boost," he commanded.

Instantly, the surge of Vylkr energy within him tripled and continued to rise. It erupted from his body, enveloping him in dense, swirling strands of vicious Vylkr energy. Though not as visibly massive as Commander Edmar's, the ferocity and overwhelming pressure it exuded far surpassed it.

"Energy Level - 2,104 BEM!"

As the cloaked figure approached Seth, his newly attained energy level became apparent.

This unfolding scene dispelled those below's doubts about the cloaked figure's strength.

Instantly, the cloaked figure arrived before Seth and thrust his Gearweaver dagger towards his throat.

The cloaked figure's smile widened as the Gearweaver dagger penetrated Seth's skin, embedding its blade deep within his neck.

'I have you now,' the cloaked figure thought.

Bang!!

He intensified the surge of Vylkr energy flowing through his body, channelling it into his Gearweaver dagger and Seth. Since Seth wasn't a gods' chosen, the Vylkr energy would begin devouring his insides, consuming him from within until all that remained was a shrivelled

corpse.

Chapter 1004: Triad Of Failure

Stunned, the cloaked figure's eyes widened as he witnessed Seth still alive. He quickly

increased the distance between them, standing far away. His body trembled as he watched the wound he had inflicted on Seth's throat heal rapidly, disappearing as though it had never existed.

Then, a wave of Vylkr energy surged from his form, filling the surroundings with countless shimmering strands before dissipating abruptly.

"You have only one chance remaining," Seth's voice resonated across the battlefield.

The battlefield fell into silence as everyone watched the scene unfold in disbelief.

The cloaked figure's eyes threatened to bulge out of their sockets. The mysterious individual he had attacked not only effortlessly healed his assault but remained utterly unaffected by the dense surge of raw Vylkr energy he had unleashed.

How could such a being exist? What kind of mysterious force was Paradise if one of their Key Leaders possessed such power?

Without waiting for his mind to settle, the cloaked figure immediately turned and fled. His techniques were useless against the mysterious figure, and neither his strength nor the Vylkr energy could harm him. He knew his third attack would be futile.

As Seth spoke, he swiftly employed his flying technique to escape. He might face consequences for failing to retrieve the Divine Artefact, but he believed the information he now held about this mysterious force, Paradise, was equally valuable.

As he reached a certain distance, a gleaming orange-reddish sword suddenly entered his line of sight, causing his pupils to shrink in alarm. In the blink of an eye, the sword exploded with astonishing speed before he could react, engulfing him in fiery liquid flames that seared through his cloak, revealing his whole appearance.

He stood tall, a humanoid figure with distinct lupine features-pointed light grey fur ears, a bushy tail, paw-like hands adorned with sharp retractable claws, and powerful digitigrade legs exuding explosive strength.

BOOM!

He crashed into the ground, carving a 30-meter-long crater before stopping, defeated. Witnessing this, Seth immediately utilized his gift to create a copy of himself through the molten magma, sending it towards the defeated figure. At this moment, the duplicate was distinguishable by its glowing orange-red molten magma parts. Still, Seth believed he could perfect the replication indistinguishable from himself with time.

As the duplicated Seth swiftly approached the figure and attempted to lift him, the body suddenly exploded, flesh and organs scattering through the air, stunning Seth into a pause.

'He killed himself,' Seth thought, furrowing his brows as he observed the unknown individual's scattered organs strewn across the battlefield.

He had never imagined that a gods' chosen would be ruthless enough to take their own life to avoid capture in case of failure. Even Paradise saw every one of its warriors as invaluable, irrespectively, to think about doing such a thing.

The Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City appears ruthless and desires the Divine Artefact much more than they had imagined.

Up above, Orion frowned as he witnessed the scene unfold below. It seemed that even if they had swiftly immobilized the gods' chosen from the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City, he would have still chosen to end his own life to avoid capture and questioning.

Fortunately, they had seized this opportunity to glimpse their opponent's strength. While it might only be overwhelmingly impressive compared to the perspective of the Grade One Runaway Cities, they now knew where to focus their efforts before facing them again.

"It looks like we need to prepare ourselves before encountering the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City and the Journeying Jaguar Runaway City. If they can afford to sacrifice such a gods' chosen, it means they have other powerful individuals at their disposal," Aerialia remarked, voicing her thoughts aloud.

Such tactics were common during the Great War to test an enemy's capabilities and gather intelligence. She could only hope that their enemies wouldn't be alerted to the gods' chosen's death or the information he had managed to gather, leaving them to prepare for the worst.

Orion nodded thoughtfully. While he was confident that Paradise wouldn't falter against the two Grade Two Runaway Cities, he knew better than to be arrogant, especially considering the unknown divine beings and Vylkr spawns that could still exist.

Suddenly, Orion squinted into the distance below, spotting another figure emerging from the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. It seemed they were not ready to concede defeat, prompting Orion to wonder what other tricks they might have up their sleeves.

Nevertheless, he relayed a message to Seth, urging him not to show mercy this time. They needed to show them they were only valuable to Paradise if deemed so.

Upon hearing the Village Chief's instructions below, Seth nodded in understanding. He shifted his focus to the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City Supreme Leader, who hovered in the air before him.

"Great Warrior, although I acknowledge your strength, I will not surrender the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City that easily," Emperor Greroth declared, his voice resonating across the battlefield and reaching the ears of all three Runaway Cities.

"But if you can withstand my attack, I will not only hand over the city willingly but also provide you with valuable information about the Wandering Wolf Borough Runaway City and other secrets that none of the so-called Supreme Leaders of a Grade One Runaway City possess."

Emperor Greroth was no fool. He observed how the mysterious Key Leader of Paradise handled previous encounters, noting that despite the deadly attacks that had scarred and injured his gods' chosen, they were all alive and would heal within a few days.

He understood Paradise was trying to recruit them under its authority, much like the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City and the Sleeping Fox Runaway City. However, how could he allow such a thing to happen when they were just beginning their journey to prominence?

Despite the losses, he was determined to show them the real reason why the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City was on the verge of becoming a Grade Two Runaway City.

Witnessing his silence, Emperor Greroth interpreted it as an agreement and proceeded immediately.

Chapter 1005: The Trekking Flamingo Runaway City's Greatest Arsenal

Dragon Shadow Transformation!

Emperor Greroth's muscles bulged, thick veins appearing on every part of his body. His body mass expanded, and dark brown scales appeared on his minotaur-like skin. His nails grew longer, and his wings extended, becoming even more prominent and thicker. A tail grew from his back as his bones enlarged, becoming more dragon-like, his body transforming and gaining even more draconic features.

Years ago, he had stumbled upon the inheritance of a half-dragon blood warrior. He didn't know the specifics of the other bloodline but had concluded this based on the art he had obtained from the inheritance. The technique allowed one with a potent half-dragon bloodline to gradually awaken it and utilize its extraordinary abilities.

He had mastered it to thirty per cent completion, with only a few years left before achieving the fifty per cent threshold, effectively mastering about half of the art. This progress would gradually transform him into a pure dragon, increasing his overall prowess tenfold.

Under his leadership, the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City had conquered several Grade One Runaway Cities and various Stowaways, amassing recognition, resources, and power for their ascension to prominence as a Grade Two Runaway City.

"ROAARRRRR!!!" A fierce roar, powerful enough to stun the gods' chosens below, resonated across the battlefield.

A sudden chill of intimidation emerged in their hearts, but it dissipated as they channelled their Vylkr energy into their bodies.

Below Seth stood a completely transformed Emperor Greroth. His wings were now more prominent and draconic, spanning 7m (24 ft.) His face had elongated into a slightly pointed structure with dark brownish scales covering his body, resembling natural armour beneath his Vylkr alloy armour.

His mouth was a carnivorous maw, revealing rows of razor-sharp, glistening teeth. Long, thick horns spiralled backwards, framing eyes that glowed with an intense, otherworldly light, giving the golden crown on his head an even more regal aura.

His overall body was two and a half times larger, and he exuded a formidable, oppressive aura to match.

"Energy level - 1,996 BEM!"

Seth's gaze was filled with interest at Emperor Greroth's transformation and his sudden surge in energy level. This was the first time he had seen a base energy level surge so high outside of Paradise. Although he knew they would encounter various wondrous and unknown marvels, he was taken aback by this sudden transformation.

He strangely began to feel his blood boiling with excitement before immediately suppressing it. Even if the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City had proven to be a formidable force compared to the other two Grade One Runaway Cities, if this was the limit of what they were capable of, then it was still far from enough.

In the distance below, feeling the surge of immense draconic energy sweeping over them, Eleanora couldn't help but feel her body drenched with sweat from the oppressive force. She took a deep breath, feeling the suppression of the draconic energy before it instantly dissipated.

Unknown to everyone distracted by Emperor Greroth's sudden display of might, she recognized that this suppression came from his stimulated bloodline, which had created much more potent draconic energy than hers, leading to a natural suppression. She quickly calmed down and continued to observe the unfolding spectacle above her.

Indeed, they stood no chance against the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. Without Paradise's presence and protection, their Runaway Cities would have already been reduced to scraps, and they would have been killed just like the Four-eared elves.

The silence that enveloped her surroundings was thick and heavy.

Even Lakul couldn't help but slump his shoulders, his body slightly shivering at the thought of what would have happened if they had successfully retrieved the Divine Artefact and faced Emperor Greroth alone.

The other leaders of both Grade One Runaway Cities felt the same way.

Above the battlefield, Emperor Greroth's lips curled into a smirk, revealing a frightening set of razor-sharp teeth that exuded arrogance.

"Boost!" he uttered, repeating the words as his Devourer's Gear surged frantically. Countless inky black Vylkr energy burst from his body, shrouding his entire figure with an eerie malevolent glow.

Since the Dragon Shadow Transformation was an art tied to his dragon bloodline, an integral part of his very being, it meant that despite its complexity, Vylkr energy couldn't easily disrupt it. Moreover, with his Vylkr compatibility, he could sustain this form for five minutes before risking severe injury that would take years to heal.

Fortunately, less than five minutes would suffice to deal with the mysterious Key Leader of Paradise before him.

This was his greatest arsenal!

"Energy level - 2,000 BEM."

Seth noted a four BEM increase with keen interest as he observed Emperor Greroth. "Prepare yourself, Great Warrior! This is my greatest arsenal!" Emperor Greroth's voice thundered with a powerful roar as he shot forward, arriving instantly before Seth. His Gearweaver Sword swung toward Seth's upper body, aiming to cleave him in half.

However, the moment the strike met his skin --

DING!!

The Gearweaver Sword was deflected and flung backwards with a hum as if striking a callous piece of metal.

Emperor Greroth's eyes widened in shock and confusion at the outcome of his attack. He immediately released his grip on the Gearweaver Sword, letting it slip from his numb fingers as he retreated, widening the distance between himself and Seth.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

At that moment, two greatswords forged from molten magma shot forth, one cleanly slicing through his leathery wings and the other cleaving through his right arm that had wielded the Gearweaver Sword.

"ARGGHHHH!!!" Emperor Greroth screamed in agony, feeling neither his wings nor his right arm except for a searing pain that tore through his body. The Dragon Shadow Transformation was dispelled, returning him to his normal appearance. Without wings to sustain him in the air, he plummeted toward the earth.

BAAMM!!! BOOMM!!

A twenty-four-foot-wide crater erupted where he collapsed, dust billowing into the air and spreading outward, slightly shrouding his figure.

Taking Orion's orders to heart, Seth hurled another greatsword toward him, slicing through both legs.

"AHHHH!!!" Emperor Greroth's scream reverberated across the battlefield once more, his crimson blood pooling beneath him as he lay lifeless on the ground.

Chapter 1006: Benevolent Face, Lingering Fear

Witnessing the former emperor's defeat and noting his unwillingness to take his own life like the cloaked figure, Seth raised his head, directing his gaze back toward the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City.

"Do you concede?" Seth asked, his tone indifferent.

This time, not only the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City but also the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City and the Sleeping Fox Runaway City felt their hair stand on end and their hearts lodged in their throats at the resonating sound of his voice.

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High above the battlefield, Aerialia shook her head in disappointment after witnessing Emperor Greroth's pitiful display of strength. She had expected more from seeing his transformation art, but it fell short of her expectations.

"The Trekking Flamingo Runaway City no longer has any hidden cards to play nor the will to fight. Your plan has worked," Aerialia remarked, shifting her gaze towards Orion.

While Orion's tactics were not groundbreaking, it was noteworthy that this was his first encounter with such a situation. He had lived in a small village with traditions shaped by a dangerous manmade god who viewed them as failures.

Aerialia was confident he would surpass his current brilliance with a few more years. If a genius like him had emerged during the Great War, she would have had another formidable mind to bolster their efforts against enemies.

Unfortunately, the world was also far from peaceful, with many potential adversaries and challenges ahead. She resolved to guide him down the right path with her expertise.

"Of course, it did. However, we're not yet finished," Orion smiled. While all this unfolded, he harboured another brilliant plan to solidify Paradise's unshakeable position in the hearts of the Runaway Cities' inhabitants below and weaken any lingering resistance they still harboured.

"Oh! What is it then?" Aerialia responded, her voice filled with interest.

"Have you ever heard the saying, 'To conquer the enemy's heart, present a benevolent face while the shadow of fear lingers behind. Balance mercy and wrath; let the enemy see hope in surrender and dread in resistance,'" Orion replied, smiling.

Upon hearing his words, Aerialia was stunned. She repeated the saying a few times, then shifted her gaze towards Orion, narrowing her eyes at him, "That's a clever saying. How am I only just hearing of it?"

"You only awakened almost a year ago and were unaware of what was happening in the world for many years, so it's obvious there are many things you haven't heard about. Besides, am I not smart enough to invent such a saying?" Orion responded, glancing at her. He had no intention of revealing the knowledge he had acquired in his previous life.

Once again stunned by Orion's response, Aerialia swiftly regained her composure and snorted loudly. "Now that I look closely, your current demeanour does seem different," Aerialia commented, her eyes scrutinizing Orion from head to toe.

She hadn't thought much about it when Orion first informed her about his encounter with the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City and the Sleeping Fox Runaway City.

After all, coming from a small village protected against the tide of Vylkr vines in the middle of nowhere, they were bound to encounter many things that could harden their hearts and make them ruthless.

However, considering this was Orion's first time handling such a situation, he had ruthlessly sent the two Grade One Runaway Cities to their deaths, causing them to lose a portion of their gods' chosens and putting the inhabitants of each Runaway City in perilous danger.

If the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City had been vile enough to sneak in and slaughter them one by one in pursuit of the Divine Artefact before the war began, it could have led to disastrous consequences.

Even during the issue with the Four-eared elves, he had only planned to punish them rather than condemning them to die in the ominous clutches of the Vylkr vines, so she was truly curious about what had brought about his sudden change. Survival may be a part of it, but not entirely.

"Have you already forgotten everything you said? True debauchery is about embracing the chaos and messiness of life and living fully within it. I will not hesitate or delay in taking the necessary actions to produce the best outcome for Paradise, regardless of who or what it might involve," Orion responded, his voice filled with seriousness.

Once again, Aerialia was stunned by Orion's response. She remembered her words clearly and quickly pieced together everything that had transpired.

"I'll be back in a few minutes. I can't present a face of benevolence while wielding my most dangerous weapon," Orion added, nodding at Aerialia. He sent a message to Seth and stood upright, focusing his attention below.

Aerialia nodded silently, observing as Orion descended through the clouds.

As Orion descended, he swiftly activated his gift, causing countless fierce lightning streaks to emerge from his body and spread through the clouds. Lightning sparked in the distance, illuminating the sky far beyond the building where the immense crater housed the Vylkr alloy harvestation.

As time passed, the clouds darkened, rolling thunderclouds stirring in the firmament. Orion transformed into his lightning form, his mask and attire assimilating a bluish lightning hue, still visible amidst the storm. Then he utilized his flying technique, 'One Winged Sky Art,' pushing it to its hundred per cent threshold.

Bang!

A burst of light emerged from Orion's back, transforming into ethereal wings resembling those of a One-winged race forged from pure celestial energy. After achieving fifty per cent of the Divine Art threshold, the wings could be disabled or manifested at will, but Orion opted to display them just for his grand entrance.

With his preparations complete, Orion descended fully, revealing Paradise's benevolent face to the Runaway Cities.

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Meanwhile, Seth received the Village Chief's orders and frowned, pondering the reasons for Orion's descent. Given the absence of further movement from the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City and their silence, Seth could be fairly sure they had exhausted all their hidden strategies.

Nevertheless, he couldn't disobey the Village Chief's commands, so he slowly dispersed the hallowed dome of molten magma, allowing it to retract to the ground gradually.

Chapter 1007: Benevolent Face, Lingering Fear (2)

As the molten magma submerged into the ground-

Thunderclaps erupted out of nowhere as dense, rolling thunderclouds gathered, filling the sky. Fierce, countless streaks of bluish lightning danced across the firmament. The once bright sky darkened instantly, and the atmosphere grew heavy with oppressive might.

The inhabitants of the Runaway Cities, who had felt relief when the molten magma hallowed dome disappeared, were immediately taken aback by the resounding thunderclaps. A chill crawled up their spines, spreading to every fibre of their being.

Suddenly, a bizarre phenomenon occurred. The firmament dimmed, and all the streaks of bluish lightning converged at a single point in the sky, illuminating it like a pillar. A bright, milky white light stretched into the dark thunderclouds overhead.

The two brilliant lights merged, growing even more colourful as they descended towards the earth, as though dragging the lightning and the milky white light.

They all shut their eyes, the intensity of the light too overwhelming to bear. After a few moments, they cautiously reopened them, looking towards the gathered lightning and gasped at what they saw.

Before them, high in the sky, was a humanoid figure seemingly forged from lightning, with two large, milky-white translucent feathered wings protruding from his back. His attire was illuminated

with fierce, bluish lightning streaks, and an inky black mask, similar to the one worn by the Key Leader of Paradise, covered his face.

A sudden realization struck them, stunning them all.

This being, forged from lightning, was also from Paradise.

This revelation made them swallow hard, recognizing the truth. Paradise possessed more powerhouses than just the man who had attacked them.

Eleanora and the leaders under her, alongside the gods' chosens and the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City inhabitants who weren't hiding in their homes, shivered when their eyes landed on Orion's figure.

When he first appeared, he had threatened them, defeated their Commander with a single attack, and chased away a divine being hiding within their Runaway City-all in the same day. Knowing he was the Leader of Paradise, it was hard for them not to dread his emergence.

The same was true for the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, which also possessed this information. Meanwhile, the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City couldn't help but feel a chilling fear. Their will to continue fighting, weakened by witnessing Seth's consecutive dominance over their strongest individuals, utterly disappeared upon Orion's appearance.

They all watched as the large milky wings disappeared, but the fierce bluish lightning connecting the man to the heavens remained, making it seem like a divine being had descended from the sky to the mortal realm.

Seth immediately moved from his position, appearing behind him and standing guard against any attack that might erupt at any moment.

Looking at their expressions, all of which mirrored what he had anticipated, Orion inwardly nodded. He cleared his throat and spoke with commanding authority, "Listen well, inhabitants of the Runaway Cities." Orion's voice boomed, accompanied by resounding thunderclaps that echoed through the air.

"You stand here today because you dared to intrude into Paradise's territory and challenge its might. You have faced but a fraction of our might and now comprehend the inevitability of your defeat. And now, you stand before me, the ruler of Paradise, who has brought you to your knees."

"A weak ruler would mock you, strip away your dignity, and revel in your despair. I am not a weak ruler. Therefore, I offer you a choice. Those of you willing to pledge your lives to Paradise will find mercy and opportunity. Submission is your first step toward liberation from the brutal existence of surviving like savages in this desolate world every day. For those who resist, you will taste the full wrath of Paradise—a torment far greater than anything you can imagine. Choose wisely!"

As Orion's words echoed, accompanied by the fierce bluish streaks of lightning that danced through the sky, each connected to him, an eerie silence fell over the entire battleground.

Even Seth, standing beside Orion, couldn't help but be stunned by his speech.

The grand entrance! The oppression! The speech!

Seth nodded in admiration, grasping Orion's strategy. Without drawing his weapon, Orion had stirred them emotionally, planting a false sense of hope that would corrode their resistance against Paradise's rule. Seth's confidence in Orion's leadership soared as he observed the inhabitants of all three Runaway Cities struggling emotionally.

Suddenly, the gods' chosen ones dropped their weapons and knelt, one by one, both on the battlefield and within their Runaway cities. They acknowledged Paradise's overwhelming strength and chose surrender over a futile death.

Eleanora, Lakul, and their respective leaders also knelt their resolve to resist Paradise crumbling. Their sole desire now was to elevate their status within the few Runaway Cities under Paradise's rule and avoid being labelled traitors, thereby escaping Paradise's wrath. Witnessing this scene, Orion shifted his attention to the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City leaders, who were all trembling with fear and dread.

Sensing Orion's gaze upon them, they paled with fright and dropped to their knees one by one. They would also make their Runaway City go on its knees now if they could. However, they couldn't, as they would be powerless against the relentless advance of the Vylkr vines, which were now breaching the once-sealed area.

BOOMM!! BOOOMM!!

Each footstep felt like an eternity until the silence was finally broken.

"You have all made a very wise decision. Take care of your injured gods' chosens and recuperate before heading towards the edge of the immense crater where the Vylkr alloy mine is. I'll inform you all at the appropriate time for a meeting there," Orion added, his voice resonating with authority.

Seth immediately grabbed Greroth and returned beside Orion. With a firm grip on the former emperor, Orion placed his arm around his shoulders, and they vanished with the rise of an immense lightning bolt that ascended into the sky.

Once they vanished, the sky began to brighten, and the rolling thunderclouds dissipated until shimmering sun rays descended upon the battlefield again, illuminating their figures. However, they remained motionless, the scene that had just unfolded continuing to replay within their hearts.

Chapter 1008: A Promising Plan

After placing Greroth in a room within the building where the Vylkr alloy harvesting was taking place, Orion ordered the warriors to attend to him and summon a healer to aid in his recovery until he was well enough to speak and answer their questions. With the number of vigilant warriors keeping watch, any foolish action on Greroth's part would be swiftly thwarted.

Next, Orion instructed Seth to maintain a vigilant watch over the three Runaway Cities. Despite knowing his plan had been effective, remaining alert was paramount to handle any unforeseen circumstances. With that settled, Orion returned to Paradise and immediately summoned the Crimson Greatsword.

The Crimson Greatsword materialized before him in a flash of light, accompanied by Aerialia. "What's is it?" Orion asked, catching Aerialia's gaze. He wasn't quite ready to return home and first surveyed the floating city to assess its condition.

"Nothing much. I was curious about your future as a ruler. After all, I'll be accompanying you until I can reconstruct my new body," Aerialia replied, shaking her head.

Orion smiled and fixed his gaze on her. "So, you won't be with me forever, even after you reconstruct your new body."

"Don't flatter yourself too much. I've dealt with gods, even in matters of the heart, and it isn't something that shakes me easily," Aerialia snorted before adding, "But depending on your future actions and your ability to create a safe haven for my children, I might reconsider."

Listening to her words, Orion was momentarily stunned before a wide smile spread across his face.

Aerialia shook her head wearily, knowing the young man well enough to suspect he was thinking mischievous thoughts. Yet, she remained unperturbed as long as he kept them to himself.

His speech echoed in her mind, reminding her of her influence on Orion's development. She realized he was growing more reliant on her, a change she hadn't fully grasped until now. While he wasn't consumed by his hedonistic desires to indulge in life's pleasures, he remained a capable leader with wisdom beyond his years.

After hours of ensuring everything was in order across the floating city, he went to the Garden. He had planned to inform Aurora about potential ways to heal her and ensure their child's safe delivery tomorrow but opted to do so today.

Witnessing Orion's flight trajectory, Aerialia immediately frowned. "What are you heading to the Garden for? Don't tell me you intend to inform my daughter about our discussion?"

Orion nodded firmly. "I want to tell her some of it, but not everything."

"And what if it fails? Or are you planning to pressure Ilse into learning the Law of Fertility for your own benefit? That wouldn't be a good start to your relationship," Aerialia responded, narrowing her eyes at Orion.

She wasn't concerned about Orion sharing the procedure they had devised with Aurora. Instead, she feared seeing her daughter's hope fade upon realizing their plan might be ineffective.

"If the procedure fails, our only option will be to continue searching outside until we find a remedy for her condition. Aurora may be your daughter, but I love her deeply. She's a strong woman; even if this approach fails, she would want to explore other options rather than give up. You know she'd prefer to have all the information, regardless of the outcome," Orion responded, biting his lip slightly. "As for Ilse, I won't force her into anything. I'll only test the procedure and see if it works."

Aerialia exhaled wearily. "Alright. In that case, let me speak with her myself. If there are any other developments, especially if it doesn't go as planned, I'll handle it."

Though she was reassured by Orion's commitment to Aurora once more, knowing he still held her daughter in high regard, Aerialia felt responsible for sharing this information since she had been instrumental in devising the plan.

Orion glanced at Aerialia from the corner of his eye. Her expression was resolute, making it clear that this was her decision, one he couldn't argue with.

Orion nodded gratefully. "Thank you," he responded, his voice tinged with appreciation.

After a few minutes, they reached the Garden and landed, spotting Aurora tending to the flowers with some of the Pixies.

"Husband!" Aurora's voice was filled with joy as she paused her work to wrap her arms around Orion.

The Pixies respectfully bowed and flew away, sensing their presence was no longer required.

"I have something very important to discuss with you. Aerialia will explain it to you," Orion said, removing his mask.

Aurora brushed the dirt off her hands, turning her curious gaze from Orion to Aerialia. "What is it?" she asked.

Orion nodded at Aerialia before stepping back, giving them space to talk. Twenty minutes later, a Pixie arrived to inform him they were finished.

Orion hurried back to them. As soon as he appeared, Aurora wrapped her arms around him, pulling him close for a deep kiss.

Orion responded kindly, returning her embrace and sharing a passionate kiss before they parted.

"I can't express how happy this information makes me," Aurora said with a smile. "Even if it doesn't work, I'm determined to keep trying. You don't need to worry about my mental state."

Despite spending time with Orion's children, whom she considered her own, Aurora knew little about motherhood. Nevertheless, she was committed to persevering until they found a cure for her condition, regardless of the outcome.

"Since you're here, why don't you spend a little time before you leave?" Aurora suggested. "Saria told me she found the perfect location for the new Garden in the Fourth Border City and the forest. You can help me decide whether it's a good place."

Orion nodded, recalling the large section of the Garden on the mountain that was slowly dying and needed to be moved. "Let's go," he responded before carrying Aurora in a princess carry.

Aurora held him tightly as they ascended into the sky, with the Crimson Greatsword and Aerialia flying alongside them.

Once they arrived at the location, Orion surveyed the area and agreed with Saria's choice. They returned to the Garden and spent more time together before Orion left.

Chapter 1009: A Budding Relationship

If Orion wanted to arrive home instantly, he could achieve it quickly with his flying technique alone. However, he wasn't in a hurry and wanted to enjoy the silence until he arrived home.

As Orion soared over the buildings and entered the borders of the Second Border City, a familiar voice called out to him, "Chief!" He halted mid-flight and turned to see Isadora leaping high from a building and swiftly heading toward him.

Orion descended to the ground as Isadora arrived beside him.

"You're back," Isadora said. She had received information that Orion had delayed his descent with the future leaders of the Runaway Cities today because of something very important. Since she was the one who had prepared their descent, she had been keeping an eye out for his return.

"I heard what happened, so I wanted to ensure it wasn't something serious or I could handle," she added.

"You don't have to worry; I've already handled the issue. Also, I couldn't share it with you," Orion responded.

Isadora nodded, sighing softly in her heart. She thought Orion would be willing to share more important tasks with her due to her role as his personal assistant. However, it appeared that wasn't the case.

"Is there anything else?" Orion asked.

Isadora hesitated before nodding, "I've heard about what you discussed with my father, and I want to know if everything he told me was true."

"Oh, what did he tell you?" Orion asked. He had discussed many things with Patriarch Rylan, but he wanted her to be straightforward about the specific topic she was referring to.

Isadora bit her lip, summoning her confidence as she responded, "It's about the chance to become one of your mistresses. I want to verify if it's something he made up himself, suggested, or if it's truly what you've told him."

Orion smiled inwardly, noting how it had taken her two days to directly broach the topic with him. "I informed him about it myself after he inquired about the two of us," he replied. Upon hearing Orion's confirmation, a deep blush immediately spread across Isadora's face. "Tsk!! Tsk!! She might be pretending, you know. With a chance to solidify her race's position in Paradise, she'd be foolish not to seize it," Aerialia clicked her tongue in disappointment as she looked at Isadora.

She had hoped the young woman would ascend through merit rather than taking shortcuts like becoming one of Orion's mistresses, but it seemed her hopes were misplaced.

Orion knew that if Isadora approached him to become his mistress without any reservations, he would not elevate her to the status of his mistress until he found out why, treating their relationship as a cultural norm in the village.

His perspectives were expanding continuously, and he understood that he couldn't maintain his previous lifestyle from when he first arrived in this world. However, aware of Isadora's intentions and knowing her character, he saw no reason to reject her advances, significantly since they could indirectly benefit the Four-eared elves.

Aerialia could only remain silent, sensing Orion's contemplation as if she could discern his thoughts.

Isadora's shoulders soon dropped in relief as she nodded in understanding.

Since starting her new role as Orion's assistant, she had witnessed his lecherous side many times. However, throughout that period, Orion had never taken advantage of her or used his authority to subject her to hedonistic pleasures despite such practices being deeply ingrained in his village's culture. This only deepened her respect for Orion.

Now that she was the one making advances, she couldn't help but feel ashamed of her behaviour. It felt like she was willingly offering herself despite everything that had transpired. How could she not feel awkward and embarrassed?

"Since that's the case, I promise to work hard to become a Mistress worthy of your love," Isadora responded, slightly bowing towards Orion.

"You don't have to overthink it. Just be yourself. Falling in love is about finding a missing piece of one's heart, so I don't want you to rush into anything you might regret later. I've promised to treat the Four-eared elves fairly as long as they behave appropriately, so there's no need to worry about how things will turn out," Orion responded.

Knowing that Isadora valued her privacy greatly, and since this concerned matters involving his family, he wanted her to feel comfortable with her decisions regarding their relationship. After hearing Orion's words, Isadora nodded, her shyness intensifying. "I understand. But I'll still give it my best. I have other things to take care of before I head home, so I'll be leaving," she said, respectfully nodding at Orion before turning around and walking away.

"Wait a minute!" Orion said, halting her departure. "Have you been practising the art I gave you? How's your progress?" he asked curiously. Knowing Isadora was still mastering the flying technique he taught her, he wanted to ensure she was progressing.

"Ahem! I've only achieved about six per cent understanding so far, but I'm confident I can reach twenty per cent with more practice," Isadora responded, her tone tinged with embarrassment. While she was amazed at her quick grasp of a Divine Art, she felt inadequate compared to the Vylkr warriors, who mastered techniques in mere weeks or within a month, depending on their ranks.

Orion nodded approvingly. "That's impressive progress on your own. Mastering a divine- ranked art is no small feat. If you need any assistance, don't hesitate to ask."

"Thank you, Chief. I'll definitely remember to seek your guidance," Isadora responded, nodding before turning around and leaping high into the sky.

Orion also took to the sky, flying towards his manor. As he landed and walked through the door, Gina raced into his arms, wrapping her limbs around his body.

Gina activated her gift, forming a shield around them as she sealed her lips with Orion's, her tongue exploring every contour. Orion reciprocated, holding her tightly.

Once they parted, Gina descended to the floor and respectfully bowed towards Aerialia, greeting her as well. "Good evening, goddess Aerialia."

Chapter 1010: A Slightly Happy Home

Aerialia nodded in understanding. She had grown accustomed to Gina's respectful gestures and admired her talent. If she were to choose an apostle, Gina would be her second choice.

Orion placed the Crimson Greatsword in a special area within the main parlour.

"How did the appointment of the leaders in the Runaway Cities go?" Gina asked eagerly, her arms linked with Orion as she led him inside the manor.

Due to her pregnancy, a noticeable bulge was already showing on her stomach. She treated herself with extra care, refraining from arousing Orion unless she wanted to go through an unpleasing experience. From the experiences other women had shared, she didn't want to experience it.

The rest of the household looked at Gina with a defeated gaze. They greeted Aerialia one by one, hoping she would share some of her endless stories since there was nothing else to do while the children were asleep and their tasks were complete.

Unknowingly to Gina, the women never had an unpleasant experience having kushi with Orion at any time, only retracting for the rest of their sisters to handle him when they were too tired. They had lied to her so she would develop a little restraint around Orion.

"It's prospone. I had to deal with something even more important today. Also, take down your shield. I never agreed to you using it for such a purpose," Orion responded, pinching Gina's cheek and kissing her forehead to preempt any objections she might have.

Gina relented and took down the shield.

Sura immediately approached and kissed him passionately before pulling away. "What important matter delayed you today?" Gina asked, ignoring Sura's abrupt entrance. With Orion's recent surge in power, they had also noticed his semen becoming more fertile. Until Seraphina and Greta developed a new fertility suppression formula, none of them were allowed to have kushi with him unless they were prepared to conceive again. His semen now even tasted better than Kalna fruits and other varieties within Paradise.

After this discovery, Greta, Celeste, Vivian, Derry, Ayla, Fifi, and Fiona were eager to have more children. However, with their hands full caring for the current children and managing personal tasks, especially with Saria primarily responsible for the children, they had no choice but to abide by the rule.

As such, Gina wasn't concerned about her temporarily diverting Orion's attention.

"GINNAAA!!" A thunderous voice echoed through the manor.

Turning towards the source of the shout, Orion spotted a visibly pregnant Meldra in her elegant dress, glaring fiercely at Gina below.

Sensing Meldra's anger, Gina kissed Orion on the cheek. "I'll come see you in your room later," she said before darting through another door leading to a building adjacent to the

manor.

Meldra locked her gaze on Gina's retreating form and ascended the stairs, intending to use another door connecting the buildings. The interconnected layout made the entire compound appear like one vast and expansive home.

"What's going on between those two?" Orion asked with a furrowed brow.

"Earlier today, Meldra caught Gina in her private study room, reading her book containing several romantic notes about her and you. It caused quite a stir, drawing everyone's attention to this unexpected discovery. The situation was defused quickly when it became clear that Gina had only delivered an herbal mixture prepared by Greta. However, Meldra was still angry and irritated."

"Lyra, Derry, and Whisperwing convinced Gina to show them where the book was stored, leading to an unfortunate accident that partially destroyed the notes. We've been trying to restore them since this afternoon, but it's been difficult. Unfortunately, Meldra has now found out and is blaming Gina, as she's the only one who knew where the notes were kept," Sura explained.

Their recent grasp of writing made replicating Meldra's handwriting and recalling her exact words difficult, further complicating the restoration process.

"You don't have to worry about it, though. Celeste and Ingrid are already prepared to handle it, so the issue will be taken care of soon," she swiftly added. She didn't want Orion to think this was something serious they couldn't handle, especially since she suspected he must have had a long day.

Orion shook his head. "Let's go see how they settle it. It'll be troublesome if Gina and Meldra have any lingering issues because of this in the future," he responded, knowing that Lyra and Derry's influence had already proven to be challenging to manage.

He didn't want Meldra to think that Gina might follow their path. As for Whisperwing, Orion couldn't tell if she had already been influenced or was the one giving them even more wild ideas. She was just as mischievous as the others.

Furthermore, he was curious about what was in Meldra's notes.

Sura shook her head, "No, even if you don't need to sleep, you still need to rest after such a long day. Besides, I have something I need to speak with you about privately." She immediately pulled Orion up the stairs.

Witnessing her gaze, Orion exhaled tiredly and nodded. He planned to check on the issue once The finished speaking with Sura.

They ascended to the top of the stairs and exited the balcony. Sura turned to face him, wrapping her arms around Orion and pulling him into a hug.

"What is it that you want to tell me?" Orion asked, returning the hug and planting a kiss on her forehead.

"I simply wanted to thank you for making me feel special," Sura responded, her chin resting on Orion's chest as she looked up at him. "I, along with several others, know we aren't as extraordinary as Seraphina, Fifi, and the others. We're grateful that with the Vylkr Fusion Armlet, we'll all have a chance to become warriors-a dream we never imagined."

"If that's the case, you'll have to thank Seraphina and the Healers Association because, without their help, I wouldn't be able to accomplish this alone," Orion responded.

"We understand that, but none of this would have been possible without you. They recognize that too, so I'm sure they wouldn't object to you receiving a significant portion of the praise," Sura replied, sealing her lips with Orion's once more.