

## Village Head 1031

### Chapter 1031: A Trade For Aid (2)

However, this was not unique art; it was a legendary art. Its discovery was more than enough to destabilize numerous territories. Even Eleanora had kept this secret to herself, never

daring to reveal it, for what she possessed, and yet--

Eleanora's body quivered as Orion's disappointed voice replayed in her mind. What kind of existence was Paradise that a Legendary Art wasn't worth exchanging for a life?

"There's more..." Eleanora added, clenching her jaw.

Orion looked at her pitiful posture indifferently. "What is it then? I hope your next words are more impressive than your last."

Eleanora hesitantly nodded before responding, "The mysterious man who gave me this Legendary Art said that once I fully mastered it, I would unravel a hidden map to a Timeworn Ruin containing a Divine Artifact. At first, I didn't believe him, but I accepted it since I was getting an art. Only after I progressed did I discover its authenticity."

She paused before continuing, "Of course, I still doubt the information about the hidden map leading to a Timeworn Ruin with a Divine Artifact. However, after experiencing the might of Paradise, I think there might be some truth to it. I beg Paradise to investigate and confirm its validity because I know it can do so. If it's proven true, I hope you fulfil the other end of this bargain."

"And if it's proven wrong?" Orion asked.

Eleanora's body quivered heavily again, biting her lips and drawing more blood. "Then I'm ready to accept whatever punishment Paradise sees fit for wasting its resources and time," she responded.

"Very well, where is this map?" Orion asked, curious.

Eleanora quickly returned to her feet, turning her back to Orion before unzipping her dress.

Initially, Orion was confused and was about to tell her to stop, thinking she was trying to seduce him. Before arriving at this Runaway City, he had already steeled his will, so whatever seduction she employed would be useless and only get her into trouble. However, he swiftly held back his words as she pulled down her neckline.

On Eleanora's back was an elongated dragon resembling an 'S'. Its claws and tail created multiple curved extensions on a tree branch that resembled a straight line. The dragon rested on one side of the line, giving the illusion that its weight was pulling it down.

Surrounding it was a circle containing various mysterious symbols and characters. It resembled an artwork radiating a mystical and enigmatic aura.

"This is a draconic sigil. At first, I thought its appearance was merely a side effect of practising such a powerful art. However, as it began to grow, covering the entirety of my back, I started to have doubts," Eleanora said, holding up the front of her gown to cover her upper body.

Eleanora turned her head to the side and looked at Orion from the corner of her eye, then lowered her head in silence, her heart racing in anticipation as she awaited his response.

A realization suddenly dawned on Orion. The map was on her body. He had planned to take the map and return to Paradise to summon Aerialia and ask her to confirm its authenticity since she would better understand this matter. However, things were more complicated with the map imprinted on her body.

"Can you draw the map out?" Orion asked, quickly coming up with a feasible solution.

"No, it isn't possible. I've tried to draw it out, but the moment I finish, it vanishes as though it was never there in the first place. The entity who created this legendary art must have arranged the sigil so that it cannot be revealed unless practised by the technique's master. I've even tried imprinting halves on separate surfaces, but when they are joined together, they inexplicably disappear," Eleanora explained, shaking her head.

Orion frowned. This was more complicated than he had anticipated.

"Have you searched for the whereabouts of the mysterious man who gave you the legendary art?" Orion asked, pondering the situation.

"Before I ascended to power and took control of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City, he had already disappeared, making it impossible for me to find any clues regarding his whereabouts. I couldn't reveal this to anyone either, for fear of ending up like Patriarch Rylan and the entire Four-eared Lone Rabbit Runaway City," Eleanora responded.

She had shown this to only a few trusted individuals who could be counted on one hand.

On the bed, Sy'ra's eyes were fixed on the draconic sigil on Eleanora's back. No matter how hard she tried to inscribe it into her mind, her vision became hazy, and a pang of headache immediately afflicted her, causing her to withdraw her gaze.

Sy'ra had always wondered how her former Queen had acquired such strength, enabling her to rise from the depths of the slums in the Lower Ward to secure the position of Supreme Leader of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City. As it turns out, it was far more profound than she had imagined.

Who would have thought Eleanora possessed such a secret? It's a pity because it has now fallen into the hands of Paradise!

"Pull your gown back up. We're leaving the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City immediately," Orion said, his expression serious and tone firm.

Just by looking at the draconic sigil on Eleanora's back, he could determine that there was something extraordinary about it. However, he wouldn't be able to truly understand its significance until he showed it to Aerialia and listened to her opinion.

Eleanora nodded and pulled her gown up. She briefly looked at Sy'ra before turning around and exiting the room with Orion following behind her.

Sy'ra looked at the door, her body feeling more weary than before. She drifted off into her thoughts, pondering deeply the whole conversation while waiting for the warrior who would be sent to pick her up soon.

If she knew that things would end up the way they were, she would have vehemently refused the mission given to them by the Journeying Jagaur Runaway City.

## Chapter 1032: The Mysterious Map

Eleanora and Orion soon emerged into the open space outside the Bastion.

As Eleanora began to speak, she was interrupted by a sudden, oppressive force descending upon her shoulders. The force enveloped her and gently lifted her off the ground.

Orion activated the One-Winged Sky Art and soared into the air. Together, they swiftly left the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

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Eleanora's hair fluttered gently in the wind as she hovered above the clouds. Her light crimson dress, embroidered with sparkling precious stones and featuring a high slit on her left side, billowed around her. She clasped the front of her dress tightly against her voluptuous chest to prevent her private features from being exposed, but her back was bare to the world, revealing the otherworldly draconic sigil.

Eleanora maintained a calm and serious expression, radiating an aura of indifference. However, the emotions raging within her heart were entirely different; fear, uncertainty, hope, and anticipation flowed through her, leaving her emotionally strained. Even as a succubus, these emotions were too much for her to handle.

'Calm yourself, Eleanora. You are the only woman I know who knows how to handle her emotions best, regardless of the circumstance,' Eleanora thought.

Behind her, at a distance, Orion stood in the air with his mask still on. He summoned the Crimson Greatsword, which appeared in a dazzling array of light before revealing itself, along with Aerialia.

Aerialia looked at Eleanora in the distance, then focused on Orion. "Haven't I explained to you that I'm not interested in how you choose to handle your desires?" she said sternly.

"That's not it! You know I would never summon you if it wasn't something serious. Just look closer at her back and tell me what you see," Orion responded swiftly.

Aerialia rolled her eyes at Orion's words before nodding and shifting her attention to the back of the half-clothed woman in the distance. Suddenly, her gaze turned sharp. "That's a draconic sigil. How did you come across something like that?" Aerialia asked, redirecting her attention to Orion.

Orion explained everything that Eleanora had mentioned to him.

"So, what are your thoughts on it? Is it truly a map?" Orion asked.

Aerialia nodded. "Although it's complex, fortunately, you have me here," she responded. "It is a map, but it's incomplete. She'll need to completely master this legendary art before we can fully understand how it works. Also, I think this might be the work of a Divine being, so you have to be careful."

Orion immediately became alert. "A Divine Being? Is it related to the dragon god?" he asked. They had witnessed Oberon kill the dragon god, so he was curious about how this was related to a Divine being.

"The dragons are a promiscuous race, always seeking to sow their seed into everything, leading to the creation of numerous half-breeds. So, it doesn't necessarily have to be related to the dragon god, especially when the Divine Mysteries can turn a mortal into a god," Aerialia responded, shaking her head.

"Nonetheless, there's a possibility it's him since we witnessed Oberon kill him, but not his Divine Apostles," she added with a smile.

Upon hearing Aerialia's words, Orion nodded in understanding, though confusion soon filled his expression again.

"Apart from the various reasons I've explained to you for giving mortals our blood and turning them into Divine Apostles, it's because by doing so, once they attain godhood, certain parts of our aspects are assimilated into them, making them not too distinct from the god they once served. It's another form of reincarnation where our essence gets to live on within Divine Apostles," Aerialia explained. She then added, clenching her fist angrily, "This is also why I can't wait to meet that Naka and deal with him for using my Divine Blood to create the Divine Apostles."

It had taken her a long time to accept the existence of her Divine Apostles, but she wouldn't lessen her anger against the manmade god who had created them.

Orion nodded again, then shook his head tiredly. He remembered thinking that he could squeeze out many years of information regarding the gods from Aerialia to be prepared for them. Still, Aerialia had told him how unrealistic that was.

He had eventually come to the same realization and conceded. Nonetheless, he didn't lack the necessary information concerning the gods. And with Aerialia's presence, he didn't need to worry about what he was still ignorant about.

"Now that we've verified the map's authenticity, all we have to do is have her teach it to one of our warriors. They'll be able to swiftly unravel the mysteries behind the map. Maybe we might even finally find the whereabouts of a divine being," Orion said, pondering deeply to devise a viable solution for the problem before him.

"I don't think teaching anybody this art would be advisable. Apart from the dubious circumstances under which she obtained this Legendary Art from a man who neither wanted to monopolize it nor the Divine Artifact, such a Legendary Technique shouldn't be as simple as it looks. It might have severe consequences if you teach it to one of your warriors," Aerialia responded, her expression serious as she redirected her focus back to Eleanora.

A deep frown emerged on Orion's face. He wasn't willing to sacrifice one of the Paradise Warriors or put them in danger recklessly. "So the only option we have now is to aid her in practising the Legendary Art to completion?" Orion asked.

"Yes," Aerialia nodded. "Even though we have goddess Ilse, we are still unaware of the changes that have transpired among the divines, so we must be careful and lay low until we are prepared. Also, if it truly relates to a Divine Artifact, I doubt you'll possess the strength to wield another with your current abilities. So it's best to delay this matter for now."

Due to whatever changes Naka had made to her Divine Artifact and the mountain the Aegis of the Arctic Deity had specially crafted for him, Orion didn't need to spend too much stamina and energy utilizing them.

## Chapter 1033: The Mysterious Map (2)

However, she could sense his consumption when using the Morhic Puppet, so she understood adding another Divine Artifact of unknown origin might do him more harm than good.

Orion exhaled tiredly, nodding his head in response. He took Aerialia's advice to heart.

"Is there anything else?" Orion asked curiously, noticing Aerialia's pondering gaze. "The draconic energy around her is too potent for someone who doesn't possess a draconic lineage," Aerialia responded, then shook her head. "Forget it. It might merely be the effects of the Legendary Art she's practising. Who knows what other effects it possesses?"

Aerialia added. "Just watch her since this is related to a Divine Artifact."

"Okay. I will," Orion responded before re-summoning Aerialia and the Crimson Greatsword into their small Crimson Greatsword mark. Orion then soared towards Eleanora's direction.

Eleanora, standing partly clothed and protected by the oppressive energy around her, with the raging emotions still within her, couldn't help but feel her muscles tightened when she sensed the familiar fierce magical signature approaching her.

"You can pull your clothes back up, Miss Eleanora," Orion said as he arrived behind her.

Eleanora swiftly adjusted her attire, then turned to face Orion. "I've confirmed the authenticity of the map," Orion continued, "but you'll need to master it before we can decipher its secrets fully."

Upon hearing this, Eleanora's shoulders sagged in relief as though his words had lifted a great weight from them. "I'll do my utmost to master it so we can begin the search for the Divine Artifact," she said, her voice filled with gratitude as she bowed her head towards Orion.

"One more thing," Orion added, "Paradise will take care of your needs to ensure you can focus on mastering the Legendary Art. While you'll be given special treatment from now on, be warned: if we discover that you're not meeting expectations, the consequences will be far worse than you can anticipate."

"I will do my best, Supreme Leader, and I won't let Paradise's resources go to waste," Eleanora replied, her voice filled with decisiveness as she quickly shook off her stunned expression.

Despite her hope that Paradise might need her to search for the Divine Artifact, she was unsure of their capabilities. Realizing that they had chosen not to reveal their entire hand-or perhaps couldn't-she felt even more relieved.

Just a few hours ago, her status had been slightly above that of an ordinary Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City denizen. Now, she has become an indispensable individual in Paradise!

"Also, make sure that this information remains confidential-just between you and Paradise," Orion instructed.

Eleanora nodded resolutely. "I will." She wasn't foolish enough to divulge such crucial information to anyone.

"Since we are done here, I'm curious about the individual who drove you to make such a significant sacrifice," Orion asked, his tone filled with genuine curiosity.

Eleanora exuded an air of indifference, her cold demeanour making even the slightest signs of gratitude seem almost unapproachable. Orion was intrigued by the kind of person who could inspire such effort and dedication from her.

'She might seem cold and distant on the outside, but perhaps she's deeply compassionate beneath it all,' Orion mused, concluding that understanding her true nature would benefit future dealings.

"It's my sister. She's gravely ill with a rare disease..." Eleanora began, detailing her younger sister's deteriorating health. "I'm asking Paradise to use its resources to save her."

"So, it's her sister," Orion thought. He was already familiar with Eleanora's sister from the reports about the divine being he had encountered on his first day at the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

The thorough interrogation revealed that Eleanora's sister had refused to cooperate, leading to the assumption that she might have a mental illness. The reports portrayed her sister with such ferocity that Orion questioned whether they were truly related. Yet, seeing Eleanora's deep concern for her presumably ill sister, he sensed something more profound at play.

Previously, Orion might have dismissed Ballasha's words since they hadn't gathered any significant information about the divine being beyond his name. However, now that Eleanora would be under Paradise's protection, he realized they needed to address her sister's condition.

"Alright. Let's return to the surface so you can take me to her," Orion said. Using the One-winged Sky Art, he descended with Eleanora, ready to confront the next challenge.



## Within the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City

### Queen's Palace

Orion followed closely behind Eleanora until they arrived before a door. Two of the gods' chosen stood at the entrance, but that wasn't what drew Orion's interest; instead, it was the door. It was fortified with four locks, each seemingly excluding an otherworldly aura, indicating that they were enchanted.

Eleanora channelled her draconic energy into the locks and released them individually. With each lock that clicked open, ancient runes etched themselves into the door's surface before

disappearing.

As Eleanora pushed the door open, revealing the room beyond, Orion followed her inside, and she closed the door behind them.

The sight that greeted Orion stunned him.

A young woman lay on the vast, lavish bed, her wrists and ankles bound with sturdy enchanted chains anchored securely to the bedposts. Her long, dark hair poured over the pristine white sheets, and she wore a thin white nightgown.

As if sensing their presence, her eyes shot open and scanned the grand room, finally locking onto their figures. Panic, then fear and anger surged through her as she began to take heavy breaths, her attempts to speak stifled by a cloth gagged tightly around her mouth. Her chest heaved, and the chains rattled as she struggled against her restraints, her gaze fixed intently on Eleanora.

"Is she your younger sister, Princess Ballesha?" Orion asked, his curiosity rising. He hadn't expected that the young woman's mental state would be so severe that she was confined and shackled within her room.

Eleanora nodded, "Her mental health is deteriorating every single day, leaving us to worry for the worst if things continue like this," she responded.

Soon, Ballesha no longer fixed her fiery gaze on Eleanora but on Orion.

#### Chapter 1034: Overfulfilling the bargain

Suddenly, Ballesha's lips moved, and she attempted to speak, but her words were stifled once more. Her fiery gaze remained fixed on Orion.

Orion looked at Ballesha curiously, pondering what she wanted to say. He redirected his attention towards Eleanora. "Unbind her," Orion said, directing his gaze towards Eleanora. Without hesitation, Eleanora stepped forward to remove the chains and untie the cloth around Ballesha's mouth. If it had been before, she might have hesitated. However, after becoming one of Paradise's most treasured individuals, such thoughts were far from her mind.

Once freed from her bondage, Ballesha lunged towards Eleanora, her eyes filled with intense bloodlust. However, just as she attempted to do so, an enormous pressure crashed upon her, pressing her body against the bed and dulling her senses.

Even though the dense energy wasn't focused on her, Eleanora could still feel the overwhelming pressure. She steeled her will and stepped back as Orion stepped forward.

Ballesha trembled. The pressure on her was far more than she had ever experienced from her sister. She realized that if she made any more sudden movements, the masked figure might kill her.

Suddenly, Orion's voice resonated loudly, "I am here because I've made a bargain with your sister-to find a cure for your severe illness." He went straight to the point.

Instantly, Ballesha was stunned, her eyes widening in astonishment as she turned to look at her sister with a complex mix of emotions.

Eleanora bowed her head, her hands nervously clasped together.

"Tch!" Ballesha's expression immediately turned fierce. "Kill me. I don't want to live any longer. She's holding me here against my will to prevent me from dying. Rather than wasting Paradise's resources to heal me, I sincerely hope that you kill me," she said, her tone firm as she redirected her gaze towards Orion. Her eyes gradually softened into a heartfelt plea.

Eleanora trembled heavily.

Orion, however, was taken aback. This was the first time he had heard such raw emotions. If he had not known Eleanora and Ballesha's relationship, he would have thought they were mortal enemies, not blood sisters.

Nonetheless, Orion swiftly recovered his composure and focused on Ballesha. "Don't you have anything you want to live for? Your sister has sacrificed tremendously to save you; you're obviously important to her. Don't you feel the same way?" Orion asked, awaiting her response.

Ballesha shook her head, a wry smile emerging on her lips. "I don't have anything to live for. I never did," she replied, her voice tinged with bitterness. She wanted to say more, but her emotions were so turbulent that she couldn't adequately express them.

From a distance, Eleanora trembled even more violently.

"Okay, why do you hate your sister so much?" Orion asked, his curious expression hidden beneath his mask.

Ballesha's eyes darkened, her wry smile fading. "Hate her? Do you think it's that simple?" She laughed bitterly. "I hate her because she might be the one who saved my life, but she's also the one who made it unbearable. She gives and takes everything I have as she pleases. I was never allowed to make my own choices, to live my own life."

"Every decision and every opportunity was dictated by her whims, hidden behind the facade of a saviour and a loving sister. How can you love someone who only sees you as a puppet?" She added, "If you don't kill me here and choose to continue with this, I promise you, sister, you'll regret it."

Her voice cut through Eleanora's composure, freezing her in place. Despite having guessed her sister's feelings, hearing this elaborate explanation of her emotions was overwhelming.

Meanwhile, Orion furrowed his brows, thinking about how to handle the mess before him. He needed to uphold his end of the bargain and heal her, securing Paradise as an entity that always stayed true to its promises. Yet, he couldn't do that if she was actively trying to kill herself.

Orion pondered, thinking of a solution.

"Aren't you tired of living like this? Your sister is soon going to be nurtured and protected by Paradise. Even if you have nothing to live for, you don't possess the strength or authority to harm her or make any decisions of your own." Orion said, pausing and observing the reactions of both sisters before continuing, "I think I may have the best solution for this: Paradise will not only find a way to treat and heal you of your illness, but we will also nurture your ascent through the hierarchy of power, so you'll be able to enact your revenge."

Orion watched as Ballesha's and Eleanora's expressions froze in shock and bewilderment, their mouth wide open, not expecting his sudden choice of words.

"Of course, because we'll be overfulfilling the bargain made with Miss Eleanora, there are two conditions," he added. "First, Miss Eleanora, who presented the bargain, must agree. Second, until Miss Eleanora's deal with Paradise has been fulfilled, you're not allowed to harm her in any way. After that, you can do as you wish, and we will no longer interfere between you."

As Orion finished speaking, he observed Ballesha and Eleanora's expressions. "Miss Eleanora, is this acceptable to you?" he asked, his gaze locking onto her. If she refused, they would need to find another way to ensure her treatment. However, if she agreed, it would be an opportunity to showcase Paradise's benevolence.

Given the unusual nature of the proposal, Orion needed to be more certain about her response. "Yes, I agree," Eleanora responded, nodding swiftly. She hadn't expected the Supreme Leader of Paradise to suggest such a thing, but she would agree to anything if it kept her sister close and gave her the will to live.

Orion couldn't help but wonder if Eleanora was equally mentally unstable.

Ballesha, astonished by her sister's words, smirked. "You should withdraw and keep this generous offer for Sy'ra's full recovery. Otherwise, I promise you'll regret this day," she said, her fierce gaze challenging Eleanora.

## Chapter 1035: Overfulfilling the bargain (2)

She knew she couldn't afford to lose this opportunity, but she wasn't willing to hide her intentions, especially considering the contents of the offer.

Eleanora looked at Ballesha with a firm expression. "Sy'ra's injuries will be treated soon with Paradise's aid, so you don't need to worry about her. Besides, I think this is the best solution to this issue. I won't change my mind, no matter what you say."

A smile appeared on her lips, causing Ballesha's smirk to twist into displeasure. "Paradise can help you get stronger, so you better not misuse this opportunity, or you might end up playing catch-up with me and fall even further behind."

'They're both truly mentally ill,' Orion thought. He was reminded of his happy home in Paradise and the village. Though they had their issues, he was thankful they had never arrived at such a situation.

Ballesha snorted, rolling her eyes in response. "Don't say I didn't warn you," she spat,

shifting her attention to the intimidating, inky-black masked figure before her. "How can I be sure you'll keep your word?"

"As the Supreme Leader of Paradise, I vow on my authority that I'll keep my word and not go back on what I've said," Orion responded.

Ballesha was visibly stunned. She had expected she was speaking with a high-ranking individual from Paradise, but she hadn't anticipated that it was the Supreme Leader himself. As the sister to the former Supreme Leader, she knew firsthand what such a title meant. Her mind paused as she tried to unravel what kind of bargain her sister had struck with the Supreme Leader of Paradise that would personally attract his attention. However, she couldn't come up with anything, realizing there were things her sister hadn't told her.

Ballesha's shoulders slumped in relief as she nodded her head in response. Regardless, she was still going to make sure of this opportunity until the very end.

"I'll send someone to pick you up in a few days so we can begin your treatment, Miss Ballesha. I'll be taking my leave," Orion responded. The longer he remained, the more his desire to leave increased.

"Let me escort you then," Eleanora said with a nod, calmly leading the way forward as she guided Orion out of the room. Once they reached an open space, Orion activated his flying technique and soared into the sky, leaving the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City behind.

Eleanora swiftly called out to the maids in the distance, "Bring me some clean towels and ointments. Deliver them to former Princess Ballesha's room quickly," she ordered.

The maids nodded and swiftly left to execute the order.

### Ballesha's Bedroom

"I never expected the Supreme Leader of Paradise to be so formidable, both in mind and strength. You should have seen me today-I could barely utter a word without immediately feeling defeated and speechless. I wonder what kind of formidable force they are to have gone unnoticed until now." Eleanora praised Paradise and its formidable Supreme Leader as she applied ointment to her sister's wrists and ankles, soothing the injuries caused by the enchanted chains.

"You will regret this," Ballesha said, her jaw clenched in hatred as she glared at Eleanora.

"This is the umpteenth time you've said that. However, you'll be playing catch-up until you're capable of making me regret my actions. So you better not make me regret your words instead," Eleanora replied. "I'll be wiping the dye from your hair next," she stood up to position herself behind Ballesha.

Ballesha tried to move, but an invisible force instantly pinned her to her seat, making her sweat and clench her fists in frustration.

"Thanks to the Supreme Leader of Paradise, I'll enforce some clear new rules you must abide by. If you choose to break any of them, you'll be punished by spending extra time with me or assisting me with personal tasks. Do I make myself clear?" Eleanora's tone and expression turned icy and stern.

Ballesha hesitated before nodding.

Eleanora's demeanour brightened as she reverted to her other self. She continued washing Ballesha's hair until all the black dye was removed, revealing a striking crimson wave. "Now you look much better," she said with a satisfied smile before cleaning her hands and standing up.

"You can go take your bath now. I'll introduce you to the Paradise representatives. Since we'll both be nurtured and cared for by Paradise, it's best to regard them as our acquaintances," she added, moving towards Ballesha's wardrobe and browsing through her collection of elegant dresses.

Ballesha nodded, rising from her seat defeatedly and frustrated, "I'll choose my own dress," she said before walking towards the door. She quickly instructed the maids waiting outside to guide her to the royal bathing room.

Eleanora chuckled softly as she watched the scene unfold. However, her laughter faded, leaving her with a complex mix of emotions.

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Orion hovered high above the sky, contemplating whether to visit the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City before heading to the Outward Stronghold and eventually returning to Paradise. Feeling mentally drained, he left the day's tasks for Isadora to handle.

"I'll make a brief visit before heading back to Paradise," Orion mused, then descended towards the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City.

Their arrival was sudden and unanticipated, leaving them little time to prepare. Nonetheless, after successfully sowing the seeds of Paradise's influence within the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise and Sleeping Fox Runaway Cities, he decided to use this to find an opportunity to devise a strategy for integrating them into their expanding forces.

Soon, Orion descended before a narrow alley pervaded by the scent of rusted metal and smoke.

Orion summoned his miniature mountain and retrieved a new set of attire. Later, he would inform his wives about integrating an enchantment for camouflage in his attire and inform Seraphina about enhancing the Energy Mask Spectrometer with similar and other additional functions.

Draped in a hooded, light green cloak that obscured his figure, Orion stepped out of the alley and onto the bustling streets, his gaze absorbing every detail of his new surroundings.

#### Chapter 1036: The Trekking Flamingo Runaway City's Ongoing Crisis

The tall buildings-with a rusted metallic sheen-were sprawled together as though they were placed without a second thought. They rose high into the air, seemingly attempting to touch the sky.

However, the radiant evening sun was blocked by ashy and black smoke clouds, darkening the small metropolis beneath it and making it appear to belong to another world entirely rather than being part of a moving mechanized habitat in the shape of a flamingo.

When viewed in its entirety from both perspectives-the outside and the inside-it amazed an individual.

Orion walked down the street, sensing the tingling torches of a foul stench that lingered in the air, pervading his nose. It was like the scent of burnt rubbish mixed with the imaginary scent of a mermaid living in sewage. Of course, he didn't know the latter; it was merely an assumption.

Nonetheless, Aerialia had informed him that there were different species of aquatic races, so he was at least hopeful of encountering one soon if they had survived up until this moment.

Orion focused on the denizens of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. The three major present races were as he had expected-Dragmins, Centaurs, and Aarakocra. Other strange races also arouse Orion's curiosity. However, he only gave them a brief glance before returning his gaze forward to avoid attracting too much suspicion.

Some people wore attires like his, attempting to appear inconspicuous, while the rest wore patched or ragged clothes, each heading towards their varied destinations.

Soon, Orion began to pass by hawkers and stalls filled with unknown dried fruits, leaves, slabs of meat, ordinary and magical items, clothes, and other daily necessities. Orion looked at the foodstuffs sold in these stalls and frowned; he wouldn't give them to his enemies unless he wanted to poison them.

'It's just like the others,' Orion thought, comparing this scene to what he had witnessed in the lower ward of the Sleeping Fox Runaway City.

An individual could never understand a Runaway City's challenges unless they witness it themselves. These were people truly doing all they could to survive in this dead, desolate world!

Knowing his purpose for arriving here, Orion approached one of the stalls; his mind focused on the task at hand. He was here to gather information about the inner workings of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, particularly where he could meet the most formidable individuals within the Lower Ward.

"What can I get for you, sir?" said a man of the Aarakocra race.

Orion couldn't tell whether he was older or young, as they all appeared the same.



"I'm looking for where I can meet the most formidable individuals within the Lower Ward," Orion said, his tone rigid. He put his face down to hide his appearance.

Hearing Orion's words, the man remained silent briefly before shaking his head. "Before asking questions like that, it's proper etiquette to buy one of the displayed goods and cover the cost of the information," the man responded.

Orion's behaviour didn't seem suspicious, as information was precious and essential to everyone's survival. Everyone in the Lower Ward tried their best to blend in or move to the middle and upper wards for a better standard of living. The only thing that attracted attention was Orion's spotless, new attire, making it obvious he wasn't from around here.

"How much?" Orion asked, scrutinizing the goods before him.

Initially, he thought of buying them for the children he had seen playing beside the streets, but he would rather throw them into the garbage than hand them out. He even doubted whether these items were picked from someone else's dustbin.

"Four Nindainth Coins for the fresh fruits and six for the dried ones. I know that sounds quite expensive, but I've received information that it will be some time before another trade is initiated. This scarcity has made every seller want to preserve their goods as long as possible to ensure they last while at the same time selling their products for profit," the man explained.

"So, it's already the cheapest you can find in the area, and you'll be getting your money's worth. Of course, if you have goods you want to trade, you can present them."

"I don't have Nindainth Coins, but I have goods to trade," Orion responded, shaking his head.

Nindainth was the last name of the former Emperor of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, so it was easy to recognize that due to his long reign and family succession, they had managed to create a currency for their use. It was remarkable because it allowed them to control their economy slightly.

"Oh! What do you have?" the trader responded, his voice tinged with curiosity.

Orion summoned his miniature mountain from within his cloak and brought fruit from the Garden. He re-summoned the miniature mountain and placed the fruit on the stall's desk, offering it as a trade.

The man's eyes widened in surprise as he swiftly took the fruits into his hands, hiding them beneath his clothing. He glanced around to ensure no one was watching before refocusing on the mysterious cloaked figure before him, who now seemed even more mysterious. He could feel the fruit's plumpness and, with his extensive experience, immediately recognized it as top quality. He realized he was holding a fortune.

"Ahem! If you had mentioned earlier that your goods were of this quality, I would have given you a discount," the man said, his tone now jovial. Why don't you choose which goods you want, and then we can move directly to the information you are searching for?"

Orion couldn't tell whether the Aarakocra was smiling, but he didn't care. "I don't need any of them. Just give me the information I asked for," Orion said firmly.

The man nodded swiftly. "The place where all the formidable individuals in the area gather is the Midnight Butcher Bar. It's a popular spot where gods' chosens rest after their patrols, and warriors looking to make connections often gather there as well."

"Even the criminals in the Lower Ward frequent it, and they're safe while inside because the bar's owner is a formidable warrior himself. So you can enter without fear of being harmed. Remember, once you step outside the bar's territory, you're on your own, so it's best you approach cautiously."

#### Chapter 1037: Midnight Butcher Bar

He wasn't stingy with the information, knowing he had already earned several times more than it was worth.

"Can you give me directions?" Orion asked, his head still lowered.

The man nodded and quickly provided Orion with directions to the bar.

The Midnight Butcher Bar was an off-limit venue for any ordinary mortal within the Lower Ward. It served as neutral ground for various rival factions, making its existence a rarely discussed topic unless one was a native of the Lower Ward.

Orion nodded, taking in the information. As he was about to leave, the man added, "Be careful, good customer. Since Paradise took over the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, tensions have been rising, and people have been disappearing one by one. It might be wise to hold off on your adventures for now."

The man's tone was cautious, and his concern was apparent. He wanted to forge a favourable connection with the mysterious figure before him. He surmised that the mysterious cloaked figure might come from a wealthier part of the city and hoped to increase his chances of a return visit.

Orion stopped in his tracks and turned back to face the man. "How many people have gone missing?" His firm voice betrayed his surprise at the unexpected revelation.

The man shook his head, "I don't know the exact number. However, from what we've gathered, these disappearances are the work of the mysterious force, Paradise. If you want more details, head to the Midnight Butcher Bar. That's where you'll find the information you're looking for."

Orion nodded, concealing his deep frown beneath his cloak. As soon as he turned to leave, he swiftly made his way towards the Midnight Butcher Bar. Descending from the outer Lower Ward to the inner suitable layer took him about twenty-four minutes, and it took him another twenty to pinpoint the bar's exact location.

He arrived at the centre of a towering metallic building, surrounded by a cluster of similar structures that seemed to crowd it from all sides. The bar stood out, with a slightly larger open space around it than the other Lower Ward buildings.

The sign above the entrance read 'Midnight Butcher Bar.' The raucous sounds of lively voices and clattering dishes spilt into the street.

Without hesitation, Orion pushed open the door and stepped inside, closing it behind him.

Immediately, the clamour of voices and the clinking of utensils ceased as if on cue. Every patron in the bar turned their gaze towards him, scrutinizing the newcomer from head to toe with a mixture of curiosity and cautiousness.

Orion kept his head bowed to hide his face, ignoring the abrupt silence that had emerged. He moved forward into the bar, relying on his acute senses to navigate his way to a secluded seat away from the crowd. The moment he settled in, the clamour of noise resumed as if the tense pause had never happened.

As Orion prepared to make himself comfortable, he noticed the bartender approaching. The four distinct hoofbeats revealed that the bartender was a centaur.

"What can I get for you, sir?" came a ruggedly feminine voice behind the desk.

"Bring me the best you can offer," Orion replied calmly. He understood the importance of blending into the environment before he could discreetly inquire about the information he was searching for.

"Are you sure? We serve the most expensive and delicious delicacies from the Lower Ward and the Middle Ward so that it will cost you a lot," the bartender warned.

Orion nodded silently.

"Okay, then pay up," the bartender responded, stretching her hand towards him.

Orion frowned. It might be his first time here, but he knew you usually pay after enjoying your meal. Besides, he didn't want to reveal his resources too easily in public.

Sensing his hesitation, the bartender explained, "There have been a few troublemakers recently who are destroying things as they please. To prevent the bar from closing, customers must pay for their meal upfront and an extra fee for any potential damage. The extra payment will be refunded if you don't cause any damage. So, do you still want to order, or would you prefer to leave?"

A look of realization dawned upon Orion.

"I don't have a Ninadainth coin, so I'll be trading," Orion responded. He was eager to learn what was happening so that he could immediately inform Seth and others and alert them to prepare for the ongoing crisis.

He doubted that the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City leaders would be unaware that such things were happening. However, even if they were oblivious, he intended to sever the roots, not just trim the branches.

"Oh, what do you want to trade, then? As long as it's a good quality item, there won't be a problem," the bartender asked.

Orion brought a fruit from his cloak and placed it on the table.

The bartender immediately snatched the fruit from the table and examined it with surprise. She checked its plumpness and texture to ensure it was real before refocusing her attention on the cloaked individual before her.

She had been suspicious about him from the beginning, just like the other new faces they had received in the past few days. However, her curiosity and suspicion now rose tremendously.

"Tsk! Tsk! Add two more of these, and I promise to give you the best delicacy the Midnight Butcher Bar can offer," the bartender said, hiding the greed that flashed through her eyes. Orion frowned deeply. "I believe one is of enough value for whatever you want to offer," he responded, shaking his head.

The bartender frowned as well. "Okay, then, would you mind if I sampled it to see if it's as good as you claim?"

Orion nodded silently.

The bartender swiftly drew a knife from beneath the desk and sliced off a piece of the fruit. She popped it into her mouth, and almost immediately, a wave of sweetness assaulted her tastebuds, lingering as an aftertaste even after she swallowed. Her expression was one of stunned amazement.

Despite having only tasted a tiny piece, the intense burst of flavour left her mouth-watering. She wondered what it would be like to experience this sensation with an entire mouthful.

## Chapter 1038: The Trekking Flamingo Runaway City's Ongoing Crisis (2)

"How is it? Is it enough value to purchase this bar's best delicacies?" Orion asked.

The bartender's lips curved with mirth. "Alright. Our best delicacies are barlit fried beef, fresh-minted pukilis leaves, fermented relogry fruit wine, freshly skimmed breastmilk, and almond lire fruit wine. Would you like all of them, or do you prefer one?" She eyed the mysterious cloaked

figure, fascinated. In all her years as a bar owner, she had never encountered a fruit like the one he had presented.

Having dealt with numerous cloaked figures who concealed more than they revealed, she had become adept at handling such situations and extracting the information she desired.

Although she suspected he might be from the Upper Ward or even higher, she couldn't dismiss the possibility that this mysterious individual was connected to the recent disappearances within the residential areas.

If he was from the Upper Ward or higher, it could mean establishing a lucrative connection to obtain more of these fruits at a profitable cost. However, if her suspicions about his involvement in the disappearances were correct, it would be... troublesome.

"I'll take the Barlit Fried Beef," Orion responded.

Given the limited amount of edible resources, he wasn't surprised that breastmilk was considered a delicacy here. He had already learned that each race or society had varying degrees of conservatism and were tolerant of each other. Otherwise, the Four-eared Elves and Pixies wouldn't have survived living alongside his people and the Prismarions.

Orion was curious about the process they used to treat it before serving it to the public.

The bartender's smile widened, "Okay. I'll be back in a few minutes, Mr," she nodded before walking away. "Lirae, Cael! Handle the rest of the tables; I'll be back in a few minutes!" she called out loudly.

Orion shifted his gaze to the side and saw two Aarakocras-a man in a brown shirt and black trousers and a woman in a brown midi dress with black embellishments down the waistline. Both nodded in response before refocusing their attention on the customers before them. Two more staff members accompanied them, busy attending to the other patrons.

Orion looked around at the warriors, a few of the gods' chosens, and various individuals he couldn't discern due to their attire. Some wore oversized sleeves, making it difficult to tell if they were gods' chosen, which would make anyone doubt they were ordinary residents. However, since the Midnight Butcher Bar wasn't a place where ordinary mortals could walk in as they wished, Orion didn't make the mistake of drawing such a conclusion.

The inside of the bar was wide enough to accommodate twenty, eight-seater rectangular tables. From the noises above the stairs, he understood that there was another bar upstairs.

After surveying his surroundings, Orion withdrew his gaze. Within fifteen minutes, he sensed the bartender finally approaching him once more.

"Sorry for the wait, Mr. I had to make it extra special since you have the potential to become a VIP customer. Enjoy," said the bartender, placing a tray with two covered plates. She lifted the lid, revealing a light purple medium-sized steak and a reddish-brown sauce in another dish. Orion nodded, taking note of the Devourer's Bracelet on her other hand, indicating she was one of the gods' chosen. It now made sense why other gods' chosen would decide to hang out here and not cause any trouble. He was even tempted to use his mask to gauge her strength but decided against it. There was no need for him to break his cover now.

Focusing on the meal before him, Orion addressed why he came here rather than digging in. "You mentioned there have been some troublemakers recently. Do you have more information regarding that?" he asked.

The bartender, who was about to leave Orion to enjoy his meal and attend to other guests, halted. "Yes, I do. I don't do this often, but since you're a bit special, Mr, I'll answer all your questions if you're willing to trade more of this fruit," she said, her gaze fixed on him with a smile.

She sighed internally, realizing that the mysterious man wasn't related to the sudden disappearances. This meant she could quickly form a connection to obtain more of these extraordinary fruits.

Orion brought out two fruits and placed them on the table. "Tell me everything you know, and don't hold back."

The bartender's eyes widened at the sight of the fruits. She snatched them from the table, her smile broadening. She noticed various gazes directed towards them, but a sharp glare from her made the onlookers quickly avert their eyes.

"Always so nosy," the bartender snorted, her gaze refocusing on the bar.

"Alright, listen closely," she began, leaning in slightly. "There's been a lot of tension lately. People have been disappearing, and it's got everyone on edge. It all began three days after the Supreme

Leader of Paradise's announcement and the defeat of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. Disappearances started occurring in the Lower Ward."

"At first, we thought the news had driven some to take their own lives, trying to escape whatever fate awaited them after the defeat. I suspected something was wrong but couldn't pin it down. However, as hours passed, more people began vanishing, moving from the Lower to the Middle Ward. And every one of them was a Dragmin."

"Rumors are flying that the nobles are trying to resist Paradise, plotting to challenge them and ensure the Runaway city's freedom. Others believe that Paradise views the Dragmins as a threat since they were the only ones able to stand up to them before our defeat."

"I doubt the latter," the bartender said, shaking her head. "From what we've seen of Paradise's power four days ago, those individuals are far from mere mortals. They could have easily resorted to direct execution and genocide, cutting the threat off at the root. So it's unlikely they'd go to such lengths unless there's more to it. Still, I could be wrong since we know little about these mysterious force or their intentions."

#### Chapter 1039: The Trekking Flamingo Runaway City's Ongoing Crisis (3)

"If you have a friend, family member, or relative who's a Dragmin, it's best to warn them to stay hidden for now. If it's already too late and someone close to you has been taken, I'm afraid I don't know where they've been sent. If you have connections in the noble residential area, now would be the time to use them."

Orion remained silent momentarily, his expression grave before finally asking, "And what about the leaders? What are they doing about this issue?"

"I've gathered that the authorities are tight-lipped about the situation. The guards Paradise has stationed to monitor their every move, along with the oversight of the Royal Cave, have left their hands effectively tied."

"They either want to see if they can find a solution or are afraid of giving Paradise the impression that they're plotting a rebellion, risking a complete extermination of the remaining powers—some of which are directly linked to noble families by blood. Regardless of their reasons, it's a shame to see a Grade One Runaway City, on the brink of becoming a Grade Two, reduced to such a state," the bartender replied, exhaling tiredly. She glanced at the untouched plate on the table and frowned.



"Aren't you going to eat?" She had put effort into preparing this meal to build a connection with him and wasn't keen on seeing good food go to waste.

Orion hesitated. Although he was eager to taste meat for the first time in this world, he wasn't naive enough to ignore the possibility of being poisoned or drugged. He trusted his formidable body but knew better than to take unnecessary risks.

Noticing his hesitation, the bartender snorted in disbelief. "I can't believe this. You're the one dressed mysteriously, and yet you're suspicious of my food? Even the idiot who broke some tables yesterday ate with no qualms before stumbling out," she said, then suddenly shouted, "Hey everyone, Mr. Mysterious here thinks I might have spiked his meal with something!"

The bar fell silent once again, just like when Orion first entered. But this time, the quiet was quickly shattered by a chorus of hearty laughter.

"HAAHAAHAHA!!"

"Hehehe, I remember accidentally breaking the signboard and thinking the waiters were serving me sewer water!!"

"Don't blame him! You can look pretty intimidating at times!"

The laughter and playful banter filled the room as patrons cheerfully shared their past mishaps and experiences.

Orion smiled, shaking his head as he realized he'd been overly paranoid. He picked up the knife and sliced off a portion of the steak, drizzling it with a bit of sauce before biting.

The moment the savoury steak touched his tongue, it appeared like the world's flavours had converged in an irresistible burst of seasonings, filling him with a satisfying primal sensation. Just when he thought the experience would continue, it vanished, his cheeks instinctively guiding the steak down his throat, leaving behind a delightful aftertaste.

Without hesitation, Orion cut another piece of the steak and savoured it. After being deprived of such delicacies for so long, the reunion was as mouthwatering as he had imagined.

While it didn't quite compare to the exceptional kalna or other fruits he had encountered, having the luxury of choice was a treat.

"It's good, isn't it, Mr. Mysterious?" the bartender asked with a hint of pride in her tone.

Orion nodded, "It's good," he said. "Do you have any idea where the last disappearance occurred?"

The bartender nodded, "It happened in this section of the Lower Ward. That's why my bar is packed to the brim today. Some seek revenge for their loved ones who've vanished, while others hope to gather information to track down these criminals. Given the nature of your questions, I'd wager you're here for similar reasons, right?"

Orion shook his head. "No, I'm just here to understand what's going on so I can stop it." A brief, heavy silence followed.

"Hahaha! Wait, you're serious?" The bartender's laughter trailed off as she realized Orion's words were no joke. She was taken aback, swiftly regaining her composure and sighing, "You're quite surprising, Mr. If you hadn't shown up, I would have thought heroes in shining armour were merely a relic of the past."

"But since you're not a god's chosen, I didn't expect you to hold such an ideology. You might find yourself dead sooner than anticipated, and I won't get another chance to obtain more of these extraordinary fruits from you."

Orion remained silent, his gaze briefly settled on his bare wrists.

The bartender sighed in disappointment, shaking her head. "Since you're set on your course, I'll share what I know about yesterday's disappearance. The next one will be even more severe, affecting the Upper, Middle, and Lower Wards tonight. This confirms my suspicions that the nobles are deeply involved. I have one specific location: the lower left section of the Middle Ward. You'll have to wait and see for the rest, as it's impossible to be everywhere at once."

"Is that all?" Orion asked.

"Yes, that's all," she replied.

"How do you procure such information?" Orion asked curiously.

"I'm afraid I can't disclose that Mr. As the leading information broker in the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, I'd be out of business if I revealed my sources so easily," the bartender replied, her tone firm.

"How about I supply you with two baskets of this fruit monthly?" Orion suggested. Since he couldn't reveal the existence of his miniature mountain, he couldn't make an upfront

payment.

The bartender pondered for a moment before shaking her head. "I'm afraid that won't work, Mr. We'll need to find another arrangement. However, I can offer you a share of the fruits' revenue, all the crucial information I can gather monthly, and some personal details as needed."

Orion shook his head "Fifty baskets of this fruit."

"You're making this difficult, Mr. If you have such a substantial amount of these fruits, you must be a noble, right? Shouldn't you be able to procure such information yourself?"

#### Chapter 1040: Mysterious Identity

The bartender's tone was tinged with frustration. Her heart ached at the thought of refusing such a lucrative deal. Yet she couldn't afford the risk and grew even more suspicious of the mysterious figure before her.

Realizing that further negotiation would be futile, Orion finished the last of his steak and stood up. "Thank you for the delicious meal. It's the best I've had in forever. I'll be-"

Before he could finish, the bar's door burst open, and a figure stormed in.

"Help me, Great Warriors! My wife has been kidnapped! Please help me!" The man screamed, pleading desperately. He collapsed on the floor, too terrified to walk further or look at the intimidating figures within the bar.

A solemn silence descended upon the bar.

The warriors and gods' chosens gripped their weapons tightly, rising from their seats one by one. Deep frowns appeared on their faces as they scanned the room.

Orion remained in his position, his acute senses detecting several individuals surrounding the bar.

"It seems you're in luck today because they are here," the bartender said, taking Orion's tray and cleaning up the space where he had eaten.

"Aren't you worried they'll break in and destroy your bar?" Orion asked curiously. Considering the number of warriors and gods' chosen packed in here, it seemed the perfect place for the enemy to sabotage if they wanted to eliminate any hindrances obstructing their plans.

Suddenly, a warrior rushed forward, dashing out of the Midnight Butcher Bar. Almost instantly, another one followed suit, not wanting to be left behind.

Then another...

Even those upstairs soon realized what was happening and rushed downstairs, dashing out the door one by one. The gods' chosens soon followed, each armed with a weapon and eyes radiating an intense intent to kill.

After the bar was completely cleared, the servers tidied the empty trays and eating areas. The bartender responded, "Unless they no longer want to live, they won't dare try such a thing. Of course, some always think they can, but they inevitably become a warning. Don't look down on this bar, Mr. It might be a bit rusty, but I dare say it's one of the safest places within the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City."

Her response only made Orion more curious about her identity and background. He couldn't help but ask, "Who are you?"

The bartender smirked. "If Mr. Mysterious is willing to reveal his identity in exchange, I might reconsider revealing mine." Although revealing her identity might cause minor problems, she considered it worth the risk as long as she could secure more special fruits.

Knowing who he was would make it easier to track him down and uncover how he had acquired such extraordinary fruit. Besides, the cloaked figure before her seemed far from ordinary, making it a fair trade.

Contrary to her expectations, Orion shook his head. "I can't reveal my identity now, Miss. If I have the time, I'll visit again to taste more of your meals."

Surprise flashed across her face, making her even more curious about the cloaked individual.

"CHASE THEM!!" a loud voice thundered from outside the bar.

"I'll be taking my leave," Orion added.

"Right. I almost forgot you came here to play hero. Let me escort you; I'm curious to see who's been causing such a stir lately," the bartender nodded, following Orion toward the door.

Arriving at the door, they peered outside and saw two gods' chosens locked in combat with a cloaked figure who held a small, struggling individual in their grasp. Surrounding them were five severely injured warriors, their faces etched with fear and defeat, barely clinging to the will to fight.

The aftermath of the battle and the clamour of noise they had heard moments before led Orion to deduce that similar fights were unfolding in other sections of the city.

As Orion prepared to intervene, a hand abruptly blocked his path.

It was the bartender's hand!

"I'm sorry, Mr., but it seems you'll need to find another opponent to challenge and play hero," the bartender said, her tone cold and rigid. It was a stark contrast to the pleasant demeanour she had displayed earlier.

"Are you sure?" Orion asked, frowning. Though he didn't know the bartender's full capabilities, he could see that the gods' chosen before him held his own against two others, using one hand to fend them off while clutching a small child in the other.

"Miss Kerensa!!..." A distressed voice echoed from the bar's upper level, followed by the sight of a woman racing toward them.

She was joined by a man whose face was etched with fear and worry. Both were Dragmins, dressed in similar attire to the two servers Orion had seen earlier.

They arrived before Orion and the bartender.

"Miss Kerensa!! Little Zeya hasn't returned from the market..." The woman's voice faltered as she saw the battle raging in the distance, her eyes widening in shock.

Although the battle unfolded too quickly for her to grasp fully, the flashes of the child in the cloaked figure's arms stirred a haunting familiarity in her mind.

"Little Zeya!!" the woman cried out, her voice a mix of fear and desperation. She tried to rush forward but was quickly restrained by the man beside her.

The man turned to the bartender with pleading eyes, "Miss Kerensa, please help us save Little Zeya. We can't lose her now."

"Enough with the pleading," Kerensa replied, clearly irritated. "Haven't I clarified that I'm responsible for your safety as long as you work for me? Tsk! You'd all be dead by now if I weren't keeping watch over you amidst all the enemies we make daily." She then ordered, "You stay here and don't move. You, fetch my Gearweaver!"

The woman nodded, standing firm while the man dashed back into the bar to retrieve her Gearweaver.

Orion observed the scene unfolding before him and quickly grasped the situation.

"As you can see, Mr., these people have touched a nerve by harming one of my own," the bartender said, her eyes blazing with intense fury as she briefly glanced at the mysterious cloaked figure beside her.