

## Village Head 1171

### Chapter 1171: Preparations For The Divine Inheritance

"You say that you speak to the goddess. Do you see her? And if possible, can you arrange a meeting where we can speak to her? I doubt you're just a Priestess. You must have some

purpose, right?" Orion said, refocusing on her.

"Yes, I see her in my dreams. It's possible, but it will take some time as it puts a strain on my body. I just spoke to her several minutes ago," Zera responded with a smile. "You are right. My purpose is to serve as the guardian of this realm. I have to remain here to take care of those who enter this realm to find solace, before giving them the chance to choose whether to remain or leave."

From her tone, it felt that she enjoyed her task yet somehow felt remorse regarding it. "Also, because my goddess didn't look down on the convictions of her demigods. If they succeed in finding or raising someone stronger, capable of killing them, and choose to make their way here, I will be there to help them receive the goddess's inheritance, and put an end to all of this so they can all rest in peace," she added.

"Is that all?" Orion asked.

"Yes," Zera replied with a nod.

"You still haven't told us your goddess's name," Orion pressed.

"Oh, we don't know her name. No one does-not even the demigods she trained. We only know her title, which is what we use to address her," Zera responded.

'This is going to be difficult,' Orion thought. He knew he would have a better chance of learning more about the goddess through her name by asking Aurora, as names were absolute, unlike divine titles which could change.

As Orion pondered, Aurora spoke up. "Fine. Even though I still doubt your identity, I will give you the benefit of the doubt that you are who you say you are."

Zera shifted her attention to Aurora and nodded, smiling. She seemed to enjoy Aurora's suspicions about her.

"I understand that you're having a hard time believing I'm not the goddess, which is a privilege in itself. But I'll do my best to convince you she is dead," Zera responded.

Aurora's expression remained blank, devoid of any reaction to her words.

Zera chuckled and refocused on both of them. "Is that all the questions you had?" she asked, her tone curious.

Orion whiffled his head. "No, it's not. We also want to know why she went against the divine mysteries, how she achieved perfect mastery of Vylkr energy..." He hesitated, about to ask how she entered here and what her relationship with Paradise was, but remembered Rimehelm's warning and decided against it.

Zera thought Orion was trying to rephrase his questions for clarity, and responded.

"If that's what you are after, you will have to wait until you receive the goddess's inheritance. With that, you will gain knowledge of everything that happened in the past and her intentions for the future," Zera replied.

"When can we begin receiving the goddess's inheritance?" Orion asked, his tone tinged with impatience.

"You'll need to wait five days. We have to prepare for the grand occasion, and you can use this time to rest," Zera responded.

"Five days? That's too long! Can't we move it sooner and get it over with?" Aurora interjected. They were uncertain if they could wait for five days for their questions to be answered.

"This isn't something that can be rushed. Everything must be perfectly prepared," Zera said, shaking her head.

"Fine, as long as we get all our questions answered, we'll wait until then," Orion agreed. "I promise you won't regret it. We have a lot of great spots that I'm sure you will love and find

relaxing," Zera responded with a smile. "If you don't mind, I also have a few questions of my own that I'd like to ask."

"What is it?" Orion asked, raising a brow.

"How is the outside world beyond this place?" Zera asked, her tone and gaze filled with curiosity.

"It's not as beautiful or pleasant as you might think. You are faring much better here than out there," Orion replied. He noticed the look in her eyes and quickly recognized the intent behind her question.

Zera nodded, seeming disappointed, then asked, "How about where you're from?"

"It's better..." Orion said before explaining some details about Paradise without giving away too much. He also gave brief details about the outside world.

"Wow! Such a place really exists in the outside world, and you're the leader?" Zera's mouth fell open as she sized up Orion. Her suspicions about the young man before her were confirmed he was truly extraordinary to have accomplished such a feat.

Orion nodded in affirmation.

Zera asked another question, and Orion's response heightened her interest and curiosity, especially as he spoke about the Runaway Cities and several other topics.

They talked for several minutes before concluding their conversation.

"That's amazing! I never expected there would be such drastic changes. Thank you for informing me," Zera nodded gratefully toward Orion.

"You're welcome," Orion responded.

"Now that we're done, I'll let you go rest in your rooms. I need to make several arrangements to prepare for you to speak directly with the goddess. If you would like, you are free to walk around and explore," Zera said, then gently clapped her hands.

After several seconds, a young woman-human, dressed in a simple white dress- stepped into the garden, swiftly arriving beside them and bowed gently toward Zera.

"This is Morriel. She's the only worker residing in my manor. She'll take you to your rooms, and you can call on her if you need anything," Zera said, pointing toward the young woman. "We are a bit modest and may not have everything for your accommodation, so I hope you can forgive us," she added, looking at Aurora.

"It's fine, you can arrange for us to stay in the same room," Aurora responded, shaking her head.

Zera furrowed her brows but understood. She pondered that they were still cautious of her, which was understandable. Deciding to stay in one room was likely their way of ensuring security. She couldn't help but feel that Orion was a very lucky man to have earned such friendship from a goddess, who was willing to share a room with him to ensure his safety. If Zera had known that their relationship was far more intimate than she imagined, her thoughts would have drastically changed.

Morriel nodded in understanding. Turning to Aurora and Orion, she bowed and said, "Please follow me."

Orion and Aurora nodded at Zera before turning and following the worker.

Zera observed them as they walked out of the garden and entered the manor, before turning to the other side and leaving.

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Orion and Aurora soon arrived at a door. Morriel opened it and led them into a spacious room.

"This is where you will be staying. The Priestess rarely receives visitors, so I can assure you that you are the first to stay in this room after its renovation," Morriel said, stopping and observing them with a smile.

"If you need anything, please ring that bell, and I will be here within a few minutes to assist you." She pointed to a small golden bell tied to a small rope hanging beside the door and

another near the beds in the separate sleeping area.

"Fruits, freshly grilled meat, and other assortments will be delivered to your room within an

hour. If you would like to explore the city, please inform me so I can arrange for a few guards to guide you. This will ensure you can get around easily without any issues. After that, you can explore on your own if you wish. If you want to go outside the city, I will speak to the Priestess, and she will personally arrange the outing. I'll take my leave now," Morriel

concluded.

Orion and Aurora nodded in understanding.

Morriel bowed to them before turning around and leaving the room.

As the door closed behind her, Orion walked over to one of the beds and lay down. "What do

you think?" he asked, looking at Aurora, who was approaching him as he made himself

comfortable on the bed.

Aurora used her sceptre to place a barrier around their room, ensuring their voices wouldn't

be overheard, and no one could peer into the room.

Then, she unsummoned her sceptre, hiked up her dress and laid on top of Orion, making herself comfortable before responding, "I don't think she told us everything, so I still don't

trust her."

Orion nodded in agreement.

He summoned the Crimson Greatsword, and with it, Aerialia emerged. "Tell me everything that's transpired," Aerialia said, her arms crossed under her chest, her gaze fixed on Orion and Aurora as they lay intimately on the bed.

Orion nodded and explained everything that had occurred, with Aurora chiming in at times to share her own thoughts.

After half an hour, they concluded their discussion.

"I have never heard of a goddess with such a title," Aerialia said.

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"Are you sure?" Orion asked.

"Yes," Aerialia replied, shaking her head. "However, there were many gods who made it through the gate, some of whom I don't even know about. If she's one of them, it's believable. But I find it odd how she ended up in the pocket dimension after Naka abandoned it. Could she be one of his experiments?" she asked.

Aurora's expression twisted in displeasure at the mention of that name.

Orion's eyes widened, realizing how he had missed such an important possibility.

It was common knowledge that Naka had experimented on numerous individuals before they began to utilize Vylkr energy more efficiently than others.

However, he couldn't understand why Naka hadn't taken her with him when he left.

Could it be that Naka foresaw she would never become a true god and deemed her an ineffective experiment? That seemed plausible, considering this was the same man who had used his race as experiments, discarding them after they showed no progress in surpassing a certain limit of strength when utilizing Vylkr energy.

Orion knew Naka's ultimate goal was to break into heaven, still believing it hadn't been destroyed, with the emergence of the 'divine mysteries.' Anything that couldn't cross that barrier was seen as a failure in Naka's eyes.

The only individuals who had the potential to cross that barrier were the 'great gods of humanity,' but they were all Naka's foes.

Orion began to wonder if the madman had once again started working on a 'great god' experiment this time, one that would be fully under his control. His eyes widened as a new thought emerged.

The only entities he had encountered that were comparable to gods were the Vylkr spawns. Ever since encountering those divine beings, he had placed them on a pedestal, forgetting that others had already dragged them down.

It would be foolish for him to jump to conclusions without proper evidence of Naka's full forces, strengths, and weaknesses-lest he fall prey to ignorance.

"Zera said she's preparing for us to speak with the goddess directly, so we'll find out who she is sooner or later," Orion said.

"Alright. Keep an eye on that Priestess. I don't trust her either. Before you speak to the goddess directly or receive any inheritance, summon me. I want to make sure you're not being deceived. I won't feel comfortable unless I know you're safe, and I have some questions to ask her," Aerialia responded.

They both nodded in understanding.

"I'll leave now so I don't interrupt your bonding session," Aerialia added with a smirk, glancing at Aurora's flushed skin and the soft, breathy sound she made.

She cast a brief look at Orion before disappearing in a stream of light back into the small crimson greatsword sword.

Orion unsummoned the Crimson Greatsword.

As Aerialia vanished, Aurora leaned in and kissed Orion's lips. It was reckless to get intimate with each other and let their guard down where they might be watched, but that didn't mean she was unwilling to shower her husband with a bit of affection and receive some in return.

Orion responded to Aurora's advances.

After a few minutes, they pulled back and began discussing their plans moving forward. Morriel soon arrived with an assortment of dishes, carried on a trolley filled with trays of food.

However, neither Orion nor Aurora was in the mood to eat or sleep, so they decided to take a tour outside.

Morriel arranged for guards to act as their guides and informed Zera a few minutes later.

Three days later

Orion and Aurora spent the last three days touring the area outside Zera's manor.

As they had been informed, no one followed them or kept a watchful eye on their movements.

It almost felt as if they had become inhabitants of the sanctuary themselves.

This wasn't hard to believe, as the inhabitants of this Mirror Realm were already used to outsiders visiting, staying briefly, and leaving soon after. Some had chosen to remain and live out the rest of their days here.

They had learned that this place was simply called 'Sanctuary.'

Orion and Aurora found it a fitting name, considering everything the inhabitants had been through.



The inhabitants, upon discovering that Orion and Aurora had newly arrived from the outside world, were eager to learn more about the current developments outside.

Orion and Aurora told them about their battle with the Harbingers, alongside the remaining three forces of the sea, and how they had now secured a safer location within their territory.

Many snorted at their words, believing them to be lies. However, after learning that the two were staying in the Priestess's manor, and hearing the news-spread throughout the Sanctuary by the Priestess herself-about the preparation of the goddess's inheritance for them, their doubts were quickly dispelled.

Nevertheless, this caused a ripple effect within the Sanctuary. Hundreds of thousands flocked to see Orion and Aurora when they left the manor on the second day, and over a million came on the third day.

Because of this, Zera stationed guards to help them navigate through the overwhelming crowds.

Orion and Aurora expected Zera to address the growing agitation within the Sanctuary, which, though generally peaceful, was disrupted by the excitement.

Surprisingly, Zera did nothing and allowed it to continue.

On the fourth day, Zera summoned them, informing them that the necessary preparations had been completed, and they could now speak directly with the goddess.

Without hesitation, Orion and Aurora followed Morriel as she led the way.

They moved from the north wing to the main wing, where Zera resided, arriving within ten minutes.

Zera stood beside a closed wooden door, gazing at the vast compound before her in a daze. Sensing their arrival, she snapped out of her thoughts and turned to them with a smile.

Morriel bowed and said, "I've brought them, Priestess."

"Good. You can return to your duties; I will handle things from here," Zera replied.

Morriel hesitated briefly but nodded, turned around, and left.

Zera nodded at Orion and Aurora. "I've heard about your actions over the past three days. It seems you've enjoyed entertaining the residents with your stories. Several Arch-Knights and Knights have informed me of the challenges in maintaining order and peace when you returned to the manor, all while they were preparing for the divine inheritance," she said with

a smile.

"We apologize. It seems we might have caused you a lot of trouble," Orion said.

"You don't need to. The Sanctuary has become more invigorated compared to before, so it's a good thing," Zera replied, shaking her head with a light chuckle.

"I've made all the arrangements so you can speak with the goddess."

"Please follow me," Zera gestured for them to follow as she turned towards the wooden door, pushed it open, and walked inside.

Orion and Aurora followed behind her.

The door closed behind them.

Inside was a dimly lit hallway leading to another room.

After passing through, they arrived in a chamber illuminated by magical glass torches.

At the far end of the room was a radiant mix of golden and inky black pool, glowing like molten liquid, its unnaturally still surface reflecting no image.

As they paused before it, Orion and Aurora looked on in surprise, sensing the dense divine energy radiating from within.

"Wait here, I will commence the ritual," Zera said, glancing at Orion and Aurora behind her.

They nodded in response.

Seeing their acknowledgement, Zera refocused on the golden pool, took a deep breath, and stepped into it.

As she entered the pool, it glowed with an intense golden and inky black hue, illuminating the entire chamber.

The golden and inky black liquid clung to her feet as she descended, and a web of golden and inky black veins spread from her legs to every part of her body.

Zera let out a gasp but didn't stop. She continued stepping forward as though descending stairs until she was fully submerged in the pool.

After a few moments, the pool began to boil vigorously. Several minutes passed before it stabilized, and ripples began spreading from the centre.

SWOOSHHH!!

A dense pressure descended upon the chamber, and a figure began to emerge from the pool, rising above it.

Aurora quickly summoned her sceptre, creating a barrier around herself and Orion to shield them from the immense pressure that made her entire being shudder, her instincts screaming

in fear.

"Are you okay?" Aurora asked, her expression filled with concern.

Orion took a deep breath and exhaled, trying to regain his composure now that the suffocating

pressure had been lifted. His body was drenched in sweat, and his legs trembled from the sheer force that had nearly brought him to his knees.

"I'm... fine now," Orion replied with a nod. He swiftly summoned his morphic puppet,

wrapping it around himself like armour, and then summoned the Crimson Greatsword.

With a flicker of light, Aerialia appeared alongside it. He shortened the length of the greatsword and pressed it against the ground, using it to steady himself.

Aurora exhaled in relief and nodded, then refocused her attention on the figure floating above the golden and inky black pool, her expression turning serious.

Chapter 1173: Meeting With The Goddess Of Twilight Chorus And Fortune (2)

The golden liquid seeped away from the goddess's body, flowing back into the pool.

Seeing the familiar goddess with short golden hair-now without the tiny black and white streaks-dressed in a knee-length black gown as dark as night with rough edges at the hem, Aurora's eyes widened in shock.

She looked eerily similar to Ilse.

As the goddess opened her eyes, another pressure wave enveloped the chamber.

CRACK!

In an instant, Aurora's barrier shattered. Before she could reinforce it, the pressure slammed into her, knocking her to the ground with a heavy gasp. Her sceptre slipped from her grasp and landed a short distance away.

Orion lay unconscious on the ground, blood oozing from the cracks in his morphic puppet armour, staining his face.

The crimson greatsword had sunk deeper into the earth.

Seeing Orion's condition, Aurora's expression morphed, then twisted into rage.

Aerialia observed the scene with a solemn gaze before refocusing on the goddess floating above the pool. She stretched out her right hand, and in an instant, the crimson greatsword pulled itself out of the ground and flew into her ethereal grasp.

As Aerialia raised the greatsword, she restored it to its full size-about four meters long. The tip of the greatsword hovered beneath the goddess's chin.

The goddess withdrew her gaze from Orion and Aurora towards Aerialia.

"I understand your worries, but I advise you to restrain your power unless you want to be entirely erased from existence," Aerialia said coldly, her tone and expression solemn.

As soon as she finished speaking, the crimson greatsword hummed violently, radiating an intense glow. Outside the manor, a blood-red moon appeared above the clouds, bathing the sky in a crimson hue. It overshadowed the sun and its light.

Witnessing this ominous sight, the sanctuary residents panicked. In an instant, soldiers were tasked with maintaining order. At the same time, several Arch-knights and knights rushed toward the Priestess's manor to figure out what was transpiring.

Within the chamber,

After a brief silence, the goddess dispelled the oppressive pressure that had enveloped the chamber.

Sensing the change, Aurora sprang to her feet and grabbed her sceptre. She didn't hold back this time, creating a powerful barrier around herself and Orion.

A shimmering translucent barrier emerged out of thin air, encasing them both.

Aurora coughed up a mouthful of blood but quickly healed herself and Orion simultaneously. After six minutes, they were thoroughly restored.

Orion was no longer drenched in blood, his external and internal injuries healed, and he seemed empowered and more robust. His eyes flickered open as he regained consciousness. With Vylkr energy seeping into the cracked morphic puppet armour, it too swiftly recovered, returning to its pristine form.

Aurora exhaled in relief and helped Orion to his feet. Although she had used up three per cent of the energy stored within her sceptre, she didn't care.

"How are you feeling?" Aurora asked, her expression filled with concern.

"I feel much better now," Orion replied with a nod. "Thank you."

Aurora nodded and gave him a brief kiss on the cheek. Without hesitation, she used her sceptre to open a rift in space, causing a hundred headless winged spawns to pour out and fill the room. This action drained another two per cent of her energy reserve.

Aurora felt the strength of the headless, winged spawns was immediately suppressed to one-fourth of their original power. However, she knew that even this wouldn't be enough against the familiar yet mysterious goddess before them, so she focused solely on defence.

Seeing that Orion and Aurora had recovered, Aerialia withdrew the crimson greatsword. Outside, the bloody red moon dissipated into thin air like it had never appeared. Still, the crimson glow around the greatsword remained, ready to strike.

Orion raised his head and looked at the familiar goddess before him with a shocked and puzzled expression. "What happened?" he asked.

"My guess is that she wanted to take you all hostage and verify your intentions for coming here, possibly by reading your memories. If she had any other plans, she couldn't carry them out now. Regardless, this proves that this goddess isn't as trustworthy as her 'Priestess' made her out to be," Aerialia responded, glancing at Orion and Aurora.

"As for her identity, we can hear the explanation from her personally, along with the reason she's done all of this."

They fixed their gazes on the goddess floating above the pool.

A tense silence filled the room.

The goddess narrowed her eyes at Aerialia. "You are Aerialia, goddess of the Hunting Moon?" she asked, her voice emotionless and eerie, as though posing a question.

Aerialia nodded in response.

The goddess shifted her attention toward Aurora, then refocused on Aerialia, her once emotionless expression morphing into confusion. "How?"

"That is Goddess Aurora, my daughter, and the man beside her is her husband, Orion," Aerialia introduced them.

"Since you don't seem to have lost your memories, you should already know the answer to that question. However, compared to me, you have it much worse, as we already have an Ilse back in our territory. I'm not sure she'll be pleased to find out there's another one here," she added.

The goddess froze, her body trembling, and her eyes widened in realization.

"Impossible..." she spat. "That bastard!!"

"I need an explanation for what has happened here and who or what you are," Aerialia said. "Where is she?" the goddess demanded, her teeth clenched as she fixed a fierce gaze on

Aerialia.

Suddenly, a tense pressure slowly enveloped the surroundings.

"I asked you a question first, so think carefully before you do anything foolish. I wouldn't mind helping goddess Ilse eliminate a fake I encountered," Aerialia replied, raising her

sword.

The goddess narrowed her eyes at Aerialia, her teeth clenched, emotions swirling through her once serene gaze—anger, frustration, grief, pain, hatred, and more. Soon, she exhaled and dispelled the pressure.

"I am Ilse. However, you can now refer to me as the Goddess of Twilight Chorus and Fortune. I am unaware of the Ilse you speak of, but whoever she is, she's the fake," the goddess introduced herself.

"That will be for us to judge. Continue," Aerialia responded, pointing the crimson greatsword

blade at her.

"More than 7,000 years ago, I was infected by Vylkr energy that had emerged from the corpse of a divine being known as Oberon, also called the Aegis of the Arctic Deity. After being transplanted into an Omnithriallain's body, the fool made a vow with an Omnithriallain to fully gain possession of its body. The vow was to eliminate all the gods that entered this universe through the stellar gates."

"He failed, and in retaliation, he was cursed by the Vylkr energy, which slowly devoured him. This energy was harmful to divine beings, and unfortunately, I was infected," Ilse explained, her fierce gaze wavering as though hesitant to reveal how she became infected.

"We're already aware of that. You can skip to what transpired afterwards," Aerialia said, her gaze filled with pity.

Ilse looked away briefly before continuing, "After the confrontation with the 'Seven Great Gods,' which resulted in severe losses on both sides, Na...ka... sealed part of what was known as Paradise, including those who had survived the war, within this pocket dimension. His goal was to hide me



while he searched for a cure for the curse. Initially, he was confident, but eventually, he realized that even his abilities were no match for the fury of an Omnithriallain -a race created by the combined might of the gods while they were in heaven. "He performed all kinds of experiments, such as attempting to restore me fully and even stripping me of my divine status to that of a mortal to eliminate the effects of the curse. But none of his efforts could save me from the gnawing claws of the curse."

"In desperation, he chose to collect fragments of my divine soul and essence that hadn't been infected and placed them in the imperishable corpse of an Omnithriallain. Even though I was unwilling to see myself reduced to such a state, as it wasn't a true rebirth, it was the only option. It worked, but at the same time it didn't. The body seemed to reject the divine soul and essence, creating a stalemate where both struggled for control yet were sealed together. It never fully awakened. Eventually, he gave up," the goddess clenched her fists as she spoke. "With a genuine divine being now infected by Vylkr energy, he decided to use my remains to continue his experiments in creating the perfect race, one capable of breaking into the heavens. The other subjects of his experiments were the remaining races within Paradise. Initially, he made countless errors in trying to grant them the ability to control this cursive energy, which could directly harm even divine beings."

"Even if the subjects weren't killed outright by the Vylkr energy, they succumbed to an illness known as the Death Plague, where their will was eradicated by the curse. However, he eventually made progress. His experiments led to the result of mortals who could restrain the dire effects of the Vylkr energy."

#### Chapter 1174: Mutated Divine Embryonic Seed

"Still, there was a limit to how much their bodies could endure. Once that limit was reached, they would die. The only difference was that they could not produce Vylkr energy naturally, just like his first subjects, and had to depend on harnessing Vylkr energy from other sources. However, what he initially counted as a setback was another tremendous progress.

"Regardless, that was all the progress he made. At that point, he gave up, deeming the entire endeavour a failure. He collected samples of the Vylkr energy and various other things, then made several arrangements before leaving elsewhere after ensuring that his tracks wouldn't be traced easily."

Her voice became sombre as she continued.

"After all that, I had to watch as the consequences of his experiments rippled through the races within the pocket dimension. The races became divided and fought relentlessly-over resources and limited land space-while battling those who had succumbed to the Death plague. Like the Vylkr

energy, the infected adapted quickly to the environment and their prey, creating countless more casualties. Several races went extinct from infighting and genocide."

"At that point, I couldn't remain idle any longer and had to intervene. Fortunately, the curse was sealed, which slowed its effects on my body-weakened my body and prevented me from using my divine energy. However, that wasn't an issue. I was still comparable to that of a divine being. I united the survivors and channelled their rage toward the tainted ones."

"Using the knowledge I had gained from Naka's laboratory while observing his work, I created the Void Heart, which could prolong their lives and ensure that even those tainted could indirectly continue protecting their races after death. This also meant they would collectively hunt the tainted ones without further intervention. The results were satisfying, and I had no issue with it."

"You created the Void Heart?" Orion exclaimed, his voice tinged with surprise.

Aurora also bore a look of surprise but quickly suppressed it.

The goddess turned her gaze toward Orion and nodded. "Its creation was based on understanding the complex structures of the curse, the ranks of energies and the mortal body -something no mere mortal could achieve. So, yes, it makes sense for it to be the handiwork of a divine being," she replied. "Nonetheless, I didn't create it alone, so I wouldn't be so arrogant as to take full credit for something as trivial as that."

"Who aided you? Was it a divine being?" Orion asked.

"Yes, it was a divine being. Her name was Margona, the goddess of Malevolence and Witches. If you're familiar with that time, you should know she was one of the eight Greed Gods. Curses were one of her specialities; with her help, I could weaken and delay the effects of the Vylkr energy," the goddess responded.

Hearing this, Orion frowned, his expression filled with confusion.

Even Aurora looked at her strangely.

"Wasn't she already dead before all of this happened?" Orion asked.

"We know that only two of the eight Greed Gods survived, while Naka killed the rest," Aerialia said with a nod, frowning deeply. "You had better be telling the truth and not making things up because we can easily tell if you're lying."

The goddess glanced at Orion, hidden within the barrier, then refocused on Aerialia and exhaled wearily. "It seems you don't know everything, then," she said, shaking her head in disappointment.

Her words caused both Orion and Aerialia to furrow their brows in confusion.

The goddess continued, "Naka never eliminated any god. Every god he claimed to have killed was sealed and used to further his experiments. Do you think a man obsessed with creating the perfect race would destroy us completely—the gods who are the architects of such races? In his words, 'What better way to understand a structure than by meeting its architect?' The great god of creation and illusion, the Aegis of the Arctic Deity, and I served his purposes, as did the others."

Orion's expression twisted with disbelief.

Aerialia and Aurora mirrored his shock and disbelief, their faces reflecting the same bewilderment.

"Regardless, I don't know why he didn't kill them entirely. Maybe some last remnant of goodwill, a flicker of sympathy, made him leave them to their fates. Or maybe he saw that they would die anyway, so he did not need to waste his time ensuring an already predestined outcome."

"Or perhaps that bastard was hoping for a miracle, thinking he could return later to reap the rewards... I don't know! I didn't care! To prevent history from repeating itself, I killed them myself using the Vylkr energy, eliminating their entire existence and ensuring they couldn't reincarnate—even if their children survived or they had hidden divine embryonic seeds somewhere."

"The only one I spared was Margona because I recognized her usefulness. She was already at her limit, just like me, but the Vylkr energy made it easy to control her. Over time, I realized it wasn't enough—that the Death plague must be cured or halted indefinitely. Meanwhile, the curse was slowly devouring me, weakening my body. But I needed to use my divine energy to accomplish either, which would have been a death sentence."

"So, how did you solve your situation?" Aerialia asked, her ethereal body tensed. She couldn't fathom how the goddess had achieved something even Naka had struggled to accomplish.

The goddess took a deep breath before responding. "If I had attempted reincarnation with an incomplete soul, the consequences would've been disastrous. But Margona also had a fractured divine soul, so she was in the same situation. We had neither the opportunity nor the time to wait for our divine souls to heal. So, we took another approach: we created a special divine embryonic seed capable of housing our divine souls and allowed our souls to compensate for the other's weaknesses."

"You what?!" Aerialia exclaimed, her voice echoing through the chamber.

The radiant crimson greatsword glowed even more intensely.

Her eyes widened in disbelief. The more she listened, the more she grasped the sheer absurdity of what the goddess had gone through.

"Is that even possible?" Orion asked, his voice tinged with curiosity.

"Yes, it's possible. However, the divine embryonic seed could either self-destruct due to the incompatibility of both divine souls or suffer severe damage along with the gods. After a while, the gods realized that their chances of reincarnation in such a state were slim, so no one tried it any more. It didn't benefit either party. But I've never heard of two gods attempting it in such a unique and dire situation," Aerialia explained, glancing at Orion before returning her gaze to the goddess.

"Since you are here, it must have worked, right?" She held her breath in anticipation.

"The divine embryonic seed was created with a natural filter for the curse, similar to the Void Heart, and was designed as a perfect vessel for me and the goddess Margona. That way, if either of our divine souls managed to survive, we could keep the special divine embryonic seed for ourselves and successfully reincarnate. We vowed never to rest until we hunted down Naka. But if both divine souls self-destructed, then so be it."

"Fortunately, things didn't go as either of us expected. We could both reincarnate within the divine embryonic seed, our souls tied together. When we awakened, we realized we were sharing the same body, something we hadn't planned for. This allowed us to suppress the curse and turn it into a blessing. The Vylkr energy no longer sought to devour me."

"Instead, it became a unique energy we could naturally produce ourselves. We suspected various reasons for this. The most plausible was that we had been baptized with enough Vylkr energy for the curse to no longer see us as foreign. Or perhaps the divine embryonic seed, which had delayed and

filtered the Vylkr energy, evolved into something entirely different- capable of housing the unified existence of two distinct divine souls."

The atmosphere grew tense.

Aerialia's gaze sharpened, her body trembling as she absorbed everything she had just heard.

In all her lifetimes, she had never encountered anything like this, and yet... in just 7,000 years... it seemed as though everyone was overturning every concept they once understood, doing something abnormal at every turn.

'No, this was all because of the curse! None of this would have transpired if we had never entered this universe created by the Omnithriallians through the Stellar Gate,' Aerialia

thought.

Countless memories surged in Aerialia's mind of how terrifying the Omnithriallians were while alive-and how much more so even in death.

Orion wasn't well-versed in the complexness of godhood, but he was knowledgeable enough

to understand everything he had just heard.

Even Aurora couldn't help but look at the floating goddess with shock and disbelief.

"Does that mean that one of the Eight Greed Gods, the goddess of malevolence and witches, is also within you?" Orion asked.

"Yes," the goddess responded with a nod.

Two audible gulps echoed across the chamber.

Aurora gritted her teeth and utilized her sceptre to strengthen the barrier around her and

Orion until its divine radiance spilt out of the chamber.

#### Chapter 1175: Mutated Divine Embryonic Seed (2)

The headless winged spawns swiftly broke through the chamber walls, crossing over to the outside. Aurora prepared to use Eternal Void Leap if their lives were endangered again.

Aurora glanced at Aerialia with a worried expression, uncertain if she could ensure her safety.

The crimson greatsword in Aerialia's grasp flared with intensity, fueled by the realisation that she wasn't just one goddess but two powerful goddesses who had singlehandedly made it through the Stellar Gates.

"You don't need to be so cautious. Since I've decided to restrain myself, she has also decided to do the same," the goddess responded, attempting to soothe the abrupt tension in the surroundings.

Unfortunately, it didn't work. Their wariness grew stronger after learning that she was also communicating with the goddess of malevolence and witches while conversing with them. Orion took a deep breath to calm himself, then asked, "Then is Zera, the..." Before he could finish his sentence, a response came from his own lips, "No, she's not. She's our priestess." Seeing their confused expressions, she continued to explain, "It was difficult to share one body with two divine souls, but considering that our souls were now tied together, it meant that even if one was severely damaged, as long as the other was intact, we would definitely heal and recover. Five years after awakening, we finally learned to cooperate and utilise our bodies efficiently. By ten years, we had ascended to the level of a 7th-order demigod while re-cultivating our laws."

"After another ten years, we completed all seven orders of the demigod realm and finally ascended into genuine godhood. Considering that we were two souls grasping the laws, we prepared ourselves for the challenges ahead, knowing that our ascension would be exceedingly difficult, if not terrifying, to pass through."

"We thought we would face our first ascension trial in another ten to twenty years, which would propel us forward. But nothing happened. Even after half a century, we could not trigger the ascension trials of the divine mysteries. At that point, we realised something was wrong, and the more we investigated, the more we understood that the issue lay within our new form and the Vylkr energy."

"So, we became determined to reach the summit on our own. In three thousand years, we re-cultivated 90 per cent of our laws. It was faster than we had imagined in any of our countless lifetimes. At the same time, we cultivated demigods and developed a few techniques to properly channel their combat prowess, as regular techniques based on the Vylkr energy were ineffective and couldn't be easily replicated."

"We also divided the realm, using our abilities to reconstruct a Mirror Realm, which greatly expanded the land and resources for the inhabitants. It also sealed their energies, halting their transformation into tainted. Until one day, we sensed the arrival of the Divine Mysteries."

"Initially, we thought it was an ascension trial that would hasten our rise to true godhood. However, we were mistaken. What emerged was not an ascension trial, but a great tribulation."

The goddess's emotionless eyes held a look of melancholy as she continued.

"We fought relentlessly but could not stop everything we had built over the years from collapsing. The will of the divine mysteries said it was here to maintain balance, that we were an abomination threatening the order of all things. To be honest, we understood its reasoning, as we had already come to a similar conclusion."

"However, that didn't mean we were willing to give up everything. The one responsible for this also possessed abilities beyond reason, threatening the order of all things, so we needed this very power to confront him."

"We refused to admit defeat and fought with everything we had. Our forces couldn't even last a few seconds against the tribulation before they were destroyed, and with time, everything we had lost vanished."

Orion's thoughts immediately flashed back to when Ilse was attacked during her first awakening. Without the Primordial Barrier, she would have died at that moment.

Aurora's mind also raced in a daze, barely registering the rest of the goddess's words. 'The will of the Divine Mysteries,' she thought. She couldn't help but wonder why the Divine Mysteries had granted her an ascension trial or what would have happened if it decided to eliminate her. The thought was both terrifying and unsettling. Initially, she had believed she'd grown powerful enough to protect Paradise, but it seemed there was yet another mountain to climb at the summit.

Suddenly, a thought flashed through her mind.

'Loira's birth triggered the Divine Mysteries, which caused the same for me. However, I didn't feel like I was losing my will; instead, I felt refreshed and fulfilled. Was it because I wouldn't transform into a tainted being that I was also recognised by the Divine Mysteries and given an ascension trial?' she wondered, sighing. 'If that's the case, then it makes sense. I truly am the first of my kind.'

"Soon, we realised that our strength and minds were gradually weakening due to the excessive use of Vylkr energy. It appeared that even though Vylkr energy no longer saw us as foreign entities, it didn't mean we were completely safe from its curse. If the battle had continued longer, we would have lost our minds and transformed into the tainted. In order to escape this fate, we made a decision."

"This Divine Mystery wanted us dead. So, even if we attempt to reincarnate, it would most likely locate and eliminate us. Thus, we took a different approach. We created another divine embryonic seed with a similar design to the former but much sturdier and more powerful." "Then, we selected a human demigod couple and gave her the seed. Humans possess far more potential than any other race and are more resilient when utilising Vylkr energy. We hoped that when she conceived, her newborn would merge with the divine embryonic seed, creating a mutated divine seed where a mortal could house the divine souls of the two of us

goddesses."

"Of course, we weren't certain if it would work, so we created another divine embryonic seed and stored it in the outside world. We relied on the demigods who had descended to the outside to help hide their aura. Fortunately, one of our demigods flooded the entire pocket dimension, masking its presence with her aura for an extended period. However, she suffered a severe, irreversible injury from the ongoing battle."

"We did our best to hide our actions from the Divine Mysteries, as this was a pocket dimension and a mirror realm, so it held little authority here. We also made sure to leave behind our inheritances if none of our plans succeeded."

"We wanted them to seek justice for themselves and leave the pocket dimension when the barrier seal we placed on it weakened. If unsuccessful, they would still have the Mirror Realm and could live the rest of their lives oblivious to all that had transpired."

"After sensing our deaths, the Divine Mysteries continued the tribulation for several years, killing off the demigods who defied it. It left many others injured and then vanished as it had come. Fortunately, one of them succeeded."



"As soon as the demigoddess conceived, her seed merged with the divine embryonic seed, transforming it into another mutated divine embryonic seed. Though the child was healthy, she depleted her mother's essence. On the day of her birth, the child was born as a demigoddess, hosting two distinct divine souls. That child was Zera. Sadly, her mother died during delivery."

"Still, none of this was revealed to the waiting demigods, who were expecting the rebirth of their goddess. We feared the Divine Mysteries catching on to our plan and foiling it, so we chose to remain hidden, observing the situation through Zera and teaching her everything we knew to make her self-dependent."

"She became our priestess. Over time, we aided her in strengthening the barrier until we could fully seal out the Divine Mysteries. Unfortunately, even if it can't attack directly, it can still do so indirectly. I have no doubt that its actions will intensify after today."

"Since it seems you arrived here with no ill intentions..." the goddess said, shifting her gaze from Aerialia to focus on Orion and Aurora, "...then we will hand over our inheritances as

promised, but on one condition."

"What is the condition?" Orion asked.

He didn't want to leave without obtaining the inheritance and was thankful she was being upfront about her terms. After hearing all she had been through, it would have been

unbelievable if she had handed it over without asking for something in return.

Help her fight against the Will of Divine Mysteries for revenge?

Help the residents of the Mirror Realm the way they had aided those in the pocket dimension?

Prove they were capable of inheriting their inheritance?

Or promise to kill Naka with their own hands?

Orion wondered what her condition would be. He could handle all of them except the first one.

He was confident but not reckless enough to believe he could go up against a force that even this goddess had ultimately failed to defeat.

#### Chapter 1176: Reasoning With A Divine

The goddess shook her head and responded, "Not yet. First, I want to ask a question..." She turned her gaze toward Aurora. "I remember you from a memory. You were one of his failed experiments to create the perfect being. It was supposed to be impossible. So how is it that you became a goddess? And where did you get an artefact like that?"

"It's none of your business," Aurora responded with a scowl.

The goddess raised an eyebrow at Aurora's undisguised irritation. However, instead of showing annoyance, she simply nodded and focused on Orion.

"For my condition, I want you to return the residents you have removed to the pocket dimension. Because of my promise to my demigods and to avoid alerting the Divine Mysteries, I had to watch as they suffered, waiting for them to arrive so I could offer them the choice to stay or leave. But now that everything has been settled, there's no longer any reason to hold back from bringing them here," she said.

Orion was inwardly surprised by her request. His mind raced, recognizing the delicate nature of the situation.

"I'm sorry, but we must disagree with that request. We've already spent so much effort rescuing the residents of this pocket dimension. We had no idea this awaited us here, so your request feels a little inconsiderate, even if you are offering your inheritance. Perhaps if we had known from the start, we would have made different decisions and brought them here instead," Aerialia responded.

'Nice job, Aerialia!' Orion praised. He couldn't have said something like that without sounding disrespectful. But with Aerialia saying it, the goddess might reconsider and revise her request.

As expected, the goddess's face twisted into a deep frown as she turned her head and focused on Aerialia.

"Are you saying you won't return them?" she asked, her tone cold and emotionless.

Aerialia shook her head. "No, that's not what I'm saying. I suggest you offer something else in return for our efforts, or make it a decision for them to choose one where to reside, rather than making it a condition to accept your inheritance. Our Ilse helped us make this rescue possible, so releasing them won't be easy."

"It's obvious how she would react once she learns the truth about her existence and the consequences that will unfold when she hears your request, especially when considering there is the Primserion race, some of whom are survivors. The nymphs are also not an option; they are determined to reunite with their sisters in our territory. Even if they are grateful for all you've done, I doubt they would choose to stay here."

"Lastly, the human race will certainly not allow one of their own to remain here for any reason. As one of the leading forces in our territory, they will undoubtedly show their gratitude for all you've done for one of their own, but they will not leave them behind," Aerialia explained.

"Also, didn't you say this place is still under the watch of the Divine Mysteries? So wouldn't bringing them here be the same as putting chains on them, preventing them from utilizing their powers while they wait for their deaths, without giving them a chance to fight back? Just like in this pocket dimension, the world outside has changed dramatically. I can assure you they will be much safer if they stay with us," Orion said.

He couldn't sit back quietly while Aerialia did her best to oppose the goddess's request. Even though his strength wasn't sufficient, he was clever enough to contribute with reasoning.

A tense silence abruptly filled the chamber.

The only sound that could be heard was the clattering of the goddess's teeth.

"Are you trying to enrage me? What makes you think they'll be safer in your territory than here? Do you think I'm chaining them, stripping them of their ability to fight back by bringing them here? Fine... Let me ask you a question! Do you believe they could defend themselves from the Divine Mysteries if it decides to attack now, no matter where they are?"

"Do you think the Divine Mysteries is so weak that mere mortals could resist it regardless of their numbers? Will you be able to protect them from the Death plague or Naka if he senses their presence and decides to use them for his experiments? Are you suggesting that we goddesses, who

have sacrificed so much for them, don't know what's best for them, but you, who has been here for such a short time, somehow know better?" she demanded, as the atmosphere in the room steadily dropped in temperature.

WHOSSHH! Heavy winds began to stir, penetrating the chamber. A pressure wave pressed down on him as though attempting to crush them.

Outside, countless terrifying snowy tornadoes swirled around the sanctuary walls.

The sanctuary's residents became more anxious about the strange turns of events, firmly believing that they were under attack. The atmosphere was more solemn among the Arch-knights and knights as they could not enter the Priestess's manor due to an invisible force surrounding it.

Aurora swiftly strengthened her barrier. Fortunately, thanks to her mother's deterrence, the goddess no longer forced her aura as intensely as before. Otherwise, they would have fled before encountering a situation as dire as the previous one.

Aerialia sealed her lips and looked at Orion. She wanted to know how he would deal with this situation.

Orion met the gaze of the goddess floating above the golden, inky black, mixed-coloured pool.

"I respect everything you've done for the countless races living within this pocket dimension, and I sympathize with every horrible thing you've endured. But I believe we can offer them greater security in our territory than here..." Orion began. As he spoke, the barrier cracked, threatening to burst open. Still, a wave of energy emerged from Aurora's sceptre, healing and restoring it to normal.

0.001%

-0.001%

Aurora felt her reserve energy rapidly depleting, but she held on. The sceptre continuously absorbed energy from the surroundings and from her. Since it had been gathering energy while outside, its reserves were far greater than expected, so she knew this wouldn't be enough to drain it.

Orion felt a sudden pressure on his body, threatening to sink him into the ground. But thanks to Aurora, whose arms supported him, he remained upright.

"Our territory is protected by a Primordial barrier. During Ilse's resurrection, we witnessed it withstand the anger of the Divine Mysteries, which is why her resurrection succeeded," Orion continued. "We also doubt Naka would take the time to revisit his old experiments, considering he has likely made considerable progress since then. Nonetheless, I don't think it would be that easy even if he does."

Orion remembered the unknown woman from the Divine Corps who had completely annihilated two powerful Vylkr spawns, withstood Ilse's pursuit, and endured Aurora's fierce, relentless attacks before dying.

If more of these individuals were out there, it made sense why the Vylkr spawns would be restrained in their actions and not wreaking havoc everywhere. He didn't know who led the Divine Corps, though he presumed it had to be someone no less than a god. He had no desire to meet them right away, just like Naka.

He simply hoped his words would convince the goddess. He also wanted to win her over, as with her help, the residents of Paradise would surely be able to attain godhood, just as those here had done in the past.

If Paradise had succeeded in creating such a firm foundation, then in time, he would have no doubt they would be able to stand against more extraordinary foes in the future.

From the Greed Gods stealing all the animals in the world and fleeing with them to the goddess before him, Orion understood how frightening divine beings could become when pushed into a corner. With the Vylkr vines spreading everywhere and threatening their lives, he wondered what drastic measures they had taken to ensure their survival. Suddenly, the pressure wave decreased, and the fierce, swirling snow tornadoes outside the sanctuary walls dissipated.

Aurora exhaled in relief and reduced the output of her energy reserves.

Orion also breathed a sigh of relief.

"Primordial barrier?" The goddess frowned, her gaze fixed on Orion and Aurora standing side

by side.

"You praise and speak so grandly of your territory, yet you haven't mentioned its name. How can I be certain you're not lying?" she asked.

Orion swallowed, maintaining a firm expression, and bowed respectfully toward her. "Forgive me for my lack of etiquette in failing to mention the name of the territory I promised your children would be safe in. It is called Paradise..." Orion said, quickly adding as he heard Aurora's barrier shatter at that moment, "This Paradise has no relation to the former one, except that it's made up of races who suffered under Naka's experiments and seek revenge, along with countless other races who are residents of the outside world."

Orion sighed, wiping the sweat from the bridge of his nose as he felt a cool breeze wash over him.

"You might have already guessed my identity, but allow me to formally introduce myself. I am Orion, the Supreme Leader of Paradise," he announced.

#### Chapter 1177: The Final Compromise

The goddess's frown deepened further. She withdrew her gaze from him and refocused on Aerialia, who was still hovering before her.

"Everything he has said is the truth. If you are still doubtful, we can prove it by taking you there and allowing you to see for yourself," Aerialia affirmed with a firm nod.

Sensing that the goddess was merely intimidating Orion and Aurora, Aerialia decided not to proceed. It was best they utilised this opportunity to understand what it felt like to face a genuine divine being, as it would benefit them in the future.

Hearing Aerialia's response, the goddess wore a pensive expression.

"Unfortunately, I can't be here without risking the Mirror realm destabilising. But if that's the case, then I will offer a trade: a Divine Embryonic Seed for the Goddess of the Hunting Moon in exchange for the safe return of residents of the pocket dimension to here," the goddess responded.

Aerialia froze, her expression filled with shock and astonishment.

Orion and Aurora mirrored her reaction.

"Are you certain?" Orion asked, his hands clenching into fists.

"I still have many materials, so creating one won't be a problem," the goddess replied with a nod.

Orion noticed that Aerialia and Aurora's gazes were now fixed on him. If the goddess kept her word, this might be Aerialia's chance to reclaim her body. It wasn't something they could afford to miss. However, he also couldn't betray the residents of the pocket dimension after the promise he had made to them.

Orion found himself at a crossroads, two heavy choices weighing on his shoulders. After a moment, his shoulders sagged. He lifted his head, met the goddess's gaze, and nodded.

"If you can create a suitable Divine Embryonic Seed for Goddess Aerialia, I will fulfil my end of the bargain," he agreed.

"That's good! See, we have finally reached an agreement. A single divine being, especially one who seems to trust you so well, is much better than countless mortals," the goddess said, her tone and expression pleased.

Aerialia and Aurora sighed quietly in relief.

A ripple of emotion flickered in their gazes before it faded. No matter how they looked at it, this was the best course of action they could take.

"Recreating the Divine Embryonic Seed will take some time, and you will need to prepare it for your goddess's reincarnation. If you don't trust me, we can wait until it's done before proceeding with your side of the bargain. In the meantime, Zera will conduct the inheritance ceremony and bestow upon you both the promised inheritances," the goddess added.

Orion nodded in agreement.

The goddess turned her head towards Aerialia and asked, "Do you disagree? If you are unsatisfied, we can make room for additional arrangements as long as they are feasible." Aerialia shook her head. "No, I'm fine with this," she said, lowering her crimson greatsword. The intense glow on the blade dimmed until it completely vanished.

The goddess nodded, pleased with how the negotiation had concluded. "Due to our actions, the divine mysteries may attempt to peer into this realm by stirring up trouble that could harm our sanctuary. I would appreciate it if you defended this place until I can push back and eliminate their presence," the goddess said, glancing outside through the broken chamber. "You don't need to worry about what you'll face. It's something you'll be able to handle with your strength." She then turned her gaze to Orion as though reading his thoughts.

"If that's the case, I'll give my all to protect the sanctuary," Orion nodded.

He didn't know precisely how the divine mysteries would stir up trouble. Still, he took her word for it since the goddess assured him it was within his capabilities.

He would swiftly use the golden key to open a gateway to the golden palace if something went wrong. He was sure Aurora would do the same after sensing his actions. Now that they knew the location of the Mirror Realm, they could always return once they were strong enough.

"I will accompany you too," Aurora said, her expression determined.

"No! There won't be any need..." the goddess began, but Aurora swiftly cut her words.

"Why not?" Aurora asked, her frown deepening.

"It's because once the divine mysteries sense that you are also a goddess, it would greatly increase the intensity of the attack, seeing no reason to spare those living within the Mirror Realm to eliminate a threat."

"So, you will not join and risk putting us in a much greater predicament. We also need your energy reserves to create the divine embryonic seed, so the fuller they remain, the better. Be rest assured that he won't be going alone."

"The boy will join the sanctuary's Arch-knights and Knights to handle the situation... Also, since he dares to proclaim himself the Supreme Leader of Paradise, I'm curious to see if he has the necessary



capabilities to back up his claims," the goddess responded, her eyes fixed on Aurora before turning to Orion with a sharp glint.

From their explanation, she realised they had two gods-one responsible for creating the Primordial barrier protecting their territory and the false Ilse, who had resurrected and was protected by the said Primordial barrier. Additionally, the goddess floating before her made it three.

However, she didn't believe the former was a true god, as a true god who had chosen to protect them would have broken into her Mirror Realm directly rather than allowing them to go through the process.

'There were three divine beings within this 'Paradise,' and yet they still allowed him to carry such a title,' she thought.

From the earlier negotiation, he was also making decisions that could determine the fate of this 'Paradise.' As such, she realised there was something unique about the boy before her and wondered what it was. She intended to use the time to satisfy her curiosity by first learning about his abilities.

She was also curious about how the experiments that had once been dismissed had grown so powerful with ease. At the same time, she had given up everything she possessed to attain her current status and still lost it all.

'It isn't fair,' the goddess thought, steadying her emotions before they could show. "You don't need to worry, Aurora. If everything she said is true, then I can handle this myself," Orion said, shifting his gaze to Aurora with a reassuring smile.

Aurora bit her lip, wanting to object, but after hearing Orion's words, she felt conflicted.

"Don't forget, I'm still here. I'll intervene if anything drastic happens," Aerialia chimed in.

Reluctantly, Aurora nodded in understanding.

The goddess observed the scene impassively until it was over. She opened her mouth to speak

but closed it with a contemplative expression.

"What is it?" Aerialia asked, quickly noticing her change in expression.

"My other half wanted to speak to you all, but it seems she has changed her mind and decided to wait for now," the goddess responded with a smile.

Orion, Aerialia, and Aurora all wore similar apprehensive expressions.

It was one thing to discuss matters with the former goddess of treasures, whom they were familiar with, but another to face the goddess of malevolence and witches-one of the strongest gods from 7,000 years ago and one of the Eight Greed Gods who had once confronted formidable figures like Naka and the Seven Great Gods.

Aerialia had almost made it through the Stellar Gate alone, so she wasn't afraid of the

goddess. However, she was still a divine soul at the moment. She preferred to limit communication with another divine being until she was fully healed. She was also uncertain if

she could handle both goddesses if they attacked.

"When I leave, Zera will return with memories of our conversation, so you won't have to explain anything to her," the goddess added, shifting the subject.

Orion and the others nodded in understanding.

The goddess closed her eyes and slowly descended into the golden, inky black pool until her entire body was submerged. The pool began to boil vigorously, shining with an intense golden, inky black hue illuminating the chamber.

After a few minutes, a figure ascended toward the stairs at the other edge of the pool, near its sides. It was none other than Zera.

The web of golden and inky black veins that had previously covered every part of her body unclung. As she fully emerged and climbed onto the stairs, it fell back into the boiling pool. The

previous Ilse was gone. Standing before them was a dark-skinned woman with an eye patch over her right eye, faint scars lining the skin near its edge. Her other eye gleamed with a silvery hue, matching her hair. She was dressed in a beautifully styled dress blending silver

and black colours.

A terrifying aura emanated from her, making them understand that everything they had experienced several minutes ago was true. The two goddesses-the goddess of the Twilight Chorus and Fortune, proclaiming herself to be the original Ilse, and the goddess of malevolence and witches-were sealed within her body.

This terrifying fact placed them on edge far more than their first meeting.

#### Chapter 1178: Earning The Interest Of The Divine

Zera descended the stairs and stood in a daze on the ground, assimilating the entire conversation that had transpired minutes before. Then, she raised her head and focused on Orion, Aurora, and Aerialia, whose hand gripped the crimson greatsword.

Zera's gaze lingered on Aerialia momentarily before she withdrew her

gaze and showed them a warm smile. She cleared her throat and said, "Follow me. I will lead the way out so we can begin."

Aurora dispelled her barrier, commanding her headless winged spawns to vanish into hers and Orion's shadows under the Priestess' inquisitive gaze.

Aerialia returned the crimson greatsword to Orion, allowing it to hover beside him before she scattered into specks of light, disappearing into Orion after taking one final look at Zera.

In an instant, the entire chamber was devoid of any spawn, and the tension that had filled the atmosphere moments ago abruptly vanished.

Orion unsummoned the morphic puppet and crimson greatsword and stood on his feet without Aurora's support.

Leaning forward to catch his breath, Orion activated his gift. Instantly, a wave of Vylkr energy, suppressed by the Primordial energy, flowed through every fibre of his muscles, rejuvenating his body.

"Are you okay?" Aurora asked, her expression filled with concern.

"I'm fine. I just needed to stabilise myself for a moment. I feel much better now," Orion responded, straightening his back.

Aurora nodded, exhaling in relief. She still felt some palpitation after encountering that dreadful goddess. So, she worried Orion might suffer long-term side effects from the encounter. However, it seemed her worries were for nought.

"Let's go," Orion said, focusing on Zera, who had been quietly observing their interaction from the side.

Zera nodded and gestured for them to follow her as they made their way out of the chamber. Despite the holes Aurora's headless winged spawns had created, they didn't pass through them but instead took the usual route they had entered.

As they stepped through the front door, they were met by countless fur-lined, armoured figures with bulky chest plates, each wielding sophisticated weapons. They filled the compound, some even positioned on the roof. Standing at the forefront of the group was the familiar head maid of Zera's manor - Morriel.

She immediately rushed toward Zera when she saw them emerge from the door.

"Are you okay, Priestess?" Morriel asked, her tone tinged with concern.

"I'm fine, Morriel. If anything happens to me, wouldn't that mean the goddess has failed to fulfil her promise of protecting us all?" Zera responded with a smile, gently pinching Morriel's cheeks.

Seeing her Priestess's jovial response, which indicated she wasn't in danger despite everything that had just transpired, Morriel exhaled in relief, her tense shoulders relaxing. However, her wary eyes continued to glance at Orion and Aurora.

Three individuals stepped forward. Two of them were a fair-skinned man and a light-blue-skinned woman with black hair tied in a ponytail and a slender, whip-like tail extending behind her. Orion and Aurora recognised the woman as the one they had met when they first entered Zera's manor.

This time, the man carried a spear with a navy-blue insignia of a lightning bolt splitting a storm cloud embroidered on the red cloth draped across his armour and right shoulder. The blue-skinned woman had a heavy shield on her back and a longsword hanging at her waist, with a purple cloth bearing a golden insignia of a shield cracking the ground under the bright

sun.

The third individual was a man with skin as white as snow, long ginger hair tied into a ponytail, and a beautiful longsword hanging at his waist. A silver cloth draped across his armour and right shoulder, featuring a crimson insignia of a flaming sword crossed with a burning shield.

All three wore fur-lined armour with bulky chestplates like the others, though subtle differences in their attire set them apart.

Their gazes lingered on Orion and Aurora with slight hostility before refocusing on Zera.

"Priestess, are you okay?" the man with the spear asked.

"It's alright. I'm okay. You don't have to worry about my safety," Zera responded with a solemn nod as she addressed her Arch-knights.

Given the overwhelming presence of Aurora's spawns that had filled the manor earlier, she understood their concern and decided to reassure them.

The Arch-knights nodded, choosing to believe her words.

"We're about to be under attack. We need to ensure your safety and determine how we should guard the sanctuary," the man said with the spear, his expression grave.

Before arriving, they had seen the telltale signs of the number of their attackers, and they were anxious about the severity of the situation.

"You don't need to be afraid. The goddess has already ensured us our victory. She instructs you all to prepare the troops for battle and take our new guest with you," Zera said, gesturing towards Orion. "He will be of great help and will serve as the key to our victory."

Hearing her words, the Arch-knights frowned deeply.

"But Priestess, he only arrived at the sanctuary a few days ago. Even if they defeated the Harbingers, they haven't yet received the goddess's inheritance. Most importantly, their skills are still lacking for a battle of this magnitude. Our opponents aren't just tainted beings but much more terrifying foes," the blue-skinned woman with the slender tail responded, her expression solemn.

After the Priestess released the information regarding Orion and Aurora, who defeated the Harbingers from the outside world, the sanctuary had already been in an uproar for days. There was also an ongoing preparation for them to receive the goddess's inheritances.

This displeased the Arch-knights, who had worked tirelessly to protect the goddess and the sanctuary she built against many terrifying enemies threatening to destroy it.

Their loyalty and the restrictions imposed on them were the only things that kept them from descending to the outside world to kill the Harbingers themselves to claim the inheritance. As such, they didn't take Orion and Aurora's achievements as seriously as the ordinary residents did.

And now, after witnessing the events that transpired in the manor—the terrifying snowy whirlwind surrounding the sanctuary's fortified walls and the sudden attack that coincidentally began on the day of the Priestess's meeting with these two mysterious individuals—they were even more sceptical and on edge.

'If only they knew the truth,' Zera thought, inwardly sighing as she saw their doubtful expressions. Having lived here for a long time due to the goddess's blessing and steadily growing in strength, she understood the source of their arrogance.

However, if they knew the truth—that the mysterious woman behind her was a genuine goddess capable of wielding her energies within this realm—and that the man was the Supreme Leader of 'Paradise,' with a divine inheritance and guided by a powerful goddess— they wouldn't dare display such arrogance anymore.

She couldn't blame them for being sceptical of the divine mysteries stirring up trouble, especially since her goddess had initiated the first strike against them, prompting their retaliation. But she could not tell them what had transpired during the meeting.

Zera focused on the slender-tailed, light blue-skinned woman with a smile and responded, "He's much stronger than he looks, Arch-knight Kasryn. Maybe you can use this opportunity to witness the prowess of one of the two who succeeded in defeating the Harbingers and chosen to acquire the goddess's inheritances."

"Okay. If you say so, Priestess. We will ensure that he is properly taken care of and brought back safely," Kasryn replied, bowing slightly toward Zera with her right hand over her

protruding chest plate.

The other two Arch-knights followed suit.

Observing the exchange, Orion frowned inwardly. He wasn't sure if Zera's words came directly from the goddess, but one thing was clear-the goddess wanted him to reveal all his secrets.

He had been under Aurora's and Aerialia's care throughout their journey, so he didn't mind. He wanted to prove that even the mortals of Paradise had far more potential than those

within the sanctuary.

Orion was itching to demonstrate his strength, especially with the prospect of earning a goddess's attention. He had already noticed the goddess's growing interest in Aurora. He realised she would likely want to engage further, to uncover more of her secrets.

Suppose he didn't do something grand or unique to draw her attention. In that case, he might be sidelined until the deal was complete, risking the loss of the inhabitants they had worked

hard to secure.

Orion couldn't turn down the challenge. Though he wasn't entirely confident about how things would unfold, he couldn't let an opportunity pass without trying it.

He simply hoped he could refill his Vylkr energy with the Vylkr vines in his storage despite the seal on the realm.

"I will direct one of my men to lead you to the station so you can gear up with your preferred equipment before meeting with us at the designated fortress walls. Is that okay?" the Arch-knight with the longsword strapped to his waist asked.

"I don't need one," Orion shook his head. He summoned the Morphic puppet, wearing it as armour, and allowed the crimson greatsword to hover beside him. "I already have my own,"

he added.

#### Chapter 1179: Familiar Monstrosities

The Arch-knights and Morriel raised their eyes in surprise at the sudden appearance of Orion's armour and crimson greatsword but swiftly regained their composure.

"If that's the case, then let's go," the Arch-knight with the longsword said.

"We will be taking our leave, Priestess. Please stay safe." He turned toward the Priestess and bowed.

The remaining Arch-knights did the same.

"After I'm done handling some matters, I'll come to the fortified walls to spectate the battle," Zera said, refocusing on Orion. "Take care, and don't tax yourself too much with this task," she added with a nod and a smile.

Orion nodded back at her and Aurora. He turned and followed the Arch-knights as they walked through the gap the soldiers had created, exiting the compound.

They quickly arrived outside the manor.



Orion observed the large birds before him. They had long, crested beaks and crowns of feathers on their heads, covered in vibrant azure, white, and icy blue plumage. Their immense wingspans stretched over 10 meters (33 ft). On their backs were lightweight saddles with anchor straps, seemingly made for riders.

There were three large birds and countless smaller ones with wingspans of about 7.6 meters (25 ft)—similar to the ones he had seen circling in the sky when he and Aurora first entered the Mirror Realm.

Now, many were either on the ground or soaring overhead. They must have used them to arrive at the manor as quickly as possible.

"What are they called?" Orion asked.

Kasryn turned toward Orion and responded, "They are called Quradactyls. They are one of the magical beasts the goddess created during her formation of this realm, so you could say they are natives. Their usefulness is indispensable, as they allow us to soar the skies, something impossible for any mortal." She began walking toward one of the saddled flying beasts, presumably hers.

As Kasryn petted her Quradactyl, it lowered its body, allowing her to straddle it.

Orion nodded in understanding. He realized these magical beasts were likely among the many creatures in the pocket dimension before the creation of the Mirror Realm. The goddess hadn't created them but had brought them here to prevent their extinction. With knowledge of the past obscured over generations, they had come to be seen as natives of this world.

The other two Arch-knights approached their flying beasts and mounted them as well.

"This one is mine, and she's Sky-Shattering Empress. She has been with me through countless battles, and I hope we will continue to fight together through many more," Kasryn said, rubbing the head of her beast.

The beast tilted its head under her gentle touch.

"Since I don't think you can fly, hop on. I'll take you on Sky-Shattering Empress to the fortress walls," Kasryn added, her eyes fixed on Orion.

Orion glanced at the two men watching him suspiciously before refocusing on Kasryn and nodding. He could fly using his morphic puppet, but he didn't feel the need to do so yet.

"Alright, climb on," Kasryn chuckled lightly and held the reins, lowering her flying beast to make it easier for Orion to mount.

Orion boosted himself up and straddled the flying beast.

"Don't fall off," Kasryn said, glancing back at him.

Orion grabbed one of the rear grips.

Without hesitation, Kasryn patted the beast gently. In an instant, the flying beast soared into the skies. The two Arch-knights followed close behind.

Orion looked down and saw numerous soldiers mounting their flying beasts and ascending into the sky behind them. The once-busy streets below were now empty, and the houses were sealed shut. Soldiers were still converging toward the fortress walls. It was the first time he had seen the sanctuary become so tense.

"Do you know what kind of enemy we'll be facing?" Orion asked, unable to contain his curiosity any longer.

Kasryn turned her head slightly, fixing her eyes on Orion. "There are many terrifying enemies we face, so we won't know until they arrive," she said before focusing forward again. "But I must warn you, these enemies are unlike the tainteds you're used to facing. To truly understand, you'll have to see them yourself. There's no need for an explanation."

Orion nodded in response.

Soon, the Arch-knight with the longsword diverted towards another route, leaving the three of them. After about seven minutes, they arrived at the walls.

"Get down," Kasryn said.

Orion dismounted the beast, followed shortly by Kasryn.

Kasryn patted her flying magical beast before handing the reins to a nearby guard.

"I want her properly suited in armour before the battle begins," Kasryn commanded.

The guard nodded in understanding and swiftly walked away, with the flying magical beast obediently following him.

The other Arch-knight landed and did the same with his mount. Then, he led the way up the wall, with Kasryn and Orion following him.

They passed several checkpoints within minutes until they arrived at the top of the fortified walls. Stretched out before them was an expansive snowy plain, surrounded by a massive dense forest that made it difficult to see within.

In the distance, snowy dust clouds were brewing, inching closer by the minute, and countless

dots painted the sky above, heralding the arrival of their attackers.

A single glance was all it took for Orion to understand the severity of the situation.

A familiar man abruptly appeared before them.

"Commander Valer! We have a problem. The enemy's numbers are much greater than we initially calculated," Jareth said, halting before the Arch-knight with a spear, his tone and expression anxious.

Orion recognized him as the same man who had found and brought them into the sanctuary.

More importantly, he was dressed similarly to the Arch-knight, with a navy-blue insignia of a lightning bolt splitting a storm cloud embroidered on the red cloth draped across his armour and right shoulder.

Orion had seen a few similar designs belonging to Kasryn, so he immediately recognized them as part of the same team.

The man glanced briefly at Orion with a deep frown before swiftly recomposing his

composure and refocusing Arch-Knight Valer.

Hearing Jareth's words, Valer and Kasryn frowned deeply.

"How many are there?" Valer asked sternly.

"According to the Northern gate reports, we've calculated their numbers to be more than ten

million death vines and corrupted," the Jareth responded. "The eastern and southern walls

and western gate report the same numbers."

Valer's and Kasryn's expressions morphed into shock. They snapped out of their thoughts and hurriedly pushed forward, approaching a wide telescope.

Valer swiftly nudged the guards aside and peered through it. His arms fell limp, and he stepped back with a bewildered and shocked expression.

Kasryn pushed him aside and also looked through the telescope. Her expression mirrored Valer's as she pulled back, staring at the approaching snowy dust clouds in trepidation and

anxiousness.

"They've always come in swarms of two to three million. The highest we've ever faced was ten million, but this is twice that!" Kasryn muttered under her breath as she bit her lips. "How are we supposed to defend against this?" Her voice was tinged with fear and anxiety. "Tch! There's no use thinking about that now. We'll have to assume our formations and do our best... Besides, hasn't the goddess already assured us of victory through him?" Valer responded, clenching his teeth as he glanced at Orion.

"We'll be counting on you. However, if this becomes too much to handle, let us know. Your safety as the candidate for the goddess's inheritance is more important, and we must ensure

nothing happens to you."

Orion nodded, meeting Valer's and Kasryn's terrified yet determined gazes.

"Can I take a look?" Orion asked, gesturing toward the telescope with an inquisitive look.

They exchanged glances for a brief moment, exhaled, and stepped aside.

"Go ahead. But steel your heart and prepare yourself not to falter," Valer said.

Orion nodded, stepped forward, and lowered his head to peer through the telescope.

In the distance, within the vast snowy dust clouds, Orion spotted numerous gigantic, four-legged creatures that appeared to amalgamate of inky black vines radiating a dark, eerie hue. With each step the creatures took, the vines swarmed and slithered, creating an unsettling movement of rustling and twisting.

Orion stood gobsmacked and wide-eyed, recognizing the terrifying monster that had once caused the deaths of countless warriors and had been a thorn in their territory.

They were three-star Vylkr vines!

Orion frowned, scrutinizing them further, sensing something was off. He saw numerous magical beasts entangled within the monstrosities as he looked closer. Strangely, these beasts emerged from the creatures' bodies, with Vylkr vines squirming around them like living armour. Yet, their movements were oddly monotonous, as if they were being

controlled.

A sudden thought struck Orion, causing him to swallow hard. These weren't just three-star vines—they were none other than four-star Vylkr vines!

Orion realized this because four-star Vylkr vines could control one-star and two-star Vylkr vines. So, it made sense that such control could extend to other beings as they matured, given the adaptability of the Vylkr vines.

#### Chapter 1180: Condensed Vylkr Essence Rebirth Elixirs

Though he didn't know how these monstrosities had grown to this point and arrived here, he understood that the Divine Mysteries were using them to wage war against those within the Mirror realm.

It also felt a bit ironic!

Orion shifted his focus to the side and saw tainteds that rivalled the immense, grotesque height of the four-star Vylkr vines. These tainteds looked far more fearsome than those he had encountered in the ocean, and they, too, seemed to have merged with thorny Vylkr vines. The Vylkr vines stretched out of their bodies and lashed around like fierce whips. Due to the snowy dust clouds obscuring his view, he couldn't see those in the skies.

Meanwhile, Valer and Kasryn noticed Orion's disbelieving expression and assumed he was shocked at seeing the monstrosities advancing toward the sanctuary.

Kasryn extended her right hand and gently patted his shoulder.

"As Arch-Knight Valer said, you don't need to worry. Just focus on what you can do and leave the rest to us. Even though these creatures are far more powerful than the tainteds you've likely encountered outside, we've handled this kind of threat many times before," she reassured, hoping to ease his nerves.

It would be disastrous if the person their goddess had proclaimed as the key to their victory chose to retreat out of fear of the approaching enemy.

Kasryn had witnessed this scene many times before, with new warriors entering the sanctuary, eager to prove their strength, quickly realizing that their opponents were on a much higher level than they were used to. It was a practical, humbling experience. However, she would be disappointed if someone who had defeated the Harbingers and received the goddess's praise crumbled so quickly.

But Orion merely nodded; his thoughts were elsewhere. He was carefully considering his approach against the Vylkr vines. He could no longer rely on the crimson greatsword, as the Vylkr vines could absorb its divine aura, adapt, and grow stronger.

Orion realized he would need to depend on the Morphic puppet and his remaining artefacts if he hoped to emerge victorious and attract the goddess of Twilight Chorus and Fortune's interest.

As for the goddess of Malevolence and Witches, he preferred not to think about her. He would be relieved if she remained hidden. He didn't have the energy to contend with another god right now.

Seeing his silent response, Kasryn sighed softly and disappointedly shook her head. She wondered if he were truly the one the goddess proclaimed would be the key to our victory in this war.

Valer also wore a disappointed expression. He exchanged a glance with Kasryn, silently conveying a message: 'Take him out of here.'

Kasryn nodded in understanding.

"Follow me. We need to prepare for the battle," she said.

With a nod, Orion followed as she turned and led the way.

Watching their departure, Jareth turned to Valer and asked, "Is he really the one the goddess said would be the key to our victory, commander? Even if he was one of the two who defeated the Harbingers, he's only just arrived. How is he supposed to accomplish such a feat?"

The Arch-Knight couldn't forget Orion's and Aurora's earlier disrespect toward the Priestess when they first arrived at the sanctuary, and he couldn't shake the feeling of doubt about how one of those two could solve the coming crisis.

'Has our goddess finally become blind, or perhaps all those years of being dead have left her mind unable to think properly?' Jareth thought.

As these various thoughts emerged, he suddenly felt a chill in his heart and immediately dispelled them.

"If the goddess has said so, then we have no choice but to believe in her. She has never failed us. Whenever she decrees something, fortune follows. However, we must still be prepared to give our best if necessary, so don't use this as an excuse to become complacent," Valer responded, looking at his second-in-command.

Jareth nodded solemnly.

"Good. Now sound the alarms and prepare the troops for battle!" Valer ordered.

Jareth saluted and turned to walk away.

"Everyone set a defensive formation around the gate and prepare for battle! Make sure not one of those beastly monsters gets through!" Jareth shouted.

...

Orion followed Kasryn to the base of the walls.

They stood before a fully armoured Quradactyl, its crown-covered head protected down to its tail. The beautiful, fearsome beast now looked even more terrifying-battle-ready and prepared to face any foe.

"You look so beautiful," Kasryn commented, softly rubbing its exposed head beneath its raised helmet.

As the beast trembled softly under her touch, Kasryn chuckled. "You're still so sensitive to compliments."

She withdrew her hand and pulled out a small cylindrical container with a cap on top from a pouch at her waist. It had been given to her by the soldier who brought the armoured flying beast. She tossed it to Orion.

"That bottle contains Condensed Vylkr Esscene Rebirth Elixirs. It's a special pill that allows you to use your energy despite the realm's restrictions freely. It can also temporarily increase your Vylkr



energy level and cleanse impurities from both your body and your Vylkr energy, making it easier to use."

"You can only take one pill per hour, as its effects last for that long, with a limit of three pills per day. So, you'll need to time it carefully and take one right before battle to benefit from its effects fully," Kasryn explained.

Hearing her words, Orion's eyes widened in surprise. Unable to suppress his curiosity, he loosened the cap and looked inside. The elixir was pills with a bright gold and black mixture

with a visible purplish aura.

They contained a faint divine aura that Orion recognized at a glance.

Sure enough, they were indeed made by those goddesses!

Orion couldn't help but be impressed by the goddesses' capabilities again and felt they deserved their positions. Like the Aegis of the Arctic Deity Aerialia, Ilse, and Aurora, their

presence alone could change the tide in any situation.

Without hesitation, Orion popped a pill into his mouth.

"Wait..." Kasryn shouted but fell silent when she saw that Orion had swallowed the pill

despite her warning.

'Is he the one who will be the key to our victory in this war?' Kasryn thought, frowning deeply as she looked at Orion, whose eyes were now closed as he dealt with the effects of the Condensed Vylkr Essence Rebirth Elixir.

Despite the goddess's words, she wasn't eager to deal with someone who couldn't follow her

orders in battle.

At the Priestess's manor, she had felt that the woman standing beside him had a much stronger aura than he did and couldn't help but wonder why the goddess hadn't sent both instead and what made him so special.

Unknowingly to Orion, his status had dropped in Kasryn's eyes.

While all this was transpiring in Kasryn's mind, Orion felt profound changes happening within him after swallowing the pill.

First, the strange seal that had been placed upon him since entering the Mirror Realm

disappeared, and a burst of pure Vylkr energy spread through every fibre of his being, creating subtle changes that didn't escape Orion's awareness, as he was deeply familiar with his body.

His muscles spasmed.

The surge of Vylkr energy, continuously transforming his body, also flowed into his Vylkr container.

As Orion channelled the Vylkr energy through his body, he realized that not only had his physique become more robust, enabling him to handle the violent Vylkr energy better, but the new Vylkr energy he absorbed from the pill also merged with the Primordial energy to

suppress the violent Vylkr energy within his Vylkr container.

Although the Primordial energy didn't need assistance, the new Vylkr energy acted like antibodies, calming the vicious Vylkr energy within him and simultaneously fine-tuning his control. The new Vylkr energy also blended seamlessly with the old.

Orion realized that if he took more of these pills, he might be able to unleash his Vylkr warrior mode without dying or suffering its disastrous side effects, further amplifying his abilities.

Orion was shocked by these tremendous changes.

If only Aurora were nearby, he would have given her a mask to check how much his Vylkr energy had increased. From the feast he had consumed at the nymphs' territory to his time within the pocket dimension and the pills in his hand, he knew that his Vylkr energy had risen several times beyond what it was before.

'I need to eat more,' Orion thought and immediately attempted to pop another pill into his hand, but a hand swiftly snatched the pill bottle before he could.

Kasryn, observing to prevent Orion from doing anything reckless again, quickly placed the pill bottle back into her small bag after taking it from him.

"Are you insane?! Didn't I tell you that you can only consume one pill per hour?! Are you aware of the disastrous effects of consuming them like that?!" Kasryn scolded, her expression twisting in anger as she glared at Orion with a sharp glint in her eyes.