

Village Head 1241

Chapter 1241 Sixty-Six Divine Mandates, 'Its' Stealing My Ideas!

The others felt similarly, but as divine beings who had lived for ages, each of them harboured their thoughts.

General Reynold's tone was devoid of amusement, and he retorted, "You can try, but I assure you, it would be the last we hear of your existence."

"Why do you say that?" The Will of the Divine Mysteries said, looking at General Reynold curiously. 'It' wanted to know why General Reynold was so confident.

"This entire realm is safeguarded by the Domain of the gods, which we just emerged from, which is connected to the outside world. So, for anyone to access this realm, they would first need to break through that dimension and challenge the new Mysteries and us to gain entry. But until then, the new Mysteries will continue to grow stronger," General Reynold responded.

"Oh," the Will of the Divine Mysteries nodded.

The creamy white and black flames baptizing the women suddenly decreased in intensity until they dimmed, returning to the twelve-step stairs, which continued flickering with the same flames. Having completed their ascension, the women now radiated an otherworldly hue, like mortals who had shed their earthly constraints.

They had all attained the status of goddesses and could now stand alongside the divine.

"What's happening now?" the Will of the Divine Mysteries asked, observing as several fruits fell from the branches and flew toward the women.

The fruits exploded, much like the previous ones, but this time, the explosion was more minor and contained within several meters. Then, they began to morph, transforming into strange and mysterious objects.

"Hey, what is it doing?" the Will of the Divine Mysteries asked, its tone filled with shock and surprise.

General Reynold, Oberon, Aurora, Aerialia, Ilse, and Orion, their expressions a mix of shock and disbelief, were caught off guard by the unfolding events.

"It's a divine mandate," Orion muttered. He hadn't expected the new Mysteries to grant his partners a divine mandate. He was curious to see how the Will of the Divine Mysteries would respond.

Would it grant them another reward or back out? Orion hoped for the former, as having one more divine mandate would be like gaining another lifeline when facing an overwhelming threat. But he was also hesitant to accept further help from the 'Will,' as its true intentions remained unclear.

"It seems they won't need the reward you promised them," General Reynold said, turning to the Will of the Divine Mysteries.

The Will of the Divine Mysteries snorted and replied, "I've already given them my word, so I will give them what I promised." 'It' glanced at Grace before refocusing on the woman and stretched 'its' hand forward, and a light shot out from his radiant form, splitting into thirty-three balls of light.

One flew toward each woman, one toward Grace, and another toward the dimension they had just emerged from. The multiple balls of light took shape, transforming into mysterious items, each exuding a familiar but distinct aura that matched the transformation of the fruits.

One turned into a ship, another into a shield, a third into a crown seemingly made of radiant water, another into a chisel, a gauntlet that appeared entirely made of flames, and many more.

Meanwhile, before Grace, the ball of light morphed into a small, radiant seed that glowed with a soft golden light. The golden seed entered Grace's body.

Grace became slightly dazed for a moment before snapping out of it, her eyes wide with surprise.

"How is it?" Orion asked, looking at Grace curiously.

Everyone turned to her, waiting for her response.

"It's amazing," Grace replied excitedly, then turned to the Will of the Divine Mysteries. "Thank you," she added.

The Will of the Divine Mysteries nodded and said, "It would be a little too much to grant you the full abilities of your divine mandate. Since you are part human, you can awaken a gift. So, the seed will remain with you and nurture alongside you as you grow older and adjust to your abilities."

"Think of it as a blank canvas matching your nurtured abilities. Until then, there are still some functions that I believe you will find quite nice." 'Its' words made it clear that it had tailored these Divine Mandates for each of them, possibly to surpass the Divine Mandates created by the new Mysteries.

Witnessing the astounding number of divine mandates taking shape in the cosmic space before them, Ilse couldn't help but sigh in defeat. Not only had these women ascended to a near-equal status with her, but the combined divine mandates of Orion's household were worth more than everything in her vault.

Aurora placed her hand on Ilse's shoulder. "If it makes you feel any better, I don't have a divine mandate either, and I'm a little jealous that my husband and sister are each receiving one. Mother has never received a divine mandate either," Aurora said with a low chuckle, glancing at Aerialia, who pretended not to listen to their conversation.

"I admit that I feel a little better knowing I'm not alone in this," Ilse responded, nodding with a softer expression.

As though eavesdropping on their conversation, a fruit emerged from one of the branches and flew toward Aurora. It arrived before her and exploded, transforming into a radiant white and ink-black winged armoured attire swiftly entering her body.

Aurora entered a daze as a wave of information regarding the divine mandate flowed into her mind.

Everything happened so quickly that none of them could react.

Ilse wore an expressionless face to hide the resentment creeping onto her visage. She didn't want to say anything that might anger the new Mysteries or create conflict between 'it', especially with an entity that had the potential to rival the Divine Mysteries while she was currently in such a state.

Aerialia sighed in defeat. She would have comforted Ilse if she had her own body, as she felt the same way, especially seeing how even Aurora had received her divine mandate. Still, she even wanted to speak up to see if she could get one.

Unable to resist the temptation any longer, Aerialia cleared her throat and said, "Even though I've become part of Orion's household, I haven't received a divine mandate either, so you don't have to worry about feeling lonely in this."

Ilse turned to Aerialia in confusion before her expression morphed into realization when she saw another fruit plucked from the branches and fly towards Aerialia.

The fruit exploded and transformed into a seed that radiated a soft white glow. Then, the seed entered Aerialia's ethereal chest, and all the information regarding the divine mandate flowed into her mind. Aerialia snapped out of her thoughts in a few moments and looked at Ilse's twisted expression with a wry smile.

"You... You crafty deceiver!" Ilse said, her voice filled with anger and tearful expression as she pointed a trembling finger at Aerialia.

Aerialia pursed her lips together and turned to look at the women, slowly snapping out of their daze.

"You are vile... Shameless... All of you!" Ilse shouted, tears streaming down her face before she quickly hid them with her arms, wiping them away, and turned her back to everyone to conceal her emotions.

Aerialia pretended as though she had no idea what had just transpired.

Aurora could not speak and could only comfort Ilse by rubbing her shoulders to avoid worsening the situation.

Meanwhile, observing the entire scene, Orion couldn't help but sigh, seeing the emotional turmoil Ilse was currently experiencing.

General Reynold and Oberon watched nonchalantly, seemingly unfazed by the overwhelming display of divine mandates.

The aura surrounding the Will of the Divine Mysteries gradually pulsed intensely upon seeing the seed the new Mysteries had created. "'Its' stealing my ideas! I've made significant investments in this entire process that led to this situation, and now 'its' trying to copy me!" the Will of the Divine Mysteries shouted, 'its' voice tinged with indignation.

"I don't believe the concept of seeds began with you, so how did 'it' steal your idea?" General Reynold asked, raising an eyebrow.

"You... You know what I'm talking about! That impersonator of a Mysteries is trying to compete with me!" the Will of the Divine Mysteries retorted.

"Even if we accept that 'its' trying to do that, please understand that our Mysteries gained awareness not long ago. So, with the presence of an entity that possesses a distinct but not too similar role, it will try to learn as much as it can, not copy," Oberon responded calmly.

"Are you justifying this as well?" The Will of the Divine Mysteries said, turning to Oberon.

"No, I'm just providing a reasonable explanation," Oberon responded.

"Oh... Okay. The next time the Divine Mysteries tries to enforce another 'Will' down here because of all the commotion you've been causing, I won't intervene. Instead, I'll observe and figure out a reasonable explanation to all after," the Will of the Divine Mysteries replied, its tone increasing in intensity.

Hearing its words, Orion, General Reynold, Oberon, and everyone present couldn't help but frown.

Chapter 1242 A Lively Family

Just as they were about to dig for more information, the Will of the Divine Mysteries vanished.

Orion's sighed in defeat. He had wanted to calm the situation and find an opportunity to ask the Will of the Divine Mysteries what it meant, but now he would have to wait until the next time they encountered one another. However, he didn't know when that would be.

At that moment, the women had regained their senses and checked their bodies. They swept their gazes past the shocking sight of cosmic space surrounding them, now filled with cosmic life and the

divine beings present. Their gazes landed on Orion, who was carrying Grace in his arms, with Sylvalis using his head as support to lay her hand and chin on.

Sensing the women's multiple intense gazes, radiating an overbearing divine power, Sylvalis distanced herself from Orion.

Grace soared over to Aurora's position, also distancing herself as she sensed the impending doom.

Isadora also distanced herself, arriving beside Aurora and the weeping Ilse.

The women vanished from their positions, reappearing before Orion and wrapping their arms around him.

"Husband, I did it! I'm now a goddess!"

"Darling, I wish you could have seen my ascent. I gave it everything, and now, I'm a genuine goddess!"

"Hubby..."

Orion spread his arms wide and welcomed them one by one. They surrounded him from all angles, embracing him tightly. If they hadn't been hovering in cosmic space, protected by General Reynold's barrier, but instead on the ground, he might have collapsed under the immense pressure surrounding him.

"Brother, I'm a goddess now! Can you believe it? I haven't even utilised my full potential yet. How amazing do you think I'll be in the future?" Gina said with a wide smile, her head pressed against Orion's chest, sharing the space with Reena.

"Yes, I can believe it. I watched your ascension, after all. I'm sure you'll be amazing. However, this is uncharted territory, so we'll need to be much more careful," Orion responded.

"I can feel my Devourer's Heart beating intensely in my chest. I can't wait to test my gift later. Now that I'm a true goddess, I promise to go easier on you," Fifi said, kissing him on the cheek, her head resting on his shoulder from behind, a soft smile on her lips.

"I can feel my Devourer's Heart beating intensely in my chest. I can't wait to test my gift later. Now that I'm a true goddess, I promise to go easier on you," Fifi said, kissing him on the cheek, her head resting on his shoulder from behind, a soft smile on her lips.

She felt immense happiness rising within her chest, knowing she finally had the strength to protect Orion once more. She had been worried that she wouldn't be able to keep up with his astounding growth, but now there was no need for her to worry.

With her current strength and the two Divine Mandates she had received from both the new Mysteries and the Divine Mysteries, anyone wanting to challenge her beloved would have to go through her first.

"I admit you've grown much stronger, but don't underestimate me. Your darling isn't someone who can be easily handled," Orion responded, turning his head to give Fifi a kiss on her lips.

"We'll see about that later," Fifi replied, her eyes turning hazy.

However, everyone present could tell she wasn't talking about a sparring session any longer but a 'special kind of battle.'

"I also have the strength to protect you now and won't have to watch you enter dangerous places alone. Now that we're all capable, promise me that even if you can handle it alone, you'll bring at least some of us along," Celeste said, nestled between Fiona and Reena.

Though she wasn't entirely sure of her current power, if she utilised everything she had—including her Divine Mandates—she was confident she could match Aurora or, at the very least, come out victorious.

Celeste didn't dare make the same claim about Ilse, as that would have been too boastful.

She could have simply asked Orion to bring her along on his outings, and she was sure he would agree. However, with Orion's household growing larger, she decided it was best to continue her responsibilities in maintaining the family's structure.

She could always take a vacation later and explore the outside world with Orion.

"I agree," Sura responded.

"I also agree," Ursa nodded.

"Me too. I'm curious to see how much my gift has developed," Lyra added, weaving her hair toward Orion. She immediately felt a hand grab it, forcing her to stop. Looking in that direction, she saw Saria was the culprit.

Lyra responded with a snort but didn't relent.

The rest of the women nodded in agreement with Celeste's words.

"I promise," Orion said, "but that'll be for later. For now, you all are pregnant, and we need to focus on our unborn children, and taking them into dangerous areas isn't a good idea."

'Of course, it depends on how dangerous the area is,' He thought, but he kept that part to himself. He knew if he said it out loud and an argument started, he would lose instantly, so he wisely decided to leave that battle for another day.

"How about me? I feel stronger, look younger, and look much more beautiful!" Derry said, her tone excited. Her skin was now fairer, radiant, and flawless, and she appeared half the age she once was.

Anyone who saw her, unless they knew her well, would think she was her own daughter. All the wrinkles had vanished from her body.

Nevertheless, Derry now exuded a mature charm, similar to Aerialia, Aurora, and Ilse, who, despite their youthful appearances, made it clear that they were far older than they seemed. Of course, with someone like Derry, it would be slightly tricky for anyone unfamiliar with her mischievous nature to notice this maturity.

"It's not just you! All of us look younger and more beautiful than we did before our ascension," Celia interjected, playfully pinching Derry's waist to leave them out of the conversation.

Derry scowled at her in annoyance.

"If anyone looks more beautiful and younger, it has to be me. We all know I'm right," Ingrid said, a smirk forming on her cold expression. Her aura had not diminished but intensified, highlighting her features even more.

"The village's concept of beauty didn't apply to any of us even before. Now, we're all goddesses. But if you're still looking for the most beautiful, that would be Reena. So try again," Derry retorted sharply.

Ingrid glanced at Reena, who was paying no attention to the conversation, enjoying the comfort of Orion's chest.

Ingrid clicked her tongue in displeasure, choosing to remain silent.

"AHM! After Reena, I'm sure we can agree it's me," Vivian chimed in confidently.

"Tsk, ts! It's really annoying to see you oldies arguing over an obvious answer," Crystalia interrupted.

"After Aurora and Reena, it's me, then Tala, then Maya, Gina, Ursa, Sura, Merida, Breezeflutter, Isadora, my mother, Anara, Saria, Dariya, Malaia, Greta, Fiona, Celeste, and Shani. That's the top twenty, and you guys aren't even in it," Crystalia said, eliciting glares from every direction.

"You might have become a goddess, but nothing about your attitude reflects it. Maybe you should meet with Aurora after this so she can teach you about beauty and divinity because you're ruining it," she added, holding their fiery gazes without backing down.

Selene sighed at her daughter's words, wondering why she had chosen to stir things up at such a delicate time. Still, she understood that, after their ascent to divinity, focusing on beauty seemed shallow, though she could see the conversation from their perspectives.

Ayla, Saria, and Anara chuckled, finding the argument amusing. The divine aura surrounding them grew more intense by the second.

"It's okay! You're all beautiful in your own way to me, and you all look more radiant than ever," Orion said loudly.

"Oh? Then tell me, husband, am I beautiful—" Vivian began, but sensing impending doom, Orion quickly moved to interrupt her. Fortunately, someone else was faster.

Suddenly, a shimmering, colourful rainbow dust fell upon the women, shrinking them instantly to pixie size.

Above them were Maeve, Willow, Breezeflutter, and Whisperwing, who had used their racial skill, Dust Morphosis, releasing the rainbow-like dust that caused the women to shrink.

They swiftly rushed down towards Orion, transforming into human size and kissing him on the lips individually before embracing him.

"We thought the Pixie race would never have another divine being to look after them after Aegis of the Deity's death. But you've proven us all wrong, helping us become goddesses in the most extraordinary manner that even the divines are shocked. Thank you, darling. I'll never forget today," Maeve said softly.

"Don't mention it. I'm your husband, after all. The least I can do is make you feel like a goddess and turn you into one," Orion replied with a broad, radiant smile, returning the embrace.

With Maeve voicing their shared thoughts, the others silently embraced him, blushing profusely. Breezeflutter nearly passed out as a myriad of emotions flowed through them.

"You always know how to use your words. And remember, you still haven't answered my question. Husband, am I beautiful?" Willow said, calming her racing heartbeat.

Before Orion could respond, the rest of the women instinctively released their divine power and returned to their regular sizes. Then, they went back to Orion to continue their embrace.

Chapter 1243 A Match-Making Scheme, Please, Supreme Leader...!

"Your scars are still there," Orion asked, looking at Whisperwing, whose attire revealed her scarred body, which looked the same as before.

Whisperwing nodded. "I decided to keep them. Didn't you say I was more beautiful this way? I think I've gotten comfortable with looking like this. It wouldn't hurt to continue," she said, glancing

at her sisters, who had gathered around them once more with a smirk. Orion nodded and shifted the conversation, wanting to find out how they felt after their ascension.

At the side, General Reynold couldn't help but raise a brow at the unfolding scene. If Orion were a normal divine being, he would have advised him to limit his growing household to avoid distractions that might hinder the realm's growth. But after witnessing how Orion had made over 30 women ascend to divinity and become goddesses—not demigoddesses—he was more inclined to advise him to copulate with more women in the future, choosing quality over quantity to nurture their abilities, as they would shine brighter in divinity. So, he remained silent.

Aside from his years as a general fighting for humanity against the divine, General Reynold had never dealt intimately with such a large number of women, so he was unsure how to advise Orion. But from what he saw, it seemed Orion was doing well alone. Despite this, General Reynold couldn't help but glance and shake his head inwardly at them. They had just attained divinity, which resulted in their realm expanding to provide more resources. They were pregnant with a child of divine origin without needing to grasp the law of fertility and had each acquired two divine mandates. Yet, instead of looking at the bigger picture, they were busy having a superficial argument. General Reynold decided to use his capabilities to scour Paradise for extraordinarily talented women who could become capable goddesses. If they had a way to create gods, it would have been better, but since they didn't, he had no choice but to work with what he had for now. He refocused on the crystallized tree, which now acted as an extension of the new Mysteries, pondering on the next stage of their development plan for Paradise.

Meanwhile, Oberon continued to observe the scene with a smile. He wondered how their creator, Aerednir, would feel witnessing such a moment. At the same time, he considered meeting the High King of the Pixies to arrange for their most talented women to be introduced to Orion, regardless of their ages, as long as they weren't engaged. Fortunately, Orion had no restrictions on the type of women as long as they were well-mannered, beautiful and talented. Seeing how fierce the women in Orion's household were, Oberon made a mental note to select those with outgoing personalities who wouldn't buckle under the pressure of their clashes.

Unbeknownst to Orion, the two man-made divines who had led the development of their new realm were already planning to matchmake him.

After a while, the women calmed down and pulled back.

Seeing this, Grace soared toward Anara. "Mother, you look amazing," she said, admiring her mother's stunning radiant figure.

Anara gently held Grace in her arms, "Thank you for the compliment, dear," she said, kissing her on the forehead.

"You too, aunties," Grace chuckled, turning around to compliment her other mothers.

Saria, Dariya, Malaia, and Shani, who were nearby, accepted her compliment with smiles.

"I heard you're pregnant. Does that mean I can expect more siblings with divine origins?" Grace asked.

"Yes," Anara nodded. "But for now, continue spending time with your other siblings. Now that we are all goddesses, I believe our breast milk should be able to provide them with nourishment. Even if they don't ascend to your level, they should become much stronger than the average mortal," she added.

As the first tree nymph to give birth, Anara had gone through several materials to ensure she could care for Grace properly. Though she had been strict and rigid initially, she had slowly adapted with the help of her sisters. When Grace ascended into divinity, Anara searched for information on caring for a divine child. Thanks to the influx of multiple races inhabiting Paradise, she stumbled upon this crucial piece of knowledge. Now that she and her sisters were all goddesses, they could help their mortal children grow into beings with divine heritage.

The other women nodded in agreement, including those listening in.

"Yes! Did you hear that, Sylvalis? We'll soon have more playmates! This is the best week of my life," Grace said joyfully, pumping her tiny fist into the air.

Sylvalis, hearing her name called, soared toward them, observing the unfolding scene curiously.

Anara looked at Sylvalis and smiled. "How are you, child?" she asked calmly. Though Sylvalis was technically much older due to her background, she had recently emerged in a petite form without her memories. As the tree nymph overseer, Anara decided to address her as a child and look after her.

Sylvalis focused intently before nodding. "Fine."

Anara's eyes widened slightly, and she was surprised to hear her speak, but her expression quickly relaxed. She nodded with a calm gaze. She decided to speak with Orion later about allowing Sylvalis to reside with them. Now that all her sisters were reunited, perhaps they could help her recover her memories. If not, it would be better for Sylvalis to familiarise herself with her race.

Isadora and Aurora stepped forward, joining in on the conversation.

After several minutes, they all fell silent, taking in the surrounding cosmic space brimming with cosmic life before deciding it was time to return home.

"Let's return," General Reynold said. He wrapped a protective barrier around them, and in an instant, the space around them warped. The scenery changed, and they appeared within Orion's manor.

Suddenly, they sensed several figures rushing toward them. Within moments, Brane, Zara, Seth, and Zogar arrived before them. Their eyes widened in shock, astonishment, and surprise as they scanned the figures present, focusing on Celeste, Greta, and the rest of the women in Orion's household. They were familiar with the inexplicable divine aura and could immediately recognize that it was the same one that Orion and the others had exuded.

Brane gulped and fell to his knees. "Please, Supreme Leader, help us ascend to divinity," he said, his voice trembling as he struggled to contain his emotions.

Zara, Seth, and Zogar knelt as well, facing Orion.

"Please, Supreme Leader, help us ascend to divinity!" they pleaded.

Orion couldn't help but sigh tiredly. He knew it would come to this when he sensed their presence near the manor. He wondered how devastated they would be when they realized it wasn't as easy as they thought.

"I can only help mortals ascend to divinity through my semen, and that's by impregnating them. I'm afraid that won't be useful for you," Orion responded, shaking his head tiredly.

Upon hearing Orion's words, Brane, Seth, and Zogar's expressions twisted into grimaces. Meanwhile, Zara's eyes widened in realization. "Then... does that mean..." she began but swiftly sealed her lips. She and her husband had promised to discover the path to divinity and ascend

together. Now, learning that her husband, who previously had the highest chance of ascending, would be left behind while she, who had the least chance of success, might ascend, it almost felt like a cruel joke.

"Zara, you can go ahead. Remember our promise. If either of us acquires the chance to ascend to divinity, we will do whatever we can to help the other ascend," Brane said, noticing his wife's dilemma.

"No. I would rather we ascend together than leave you behind. Divinity means nothing to me without you," Zara responded, biting her lips as her eyes grew misty. It wasn't the idea of being impregnated by Orion or carrying his child that bothered them. Unlike the younger generation, the Village customs were deeply ingrained in them, just like in Celia, Vivian and the others. They found it hard to shed those customs, even with exposure to other cultures. In fact, they were rather pleased with the idea of taking care of Orion's child as though he were their own, given that he was the current Village Chief, Supreme Leader of Paradise, and a divine being. They had already considered this before, and none had disagreed. Orion had been reluctant due to his preference for maintaining a close-knit family. What truly troubled Zara was the fear that her husband might not ascend to divinity before the end of his lifespan.

The thought of this future was enough to make her heart ache. Zara didn't need her gift of foresight to see that far.

General Reynold, who had been observing the scene, said, "Why don't you two consider becoming divine apostles of Orion's household?" He acknowledged that without Brane and Zara, capable leaders who cared for this settlement, none of this would have been possible.

They had also recognized Orion's potential and nurtured it. He was curious why they chose to chase divinity on their own instead of seeking divine assistance.

Chapter 1244 Zara's Decision, A Divine Household!

"We can't because doing so would mean limiting ourselves to their level. For the Supreme Leader and his household to have reached this level on their own proves they are all capable, but we want to walk our own path, knowing we've given it our all. The concept of divinity is too grand and profound for one to suppress oneself in such a way," Brane replied, lowering his head in respect. General Reynold had taken care of their race, so Brane offered him all the respect he could muster.

"Haha! Good... You remind me of myself and many others who would rather step into the unknown to ascend to divinity than lower our heads in defeat and accept our fate. You carry the heritage of

the Omnithrialians, just as I do, and you should be confident in yourself. Don't let your talent be limited. Even the divine should tremble at your confidence," General Reynold said with laughter.

"However, if you fail, at least you will know you tried your best. And if you ever decide to give up, come to me, and we will figure something out. For now, though, only you can make this choice." He focused on them, including Seth and Zogar in his words.

Among them, Zara was the most valuable. In this chaotic world where divine beings plot their deaths and resurrections, anomalies defy fate, throwing a wrench into the order of all things and destabilizing what was once planned; those who could foresee the future accurately were rare talents.

Others might see a future that would change before it began, and some couldn't see anything at all due to the various forces at play. Only when true gods ascended to divinity did such matters become trivial. However, true gods rarely intervened in the affairs of regarding such matters.

General Reynold hoped that Zara would eventually choose to ascend to divinity, but he didn't need to force her. He chose to respect their decision.

"Thank you. We will remember your words and seek you out when the time is right," Brane responded with a nod, bowing respectfully while kneeling.

Zara bowed alongside her husband.

"Have you made up your mind?" Orion asked, looking at Zara.

Zara raised her head, meeting Orion's gaze, and said, "I'm sorry, but I've made my choice. I won't ascend until my husband also has a chance to ascend."

Orion nodded in understanding and responded, "I will make Paradise's resources available for you so that you can do your best to achieve ascension." He was confident they would figure something out, especially now that their realm had expanded further into its dimension. He might be a unique individual, even compared to other extraordinary beings. However, he didn't need to be overly arrogant when Naka, the hidden figures behind the Divine Corps, and other extremely powerful figures were still alive. 'The higher I climb, the more I can see the chasm separating us,' Orion thought. Orion remembered when he had once believed he could face Naka or the Divine Mysteries while still a four-star warrior, and now he found that laughable. He had already paid the price after

discovering that Naka had been spying on them constantly. Why Naka hadn't emerged to confront them, Orion didn't know, and he hoped that wouldn't happen until they were ready to face him.

"Thank you, Supreme Leader!" Zara, Brane, Seth and Z said simultaneously.

"Supreme Leader, I hope you can help me with something. Since I'm not... viable for the condition, could you help someone else close to me ascend?" Zogar asked, lowering his head to the ground.

"Me too," Seth chimed in. "I will think about it," Orion responded. Unlike Brane and Zara, Zogar and Seth were still full of life and weren't in a rush to ascend. They had time, but that might not be the case for any loved ones around them who might not have the opportunity to reach the level they had.

If it had been any other individual, they would have swiftly accepted the decision and chosen to begin immediately. However, for Orion, who didn't just want to have children with every woman he met but instead only with those he had sworn to spend eternity with, this was an important matter that required careful thought. Moreover, just thinking about the chaos that would ensue if he decided to copulate with all of the single women in Paradise—helping them ascend to divinity while also bearing his children—was enough to imagine strife that would reverberate for countless generations. That wasn't the legacy he wanted to create for their new realm. Aside from the occasional ascensions here and there due to his interference, Orion believed it was best to allow people to ascend to divinity naturally. So, for him, this was a personal and universal decision.

Seth and Zogar nodded in understanding as though they had already expected this response.

Orion turned to General Reynold and said, "Since you're here, there are some things I need your help with." He quickly explained the situation regarding the nymphs, the demigoddess among them, and the tainteds. Through his Divine Medallion of Sovereign Accord, he had received several reports, including about individuals on the verge of transforming into tainteds.

"I'm not certain if we can help the demigoddess, but your partners might be able to figure something out for the transformed tree nymphs and help them recover," General Reynold responded, turning to look at Saria, Anara, Dariya, and Malaia. His eyes briefly lingered on Saria before withdrawing his gaze. In the past, he would have examined their condition himself. Nevertheless, with so many tree nymph goddesses present, he realized it would be best for them to use this opportunity to train their divine capabilities, especially since they were the ones most familiar with their nymph sisters.

Orion responded with a nod.

"Take those infested by the Deathplague to the Mirror Realm. Once we're done curing them, we'll select a special universe to send them to and place them there," General Reynold said.

Orion nodded once more.

"If that's all, we'll take our leave," General Reynold said. He and Oberon swiftly transformed into streams of light that vanished into the stairs. The twelve-step staircase floating in the air transformed into a streak of light that shot toward the direction of the former Village Chief's compound. When it arrived at its previous position, it transformed into an enormous sundial. But this time, numerous mysterious patterns surrounded the sundial, and its entire form was wrapped in ever-continuous swirling white and inky black flames. It exuded a mysterious aura, like an entity not from this plane of existence and above it.

After General Reynold and Oberon left, the women began discussing various topics. Some returned to the manor to check on the children while Fifi and Tala approached Orion.

"We need a place where we can test our abilities and divine mandates," Fifi said.

Tala nodded in agreement. Now that she had surpassed Orion in strength, she was eager to join him on his explorations, just like Fifi. She saw this as an opportunity to bond with him and make up for their time apart. At times, she felt she was falling behind, giving her the illusion that their relationship was becoming shallow. While some of her sisters shared their experiences handling these feelings, only Fifi seemed to truly understand her struggle. Fifi had helped her find a way to cope with her current predicament.

However, they needed a place to train and push their abilities to the limit, but they couldn't do so within Paradise, especially near the children. They hoped Orion could provide them with a suitable place to practice.

"I'll speak with Ilse and see if she can secure a space at the Golden Palace for you to use," Orion responded. He then turned to Ilse, whose emotions had calmed. Her face was no longer teary but wore an expressionless gaze, seemingly detached from their conversation. "Is that okay with you, Ilse?" Orion asked.

Ilse focused on him, swept her gaze over the women, and then refocused on Orion. She nodded, "I will do my best to secure a place for them at the Golden Palace immediately."

"Are you sure you're in the right condition to do so?" Orion asked, his tone curious. He had expected her to take a break before offering her help and hadn't anticipated her willingness to assist immediately.

Ilse sighed tiredly and nodded. "Yes, I am." She glanced at Orion's manor and added, "From the look of things, this home is no longer fit to be called 'Orion's Manor,' and the household is now a divine household. Why don't your household join me at the Golden Palace until you have prepared your own place to stay? It would also make it easier for everyone to access the Golden Palace for training."

Hearing Ilse's offer for them to reside at the Golden Palace, Selene, Merida, and Maya, who were still nearby, couldn't help but widen their eyes in surprise, their bodies trembling with excitement.

Chapter 1245 Anara's Divine Mandate, The Root Of All Creation

Just a few hours ago, they had only hoped to be summoned by Ilse, never daring to dream of setting foot inside the Golden Palace. Now, they were being offered a place to live there.

It felt like a dream come true, as though everything they had ever wanted was falling into place effortlessly.

Although they had become goddesses, their respect for their creator remained unwavering. Even if they were to surpass her in strength, which seemed unlikely, they saw it as an opportunity to care for her just as she had cared for them.

"Alright then," Orion responded with a nod. He turned to the women and said, "Inform everyone to pack their things and get ready. We'll be moving to the Golden Palace immediately."

Fifi, Tala, and the others nodded in agreement and swiftly went into the manor to share the news with the rest of the women.

"After this, I will begin preparing to forge my new body," Aerialia said.

She had decided to wait until they reached the Golden Palace, knowing it was a safer place for such a dangerous undertaking. With the Divine Mandate she had received from the new Mysteries, she was confident in forging her new body and eager to put her divine mandate to use.

"Okay. When you begin, I'll be there to keep watch over you," Orion said, nodding.

Aerialia shook her head and responded, "You don't need to. I know you have many tasks to handle. Aurora and the others can watch over me until I'm done."

"Alright," Orion nodded, acknowledging that he had much to care for.

He had already sent a message to the other Key Leaders to prepare for a meeting in which he would inform them about the latest developments in Paradise.

After an hour and a half of preparation, the entire family was ready to leave Orion's manor. All their belongings had been stored on a ship—one of the divine mandates Ursa had received from the Divine Mysteries.

Meanwhile, the children were being carried by multiple versions of Greta. Thanks to her gift, which had evolved into a divine gift, Greta could split herself into countless forms. The limit was still unknown, each as powerful as the original.

Orion had heard that some of these forms could be slightly stronger than she was. Greta could also act as a complete healing force on her own. Orion was curious to learn more about her divine gift. Fortunately, each of them carried a fragment of his Divine Medallion of Sovereign Accord, which allowed them to record their abilities and divine mandates for him to review later.

He could assign them roles in Paradise that best suited their capabilities.

Brane, Zara, Seth, and Zogar stayed behind to escort them to the Golden Palace. Though it wasn't necessary, it was a gesture of respect for the first divine family in Paradise.

Once everyone was ready, Ilse tore open a rift in space and flew through it, with the others following close behind.

After emerging on the other side, Ilse led the women into the Golden Palace to show them around. Grace and Sylvalis immediately soared off into the distance, continuing their playful activities.

Orion called Anara, Saria, Malaia, and Dariya over and asked them to follow him as they went to meet the Nymphs. Aurora followed him as the Crimson Greatsword floating beside him.

Brane and the others accompanied them to observe how they would attempt to cure the transformed tree nymphs who had succumbed to the death plague and were already at death's door.

They swiftly exited the massive city and arrived at one of the lakes outside it, which spanned hundreds of kilometres. There, the demigoddess water nymph resided.

As though sensing their presence, the demigoddess water nymph swiftly emerged. She bowed respectfully toward Orion, then curiously eyed the four tree nymphs.

"We're waiting for someone else. She will be here soon," Orion said.

He had already sent word through one of his bound servants—whom he had acquired from spies infiltrating the Runaway Cities—to summon Nadia. She should arrive at any moment. He intended to enhance their strength to provide Paradise with more capable hands.

Anara and the others were already aware that Nadia would be appearing, as she had been the previous Sovereign of the Bastion of the Wailing Gnarled, taking care of them before they arrived here.

The demigoddess water nymph nodded, though she remained curious about who they were waiting for.

Within minutes, a flying magical beast, a Quradactyl, appeared on the horizon and swiftly landed before them. Nadia leapt down from its back, landing gracefully, and bowed in greeting.

"I've heard everything. Congratulations on your ascensions!" Nadia said, bowing toward Anara, Saria, Malaia, and Dariya.

She was overjoyed by the existence of the demigoddess water nymph, and now that several of her sisters had become goddesses, it felt as though a heavy burden had been lifted from her shoulders.

It had been a long time since any nymph had ascended to such a divine stage, and she couldn't help but wonder about the capabilities of a goddess-level tree nymph.

"Even with this, don't treat us any differently than before. Always remember that you are our sister," Anara said.

The others nodded in agreement, smiling warmly.

Nadia sighed softly and responded with a bright smile, nodding.

"Let's begin. Take us to the tree nymphs," Orion said, turning to the demigoddess water nymph.

The water nymph nodded and faced the lake. In an instant, the waters parted, revealing a path from their position in the centre to the other end of the lake, stretching hundreds of kilometres away.

A staircase made of water materialized at the lake's edge, leading down into its depths. She gestured for them to follow and stepped onto the stairs.

Orion led the way with Aerialia following beside him, followed by Anara, Saria, Malaia, Dariya, and Nadia. Brane, Zara, Seth, and Zogar trailed behind.

The stairs began to move, taking them down into the deep. Within moments, they reached the lake's bottom.

One by one, they stepped off the stairs.

At the bottom of the lake lay hundreds of thousands of petrified tree nymphs, all victims of the dreadful death plague. Countless blue rings of water held them in place, preventing them from attacking when approached.

"Do you all want to do this together?" Orion asked, turning to Anara and his other tree nymph partners.

Truthfully, he had no idea how they could cure the petrified tree nymphs. However, since General Reynold had assured him they could handle it, he trusted their abilities and looked forward to seeing how they would solve this dilemma.

They glanced at each other, communicating their thoughts, and nodded as though they had made a decision.

"I will handle everything myself," Anara said.

"Go ahead," Orion said, gesturing for her to proceed.

Anara moved closer to the petrified trees, examining the blue rings of water holding them in place. She summoned one of her divine mandates. In an instant, a golden crown with antlers stretching outward, pulsating with a soft divine light, appeared before her.

Anara held it and placed the crown on her head. This was the divine mandate she had received from the new Mysteries. The new Mysteries had allowed them to name their Divine Mandates.

Anara didn't know if it was because they were in competition to outdo the Divine Mysteries, but she didn't care. In honour of receiving such a peerless Divine Mandate and being one of the few to be granted such a privilege, she named her Divine Mandate, 'The Root of All Creation.'

One function of this Divine Mandate was that it allowed her to manifest a pocket dimension, an entire realm, on a smaller scale, like the universes that had emerged from the seed of the crystallized tree of the new Mysteries. She could recreate, reshape, and redefine reality within—changing air to water, water to earth, or even erasing it entirely.

In a sense, it was similar to Ilse's Golden Palace. In this impregnable fortress, Ilse could transform the landscape, redefine it, or create an endless domain capable of housing Paradise's population.

According to Ilse, she had used it to care for her children during the Great War for countless years before releasing them after realizing they had taken her security for granted.

But for Anara, it was an endlessly growing universe. With such a powerful Divine Mandate, Anara was thankful that the new Mysteries powered it. Otherwise, she doubted she could utilize even a fraction of its full potential at her current level.

Anara activated The Root of All Creation. Instantly, the divine light on the golden antlers intensified. A transparent, square veil emerged from the crown, surrounding the petrified tree nymphs, Orion, and the others.

The veil soon began to solidify, and their surroundings transformed into a wide, lush garden with a vast plain where all the petrified tree nymphs remained rooted to the ground.

The blue rings of water sealing them in place shattered, allowing the petrified tree to move. The branches stretched wispy from side to side, but they were still stuck in place, unable to move.

Anaa had cast another one of her Divine Mandate's abilities.

Chapter 1246 Anara's Divine Mandate, The Root Of All Creation (2)

Suddenly, at the back of the petrified tree nymphs, numbering about 800,000, a leaf sprouted from the ground and grew into a giant, stretching upward until it reached the sky, bordering the space above and the earth below. Its roots stretched across the entire domain, writhing and spreading beneath their feet, intertwining with the roots of the petrified tree nymphs.

Then, the ground beneath the tree nymphs began to open as the roots attached to the petrified tree nymphs dragged them beneath it, swallowing them. Then, the ground sealed back, instantly returning to its normal state.

Anara could also grant blessings with the Root of All Creation, bestowing functional immortality. She could kill them and preserve their souls, whether within her domain or outside; if she will, she could remove a soul from its cycle of reincarnation, ensuring the total and irreversible erasure of an enemy. Whether foes or allies, all were subject to her rule.

Her will alone could decide who flourishes and who fades, dictating the laws of growth, longevity, and decay. She could also force the evolution of a lifeform, allowing it to grow beyond its limits. For example, she could turn a seed into a tree that eclipses a world, possibly even allowing it to ascend to divinity.

Anara realized that she had literally become a force of nature. She also understood that some aspects of her ability could be used on mortals while other parts were meant to deal with divine beings who could infinitely reincarnate or resurrect.

This kind of power was reserved for divine beings who had mastered the laws of the cosmos to a terrifying level, yet she had mastered none. This Divine Mandate had granted her the same authority.

Anara felt exhilarated, yet at the same time, it was frightening. If anyone else had the divine mandate, they could easily throw the outside world into chaos. Fortunately, it wasn't in her nature to do so. Nonetheless, the fact that the two new and Divine Mysteries had seen fit to give her and her sisters sixty-six divine mandates, each rivalling her own, made her realize the terrifying potential of their family.

After a while, the enormous tree began to glow with a dazzling array of light, causing Anara to sigh in relief. To free the petrified tree nymphs from their current predicament, she destroyed their bodies and grasped their souls, which were absorbed into the Tree of the Root of Creation. Their soul essence was broken down until the preserved essence from the tree nymphs was extracted, the very essence that allowed them to function—listening to orders and moving. Once the preserved essence was extracted, the Root of Creation allowed Anara to recreate the birth of the tree nymph.

She didn't consider destroying the Vylkr energy; even with her Divine Mandate, that would be impossible. She could only isolate it or absorb it within the Divine Mandate, which had been granted to her by the new Will Mysteries, birthed from the essence of the Divine Mysteries corrupted by the Vylkr energy.

The Divine Mandate granted to her by the Divine Mysteries could also bestow slightly similar capabilities, as both Mysteries had been trying to outdo each other. Anara was uncertain whether the Divine Mandate could absorb the Vylkr energy in the same way, or if there was a limit to how much Vylkr energy it could consume before it would be corrupted, or if it could withstand it, as the Divine Mandate given to her by the new Mysteries could. Considering that Aurora possessed a dual Vylkr and divine energy artefact created with the help of the Divine Mysteries, Anara also wondered if hers would be dual or not. She decided to test it later and see if the Divine Mandate could withstand the force of the Vylkr energy or if Aerialia's Scepter was a unique case.

Anara could have granted the petrified tree nymphs her blessing, thereby granting them functional immortality. However, the nymphs were unlike Orion and the other humans, who had adapted to utilizing Vylkr energy through their heritages as descendants of the Omnithrialians. Instead, they were beings created at the whim of their creator so they could descend into the universe. They weren't suited to wield such a powerful curse in the form of energy. Even the gods' chosen, like the dragmins, wouldn't need to utilize a deeply diluted form of Vylkr energy if they wielded it. Attempting to force evolution on the current petrified tree nymphs would cause the Vylkr energy to adapt and mutate further. Rather than healing them, it would only spiral them deeper into abomination, destroying their last chance to preserve their sanity and being.

There was a reason why Naka had deemed them a failed experiment and moved on. The only way Anara could think of saving them was to rid them of their previous form, extract their essence, and rebirth them using a new body, rivalling that of a divine being created from the essence of the new Mysteries. If they were any other beings, she would have gone through several processes, perhaps

consulting her other sisters. However, since the beings before her were tree nymphs like herself, her ability was the perfect counter.

Anara turned to look at Orion and Aerialia, who curiously observed the situation behind her. The demigoddess Water Nymph and Nadia also watched with shocked and astounded expressions. Anara couldn't hold it in and chuckled softly. But she couldn't blame them; she would have felt the same before ascending to divinity.

"I'm done. They will be out in a few minutes," Anara said, focusing on Orion.

Orion approached her, with Aerialia floating beside him.

Aerialia stared intently at her, awaiting an explanation.

Anara nodded and explained. Her voice was loud enough for those behind them to hear. After she finished, she waited for them to digest everything she had said.

At the same time, countless fruits covered in brilliant rainbow-like colours sprouted from the branches and then fell towards the earth. The earth swallowed the fruits, and instantly, they began to germinate, sprouting into trees that grew until they reached 400 feet before coming to a halt. Then, tree nymphs began to emerge from their trees one by one. Their expressions were a mixture of shock, disbelief, and fear. Some rubbed their eyes as they took in their surroundings, including the enormous tree that reached the border between the world and space—the trees they had just emerged from—and themselves, especially their chests. Several tree nymphs who recognized each other rushed towards one another, hugging and reuniting.

Meanwhile, at the forefront, several tree nymphs immediately took note of Anara, Orion, and the others. Sensing the otherworldly divine power radiating from each of them, except Nadia and the demigoddess water nymph, who exuded an aura they were very familiar with, understanding emerged within their minds, and instinctively, they knelt, bowing toward them.

As soon as the others realized what was happening, they also knelt and bowed. The kneeling continued until all 800,000 tree nymphs were on their knees, bowing.

"Sisters, you have been given a new life and cured of the affliction that once placed you in such a horrendous state. You no longer have to live in fear of encountering the tainted or facing the wrath of the Harbingers, for your previous condition and the Bastion of Wailling Gnarled are no more!" Anara's voice reverberated across her domain. She added, "I welcome you to your new home, in

your new bodies, where you will also be reunited with your long-lost sisters. For your courage in choosing to sacrifice yourselves and holding off the corruption even at your last breath, I welcome you to the realm that has taken away your sorrows and pains... My sisters, I welcome you to our realm... Paradise!"

As her voice ended, the tree nymphs' faces twisted into various expressions before morphing into happiness, tears running down their cheeks as they realized what had transpired.

Behind them, Saria, Dariya, Malaia, and Nadia displayed similar emotions, calmly smiling brightly.

Nadia collapsed to her knees, weeping profusely before wiping her tears and standing up. She rushed towards the reincarnated tree nymphs.

"Vaeloria, Lirienna, Aeloria, Eiravine, Calythra!" Nadia cried out, calling various names as though searching for long-lost acquaintances—or perhaps sisters. Her heart paused as she froze upon seeing a tree nymph with light pink skin on the upper body and a deep brown complexion on the lower half. She swiftly embraced her before continuing to call out more names.

As the former Sovereign of the Bastion of Wailling Gnarled, Nadia had laid many tree nymphs to rest in this condition, so seeing them recover and speaking with them was a dream she never dared to conceive. But now, this was their reality.

At that moment, Nadia believed she was indeed in Paradise!

Witnessing the heartwarming scene, Orion turned to Anara and said, "I will leave everything here for you to handle. There are other matters that I need to take care of."

Anara nodded. She kissed him on the lips briefly, then pulled back and said, "Take care."

Orion nodded. He did the same with his other wives before Anara ejected him from her domain.

Chapter 1247 A Reassuring Future, Visiting The Midnight Butcher Bar!

Moments later, Brane, Zara, Zogar and Seth were also ejected from the enclosed dimension. Although they wanted to observe more of Anara's extraordinary abilities, they still had other matters to attend to. As such, they followed Orion out of the barrier. Orion looked at the domain's green surroundings and realized Anara had moved it from the lake to a far distance from the city and the

other sites filled with other races. He realized she must have done so to prevent the tree nymphs from being overwhelmed by the sights and to reintegrate them safely into society. Yet, that didn't change the fact that Anara's Divine Mandate, The Root of Creation, was so terrifying! And with sixty-five more divine mandates to learn about, Orion couldn't help but wonder if it would be enough to deal with their enemies.

"They are growing into terrifying figures. This means you won't have to work so hard and risk your life in the future. Once I reforge my body, I will ensure to reinforce this statement," Aerialia said, looking at the outline of the encased dimension before refocusing on Orion.

Even though she had her reservations in the past due to her status, she had already declared her desire to be part of Orion's family in front of everyone, including the new and Divine Mysteries. So, she saw no reason to avoid strengthening her romantic relationship with Orion before she reforged her body. She couldn't help but look forward to it in anticipation.

After years of relentless ascension to divinity, Aerialia decided it was time to settle and ensure that what had transpired in the outside world would not happen within their realm.

Aerialia looked at Orion with a light smile. The young man had genuinely grown on her!

Orion nodded in agreement. "I want them to continue growing more terrifying until even Naka, his Vylkr spawns, the Divine Corps, and anyone else standing against Paradise fear to incur their wrath. Then, I can be at ease, knowing I have loved ones capable of preserving the same peace and security I strive to maintain," Orion said, meeting Aerialia's softened gaze.

"You better be prepared to handle my desire to bring my children back from extinction," Aerialia said, her lips curling slightly as she looked at Orion intently, with desire burning in her eyes.

Orion wanted to respond, but seeing the intensity in Aerialia's gaze, he knew she was serious. He remained silent, understanding it wasn't wise to challenge a goddess who had lived longer than before the emergence of the Divine Mysteries.

Aerialia withdrew her gaze with a light smile. "Due to the tremendous transformation that has taken place in Paradise, you can go ahead and introduce me to the rest of the Key Leaders. It's best I do so before reforging my body," she said. Her existence had been kept a secret to act as their last line of defence in case something happened to Paradise, and Ilse couldn't respond. However, now that there were numerous divine beings with multiple divine mandates, more than anything she had ever seen in her lifetime, including their own Mysteries, this tactic was no longer needed.

Orion nodded, agreeing that this was the best course of action. He didn't want the Key Leaders to be surprised or suspicious of Aerialia after she reforged her body and re-emerged. It was also a matter of respect for their positions as Paradise's Key Leaders.

Nearby, floating in the air, Brane and the others couldn't help but look at Orion strangely. Though they couldn't hear what he was saying, his actions indicated he was speaking with someone, yet they couldn't see anyone else.

Nevertheless, they didn't see his actions as abnormal or crazy. They fully believed Orion was speaking with someone. After witnessing so much already, they knew it wasn't him who was disconnected from reality; it was them who couldn't comprehend the complexity of the situation unfolding before them.

They sighed inwardly, realizing the immense heights they would need to scale to reach Orion's current capabilities.

Orion turned to look at Brane and the others beside him, enveloped them in his divine power, and vanished into thin air, heading toward the Golden Palace.

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The Golden Palace

The meeting lasted an hour before it ended. Apart from Anara and Reena, the Key Leaders walked out of the meeting hall one by one, their faces displaying a variety of intense emotions. Although they had been within the realm, observing the event that had transpired from a distance at Orion's manor, they never realized they could still miss something grand and impressive.

Sixty-eight Divine Mandates!

Their own architect of universes! And they could overlook it from this dimension, which was now called the Domain of the gods!

With complex emotions filling their eyes, Brane, Zara, Seth, and Zogar looked at the floating Crimson Greatsword and the ethereal woman, whose body was wrapped in numerous cloths resembling bandages, standing beside Orion.

As they had suspected, Orion had been speaking to someone they couldn't see. Nonetheless, they were filled with renewed determination to ascend to divinity. They each exited the Golden Palace, vanishing into countless light particles one by one, and returned to their territories to inform them that the celebration of Orion's family's ascension to a divine family could commence. After handing the Crimson Greatsword to Aurora, Orion exited the Golden Palace and headed toward the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City camp area. With the One-Winged Chains of Eternal Submission, he could tune into the thoughts of all his bound servants, and when he summoned Iyalis, one thought stood out to him. It belonged to none other than Evaline, the former Mistress of Espionage and Intelligence of Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, whom he had bound with the One-Winged Chains of Eternal Submission because she was the aunt and only remaining family of Karensa, the owner of the Midnight Butcher Bar. Karensa had provided him with vital information to stop the rebellion of the nobles of Trekking Flamingo Runaway City.

Now that he possessed the Divine Medallion of Sovereign Accord, which allowed him to sense an individual's unwavering loyalty to Paradise or detect their evil intent and observe their actions, he used it to assess Evaline. He sensed her unwavering loyalty toward Paradise and decided to deactivate the One-Winged Chains of Eternal Submission, freeing her from eternal bondage. Although he considered doing the same for Iyalis, after reading her thoughts, he realized it was best not to. Iyalis's unwavering loyalty to him and Paradise was even more intense than Evaline's. He decided to address her situation the next time they met.

Orion arrived at the camp area, which resembled a large city surrounding Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. He masked his face with an illusion, making it seem like he was wearing a black mask resembling the warriors' energy-mask spectrometer. As the Supreme Leader of Paradise, every individual had a painting of his face. Hence, he needed to cloak his aura and mask his identity if he wanted to walk among the ordinary inhabitants of Paradise without causing a scene. After pinpointing Evaline's aura, Orion vanished from his position and materialized in front of a large three-story building with a sign that read, 'The Midnight Butcher Bar.' A long line of people, consisting of Dragmin, Centaurs, Arakocra, and other races, waited to enter the bar.

Next to the entrance was another door, and multiple individuals walked out, each wearing a satisfied expression. Some carried baskets filled with takeaways, likely for their friends or families.

It was obvious that the Midnight Butcher Bar had grown into a popular establishment.

Orion walked through the door. No one sensed him or tried to stop him. He glanced at the tables, filled with groups of individuals eating heartily, before sitting in an empty seat at the counter, where a familiar figure stood at the other end, serving a meal to a guest.

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"Is there anything else you'd like?" Karensa asked, looking at the rich plum-coloured robed Dragmin man at the counter's far end.

"No, I'm fine. Thank you for the meal," the Dragmin responded, eyeing the two stacks of grilled magical beast meat with vegetable toppings and a familiar reed sauce on the side.

Karensa nodded in response. "We accept Kalna fruits and Paradise coins. Failure to pay will result in us contacting the Patrol Warriors stationed nearby," she said.

Paradise coins were the new currency established by the representatives of the Runaway Cities and Stowaways, replacing the individual currencies each city had previously used. This decision was authorized by the Key Leaders, making it the official currency. While bartering still occurred, with shelter, land, and security provided ever since they entered this mysterious dimension through the Golden Gate, they possessed little value except for their personal skills or craftsmanship.

Rumours circulated among the warriors about Paradise plans to introduce 'Paradise Points,' which would allow individuals to purchase techniques, artefacts, mysterious treasures, or anything they desired. Though the representatives had not officially confirmed this, the fact that the information had spread through Paradise's warriors and had not been refuted suggested it was true.

Chapter 1248 Allow Me To Finish Speaking!

If it were a false rumour, Paradise would have intervened immediately.

The only way to obtain Paradise Points was by purchasing them with Paradise coins, so everyone did their best to accumulate as much currency as possible. Karensa also heard this would be possible thanks to the Supreme Leader. This convinced people that the rumour was true. After all, no one would dare sully the Supreme Leader's name with false information, especially now that all his household, wives, and concubines were ascending to -divinity.

Just thinking about the Supreme Leader and his household, Karensa couldn't help but sigh. She had never seen the Supreme Leader or any of his family, so she had no idea what kind of individuals

they were to be able to ascend to divinity by their own power. As a warrior striving to reach the top, she understood what an incomprehensible feat that was. To achieve it simultaneously, she was sure that even the divines would find it terrifying.

Karensa was still adjusting to the reality that divinities weren't just legends in books but real and genuine figures. She wondered where they had been while the world was in its current state and what they had done to save it. From the knowledge she had gathered, she understood that Vylkr energy was a terrifying curse capable of deterring them from interfering. But this also made her doubt their capabilities as divines.

As these thoughts flooded her mind, Karensa shook her head and pushed them aside. Noticing the customer who had just sat at the counter was one of Paradise's warriors, she immediately approached to take his order. "Can I take you..." Just as she was about to speak, a voice interrupted her.

"It's okay, I'll handle things from here."

Karensa turned her head and saw her aunt, Evaline, standing behind her.

Evaline glanced at her briefly before focusing on the warrior seated at the counter with a solemn expression.

Evaline nodded to the crowd that greeted her upon her entrance, responding calmly as she approached Orion and stopped before him. Seeing the confusion on her niece's face, Evaline sighed and gestured for her to come closer.

Karensa leaned in with a frown, wondering why her aunt was acting so secretive in public.

"He's the one," Evaline whispered.

Though they were just three simple words, they were part of a code known only to Evaline, Karensa, and Orion, who could read Evaline's thoughts.

Karensa's eyes widened in shock and disbelief. She refocused on the warrior in front of her, wondering how she had failed to recognize the very person who had stopped the plotting nobles of the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City before their rebellion came to fruition, eliminated the entire noble household, and spared her aunt for her sake. She knew this mysterious warrior must hold a

high rank within Paradise to accomplish such feats. Since her aunt had become an undercover agent for Paradise, she had refused to share any information about the mysterious warrior, so Karensa decided to investigate him independently.

Ever since they were brought into this strange dimension and met numerous other races and formidable warriors, she had been trying to uncover his identity, but she had always come up empty. It was as if the identity of 'Rion' didn't exist.

And now, that mysterious warrior had appeared right before her, and she had failed to notice him.

Karensa might have taken it easier on herself if she had known that the person she had been searching for all this time was none other than the Supreme Leader of Paradise, a demigod in disguise to avoid detection. Even Evaline had only sensed his presence through the One-winged Chains of Eternal Submission because Orion had allowed it. But since she didn't know, she couldn't help but feel the urge to punch herself for making such a blunder.

"Don't beat yourself up about it. You wouldn't have noticed even if you tried," Evaline said lightly, sensing her niece's thoughts.

Karensa responded with a nod, sighing as her shoulders slumped in defeat.

Evaline turned to Orion and nodded silently before stepping out from behind the counter and heading toward the stairs.

Orion stood up and followed her.

The crowd glanced briefly in their direction before returning to their activities. Seeing that Orion was one of Paradise's warriors, they didn't find the scene of him being treated with respect or invited to the upper floor unusual. Other establishments even stopped accepting customers for the day if two or more warriors walked in, so this much was considered tame.

Karensa's eyes followed their figures as they ascended the stairs, and she also decided to follow. She wasn't going to let this rare opportunity slip by.

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Evaline held the door open for Orion to enter, then glanced outward to ensure no one was nearby before sealing it shut.

Orion took in the room's simple décor, a small table in the centre, a floor couch in the corner, and cabinets lining the walls. It was a modest space.

Orion sat on one of the floor couches.

Evaline then released her Celestial energy to shield the room from prying ears before returning to Orion, who had already made himself comfortable. "I wasn't expecting your visit after such a long time. I thought you had forgotten about our meeting," Evaline said as she took off her apron and hung it on a hanger by the door.

Unlike before, she wore an elegant light yellow robe covering her humanoid upper half and robust, four-legged body with hooves. Beneath her robe, a lightweight armour peeked out. However, she wasn't wearing any jewellery at the moment.

Orion knew it was because she was in charge of preparing the meals for the bar, and she didn't want the jewellery to get in the way.

Evaline walked to the other end of the table opposite Orion and sat down.

"I want to inform you about an important matter," Orion responded, meeting her gaze.

Evaline was stunned by the news but quickly recomposed herself and asked, "What important information do you want to share with me that made you decide to come here by yourself?" Her tone and expression were solemn, but inwardly, her emotions were in turmoil, contrasting her calm demeanour.

"I'm here to free you from the One-winged Chain of Eternal Submission," Orion said.

A deep silence immediately enveloped the entire room when these words left his lips.

"Why?" Evaline asked, her expression firm as she awaited his response.

"Paradise has expanded its influence and will continue to do so, and so..." Orion began, but before he could continue, she interrupted.

"So you're here to get rid of me," Evaline said, completing his words. She continued, her voice rising with her emotions, "Is this because of the Supreme Leader's ascension and that of his entire family? You know what? I don't care. But I can't believe this! After all, you've put me through, giving me this mark..."

"For the several months since we last spoke, I've felt someone intruding in my thoughts when I think, looking over my shoulder when I'm alone and observing my every action. And now, suddenly, you want to remove the mark? Is it because you pity me for being in this condition, or perhaps you saw no use in wasting such a valuable technique on me because I'm useless?"

Then, she muttered, "Don't tell me you've already forgotten about our discussion regarding the ceremony. How am I supposed to find another partner to stay with for the rest of my life when my body and soul have already been claimed by another man? Rion, you are heartless." She glared at the warrior still wearing his mask, tears rolling down her cheeks.

As someone who was aware of Evaline's thoughts and emotions, Orion already expected things to play out this way. "You didn't allow me to finish my words," Orion said, sighing loudly. Her reaction was still much more intense than he had expected.

"Okay. Go ahead and finish your words. I'm listening," Evaline responded, swallowing what she would say next.

"I came to remove the mark and offer you a position as my concubine. I'm still interested in experiencing the Centaur ceremony myself, and I see no reason not to do so with the woman before me," Orion said. Even if he wanted to set Evaline free from the mark, he was aware of his actions during their last meeting, and he already had a firm grasp of the kind of woman Evaline was. She had lived her entire life committed to her position, gathering power without the desire for a relationship or to have her own family because of what she had witnessed her twin sister experience and later her own daughter. But all of that was just an excuse to solidify his actions. Orion had set his eyes on her from their first meeting, hence the kiss. He knew she already understood its significance. So, his main reason for removing the mark was so he could propose to her.

Evaline's expression shifted into intense shock before she became composed. She took a kettle from the side of the table and poured it into a teacup.

She poured another into a second cup and pushed it towards Orion.

"Have some tea. It helps clear one's throat and clear the mind... Then, repeat yourself because I didn't hear you clearly," Evaline said, holding the tea elegantly up to her mouth before swallowing it in one gulp. "I'm sorry for the unsightly display; I also need to clear my mind," she added. However, her tone didn't hold a hint of apology. Instead, she stared at Orion with an even fiercer gaze, like she dared him to repeat his words.

Orion took a sip of the tea. He didn't feel any effects, probably because of his divine physiology. He gently placed the teacup on the table and focused on Evaline.

"I came to remove the mark and propose to you. But before I propose, there are certain things I need to reveal to you," Orion said.

"What are these things? I want to hear them now," Evaline responded, her hands fidgeting under the table nervously.

"Rion is my false identity. I have another, much more well-known one," Orion replied.

Evaline nodded, gesturing for him to continue. She had long suspected that Rion was a fake identity. Despite all her efforts to uncover more about him since they had entered this mysterious dimension, she had found nothing. It was as though this person didn't exist, which was something her niece had also concluded. It made no sense for such a powerful and high-ranking warrior not to be widely known, especially within a force like Paradise. Now, she was even more curious about his true identity.

Could he be one of Paradise's hidden high-ranking warriors? Or perhaps one of the Generals serving directly under the Commanders?

Orion dispelled his disguise. "I am Orion, the Supreme Leader of Paradise," he said.

Evaline's mind came to a screeching halt. Her face froze, unable to make a single expression. It wasn't until after a minute that her expression slowly returned, and she began scrutinizing Orion from head to toe with wide eyes.

"... You are the Supreme Leader of Paradise... Orion?" Evaline asked, her voice cracking as her body trembled.

"Yes, I am," Orion confirmed with a nod.

In an instant, Evaline jumped up from her seat, distanced herself from the table, and bowed deeply toward him.

"Forgive me for my foolish words earlier. I wasn't aware I was in the presence of such a grand figure, or I would have held my tongue. Please overlook the foolish behaviour of this mortal," Evaline said, her body trembling intensely. Her four robust legs looked as if they might collapse at any moment.

Orion sighed tiredly. "You don't need to apologize. Your emotions are valid, and I've kept my identity hidden. Even you wouldn't have uncovered it unless I wanted you to," he said. Activating the mark of the One-winged Chains of Eternal Submission, he added, "You may return to your seat."

Evaline stared at Orion with a twisted expression, a mixture of fear, anger, and disbelief swirling in her eyes.

Evaline's body moved beyond her control, and she returned to her seat. No matter how hard she struggled, she remained in place, forced to sit.

Sensing her tumultuous emotions, Orion could tell how she truly felt. It was fear!

"You can speak your mind," Orion said, activating the mark again.

"You're doing it again. Do you have any idea how I'm feeling right now? Your name isn't Rion, but Orion... I should've known. But how was I supposed to realize that the Supreme Leader was going undercover and bullying someone as insignificant as me?" Evaline said, her voice unfiltered as she stared at Orion with a fierce, teary gaze.

"How am I supposed to react to the Supreme Leader of Paradise proposing to me? Honestly, I want to outright reject your proposal or tell you that I'll think about it so I can see the pathetic emotions you might show. But how do I know you don't have a fragile ego and won't try to take me and my niece if I reject you?"

"I've heard you have many wives and concubines ascending to divinity. How could I ever compete with them if I accepted your proposal? I also heard that every race within Paradise has fallen under your influence and that you've fathered numerous children with women from each race. Wouldn't that mean I'd just become another trophy, proof that even the Centaur race couldn't escape your clutches?"

"I can't compete with the goddesses of the Orion household. And what is it that you even see in me, to leave your household and come here just to propose to me? Please tell me what you find so special about me because I don't see it." Evaline finished her words and awaited his response. Compared to an ordinary figure within the Runaway Cities or the Stowaways, she was special and well-respected, having once held a key position in the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City. But compared to even an ordinary warrior within Paradise, her status meant nothing. She couldn't even compare herself to the newly emerged residents, who were capable of producing pure Vylkr energy with their own bodies.

So, comparing herself to the divine household of Paradise was laughable. Though it wasn't unusual for a powerful figure to have many partners, she knew she wouldn't be her first choice if she were in his position. She wasn't demeaning herself. She was simply acknowledging her reality, which had kept her alive in this treacherous world.

"You should have more confidence in yourself," Orion said. "My ego isn't so fragile that I would harm you or anyone else just because you refused my proposal. You'd be free to enjoy your life like any other resident of Paradise."

"You may not compare to my other partners in some ways, but that doesn't make you any less special as an individual. If you weren't special, we wouldn't have crossed paths. Isn't the fact that you are Evaline enough?"

Silence enveloped the room.

"It's not enough," Evaline said, breaking the silence. "I don't have the potential to ascend to divinity. I've heard from people who got engaged outside their race that their partners often feel uncomfortable during intimate moments. So, if you're just interested in being with a centaress, I can make an oath that I'll always be here for your pleasure visits, and I won't have any partners until I'm gone. But be ready for such awkwardness."

"Fortunately, that isn't a problem for me. I'm sure our intimate moments will be more interesting than awkward," Orion replied. "And as I said before, you need to have more confidence in yourself."

I would have pursued that in our first meeting if I had only wanted an intimate encounter with a centauress or even an Aarakocra."

"This is still your choice," Orion added.

"Fine. I reject your proposal," Evaline said, gritting her teeth as emotions swirled. She couldn't stop herself from voicing her thoughts, desperate to understand what was going on in the mind of the man before her.

"Are you sure?" Orion asked, raising a brow.

"No. I just wanted to see your reaction, to see if you were lying or not," Evaline admitted. "I accept your proposal but don't want to be your concubine. I want to be your wife. And don't think I'm doing this for the benefits. I want to be treated equally, with as much love as you give your other wives. I don't want to be left behind or treated as second."

Orion shook his head. "The hierarchy in my household is to maintain order. So, everyone starts as a concubine. But I promise you, I won't treat you any less than my other partners. If you're seeking further assurance, I have another way to prove my love for you."

"And what is that?" Evaline asked, surprised.

She had expected Orion to refuse her request outright, assuming it would conflict with his respect for his other wives. But hearing that he had another way to assure her of his love made her curious.

"I'll tell you after you genuinely respond to my proposal," Orion replied.

Evaline nodded and said, "I accept to be your concubine. You're lucky I have feelings for you after learning you stopped my execution because of my niece, feelings that grew more during our first meeting." As she finished her sentence, she instinctively raised her hand to her mouth, sealing it, relieved that she'd already spoken her mind.

Orion nodded. "Give me your hand," he said, extending his hand toward her.

Evaline hesitated briefly but then reached out and placed her hand in his.

Orion took her hand and leaned in, gesturing for her to move closer.

Evaline swallowed hard and leaned in as well, her breath quickening as her face came closer to his. "If you remove the mark, wouldn't the power I've received from you disappear along with it?" she asked, her voice soft and uncertain.

"No, it won't. This is a divine art. You don't have to worry about something so trivial," Orion replied. He turned his head slightly and kissed her.

Chapter 1250 The Centaur Race's Engagement Ceremony

At the same time, his hand, which held Evaline's, began to glow brightly, and he removed the mark of the One-winged Chains of Eternal Submission, freeing Evaline from her eternal servitude.

Evaline's energy became chaotic, and in an instant, the barrier surrounding the room collapsed. The door burst open, and a figure rushed in. Upon seeing the scene before her, the intruder froze.

"Eyyyee!" Karensa exclaimed, quickly covering her mouth with both hands to stifle her shock.

Karensa had been trying to eavesdrop on the meeting but immediately gave up after sensing her aunt had enveloped the room with Celestial energy to seal the sounds within and deter anyone from approaching, as though she had anticipated her actions.

However, she couldn't herself stop entering the room once she sensed the barrier had been dispelled. She had prepared herself for anything, including making excuses and apologizing for interrupting their meeting.

Yet, she had never anticipated the scene unfolding before her.

Her aunt was being intimate with not just anyone but a mysterious, high-ranking Paradise warrior. She had unknowingly stumbled upon a secret love affair. Even with her presence, they didn't stop; their actions grew even more intense.

Evaline's eyes widened slightly when she noticed Karensa entering the room, but she didn't break the kiss. Her tongue continued to entangle with Orion's as she felt the mark of the One-winged

Chains of Eternal Submission being slowly removed from her back. Although it was somewhat painful, she endured it, knowing it was better than having the mark remain.

Orion paid no mind to Karensa. He had sensed her presence outside the door and didn't stop her from entering. He found it easier for her to learn about their relationship this way than to explain it from the beginning.

After a minute, they broke the kiss, a string of saliva still connecting their lips as they pulled apart.

Karensa couldn't help but gulp as she witnessed the intense scene before her. She had never seen her aunt in such a compromising situation, especially with a man. As she got a clearer look at Orion, her eyes widened, and she stepped back until her rear was pressed against the closed door. Her mouth hung open in shock as she stared at Orion. She rubbed her eyes several times to ensure she wasn't seeing things.

But nothing changed.

Karensa was unsure why the man her aunt had been making out with resembled the Supreme Leader of Paradise.

'It can't be him. It's someone else. Maybe a look-alike,' Karensa thought, coming up with an explanation. Though rare, two people could look the same.

'Still, it seems I underestimated her. To attract the attention of such a high-ranking figure, she does have some skills,' Karensa thought, sighing inwardly as she looked at Evaline and nodded approvingly.

Meanwhile, Evaline swiftly released her Celestial energy. Sensing that the quality and quantity remained the same, she pulled her robe down to her shoulders and quickly summoned a hand mirror from one of the cabinets. She placed it behind her and examined her now spotless back through the reflection, exhaling in relief.

Putting the hand mirror back on the table, Evaline stood on her four robust legs, bowed respectfully towards Orion, and said, "I will never forget your benevolence." Her tone was filled with gratitude.

Orion nodded, then turned to Karensa and said, "You're here." He displayed a bright smile. Karensa observed her aunt's strange behaviour but didn't dwell on it. The moment Orion addressed her, she

cleared her throat and nodded. "I sensed something was wrong, so I rushed in to find out what was happening," Karensa said, her gaze shifting between Evaline and Orion. "However, it seems I was mistaken. I'm sorry for interrupting your meeting. To make up for it, I'll ensure you get a VIP table and a free meal for you and whoever you bring to the Midnight Butcher Bar."

Orion waved his right hand at her. "You don't have to worry about that. Since you're here, why don't you have a seat," he said.

Karensa nodded and looked toward her aunt for confirmation. She didn't want to interrupt whatever was going on.

Sensing her niece's gaze, Evaline nodded. "He's right; you should sit with us since you're here. There are some important matters I need to inform you about," she said.

Karensa nodded, walked up to the table, and sat down on the other end.

As Karensa took her seat, Evaline explained her relationship with Orion, revealing his true identity. However, she omitted the details about the One-winged Chains of Eternal Submission to avoid unnecessary drama.

In less than ten minutes, she finished her explanation.

Karensa's body shivered as she swallowed heavily, glancing at Orion from the corner of her eye before quickly refocusing on Evaline. "He's the Supreme Leader of Paradise, Orion?" she asked, seeking clarification.

Evaline responded with a nod.

"You two are planning on getting engaged today?" Karensa asked, gesturing with her hands.

Evaline nodded once more.

"So you're going to be part of the divine household of Paradise, and I'm going to be an in-law to divine beings?" Karensa asked, excitement creeping into her voice.

Evaline nodded again.

Karensa's expression morphed from fear into joy and excitement. She slammed her hand against the table. "Alright! I'll shut down the entire bar and immediately start preparations with the staff for the wedding. You two stay here and get ready for the ceremony," Karensa said, glancing between them. She didn't care that her aunt had kept such a secret from her and even found it understandable. She would've done the same if she were in her place.

"Is that okay with both of you?" she asked.

"Alright, we'll leave it to you to handle. Just make sure to keep it private. We don't want too many people finding out about this engagement ceremony too soon," Evaline replied with a nod. Orion had already given her the privilege to arrange the ceremony, and she trusted her niece, so she had no reason not to hand it over to Karensa as she prepared herself.

"Of course, I'll do my best to keep it as quiet as possible," Karensa said solemnly. She wasn't foolish enough to broadcast her aunt's engagement ceremony to the Supreme Leader and risk the entire dimension turning upside down on her tiny bar.

Karensa stood up and bowed respectfully to Orion and Evaline. Then, she swiftly raced out of the room, closing the door behind her.

A few seconds after Karensa left, a thunderous voice reverberated across the entire Midnight Butcher Bar: "Kick everyone out of the bar and give them their refunds! We're having a private family event soon!"

Inside Evaline's office, she gently rubbed her forehead, contemplating whether letting her niece handle such an important event had been a mistake.

"Why don't we prepare while they're getting everything ready?" Orion suggested.

Evaline nodded, focusing on Orion. "We'll need to change our attire first," she said.

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By evening, the doors of the Midnight Butcher Bar were closed and barred, leaving customers confused as they were turned away. They wondered if anything had transpired as the bar was completely empty.

Rumours quickly spread about a special event taking place inside the Midnight Butcher Bar. With no one knowing exactly what it was, customers grew curious. Even competitors wanted to know more. Some decided to investigate but soon discovered that the entire bar was enveloped in an oppressive barrier, preventing anyone from approaching.

Even Paradise's Warriors could not get close, fueling the growing gossip.

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On the third floor of the Midnight Butcher Bar, Orion stood beside Evaline. He wore a sleeveless tunic blending deep blue, red, and green. His trousers were made of golden-threaded silk, with an embroidered sash tied around his waist. A braided leather cord adorned his right leg. He stood barefoot, as shoes were not permitted for the engagement ceremony.

Evaline wore a similar ensemble, with a robe of matching colours on her upper body. Her lower body, including her four robust legs, was covered in golden-threaded silk drapes, trailing behind her like a carpet. Even her tail was hidden. A golden embroidered sash cinched her waist, and a braided leather cord adorned her right forehooves.

Surrounding them was Karensa, dressed in a full red robe, along with the staff of the Midnight Butcher Bar, including Dragmins and Aarakocra, all dressed in similar deep-red attire. On the other side stood four elderly figures—a male and female centaur and a male Dragmin and female centaur—who appeared to be couples.

Their gazes flickered between Orion and Evaline, with the women at the far end with wide-eyed, intense emotions they struggled to hide.

At the far end were Meave, Whisperwing, Willow, and Breezeflutter in their human-sized forms, as well as Celeste, Reena, Merida, Maya, Ingrid, and Celia. After being informed about the engagement ceremony, they rushed over immediately. They had already interrogated the woman Orion was set to marry and found nothing wrong with her. Aside from her sharp intelligence rivalling even Derry's and Selene's, they found her rather ordinary.