

Village Head 1311

Chapter 1311: The Strength Behind The Supreme Leader (2), A battle that cannot be predicted?

"If I still had my vault, each one of you would have received a rare treasure that only a few ancient divines have ever seen."

The women all felt their hearts warm upon hearing Avarielle's words.

"Thank you for your kind words, goddess Avarielle..."

"Thank you for your kind words..."

"Thank you for your kind words..." they echoed one after another.

In response, Avarielle smiled craftily.

"What are you thanking me for? Have you forgotten that I will also be a part of this household? With my decision to join, this household is naturally 'number one'!"

The women were momentarily stunned.

Suddenly, they all burst into laughter.

Avarielle breathed out softly. "It's a pity that your gifts cannot replicate Zera's uniqueness."

The women were only able to create a clone of whichever personality currently possessed the body.

She wasn't surprised. This was a technique they had used to hide themselves from the Will of the Divine Mysteries. No matter how powerful their gifts had become, it would be difficult for them to replicate Zera's uniqueness.

It was that clone they had sent out to confront the Vylkr spawn.

"Once again, I admire your confidence, but it won't be enough.

I don't think your strength is sufficient to hold it back," she added.

For the Vylkr spawn to have sensed Ilse's barrier and broken through it, its strength should be equivalent to a Duke-ranked Spirit Beast.

With their gifts, the women could only hold their own against an Earl-ranked Spirit Beast. They would be too weak against anything stronger, at least, without utilizing the Vylkr energy.

She was uncertain about the chaos that would ensue if they resorted to it.

But when it came to fighting a Vylkr spawn, that consideration no longer applied.

Since being freed from the mirror dimension, she had begun to grasp the laws of the universe. Though the laws remained the same—as long as the universe existed—they were ever-changing and ever-transforming.

Just as the Material Realm kept expanding and correcting the destruction dealt to it, so too did the Spirit Realm expand, but at a much faster rate.

One significant advantage of their shared body was that either of them could sense and use the laws the other had mastered, though the effect wouldn't be as strong as when used by the one who had mastered it initially.

Still, one of their greatest strengths was their affinity for Vylkr energy.

In truth, Orion's judgment wasn't entirely wrong. Apart from Oberon, General Reynold, and the Will of the Twelve Steps, she was one of Paradise's best counters against the Vylkr entities.

As for the surrounding Spirit Beasts, their goal wasn't to fight them in the first place.

"You have all been entrusted to my care. Leave everything to me," Ilse said.

The women's expressions briefly shifted with worry, but they nodded in understanding.

Below,

J'garin, Iy'yra, the White-Winged Gryphons, and the rest of the Spirit Beasts were initially frightened by the mysterious Spirit Beasts' arrival after Avarielle and the others disappeared.

J'garin was prepared to step forward and address the Spirit Beasts, but before he could move, he froze, watching as Avarielle and the others, whom he had thought had vanished along with the Vylkr spawn, reappeared.

It only took a moment for them to understand what had transpired.

'Truly formidable,' J'garin thought, observing how casually the women spoke among themselves, seemingly ignoring the pressure around them.

'It seems we don't need to worry about intervening.'

'The strength supporting the Supreme Leader is truly something extraordinary.'

Iy'yra and the others felt the same.

They realized that the atmosphere was much lighter than before.

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Within a particular room on the island, Viscount Layrin and Thri'el observed the scene with trembling emotions in their heart.

They were imprisoned here to continue viewing the situation on the battlefield. As such, they were surprised by the emergence of the Vylkr spawn—a being neither of them had heard of nor seen before.

Despite this, the captures still stood firm before such a formidable being and even handled the situation perfectly.

They were no longer sure that this 'Paradise' was a force that the Celestial Spirit Court could handle on their own without involving the other Spirit Beast Coalition.

They could only hope that, regardless, their lives would be spared.

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At a distance from the White Winged Gryphon Territorial home, a woman dressed in a black robe adorned with grey embellishments, with two white furry ears protruding from either side of her head and a tail extending from the centre behind her waist, narrowed her eyes at the unfolding scene in the sky.

"They are much more capable than I imagined," she muttered, staring at the clones they had cast to surround the floating island.

However, she sensed that it had been done with the help of a strange technique because these clones were far different from other divine beings she had encountered.

They carried a unique aura that would make the surrounding mysterious Spirit Beasts hesitate to approach them.

"Was this the reason you stopped me from going?" she said, glancing at a black cat with round orange spots on its body and an exaggeratedly long, pointy crown on its head.

"Maybe," the cat responded.

The woman furrowed her brows in thought. She had expected that she would encounter such a mysterious Spirit Beast on the level of the King-ranked Spirit Beast that had emerged during her search.

It only increased her desire to uncover what was so special about this territory.

"Who do you think is going to emerge victorious?" she asked, her tone filled with curiosity.

"I don't know. They are all anomalies. This isn't the kind of battle that can be predicted. That's why I asked you not to interfere so we can witness the results ourselves," the cat responded.

The woman took a deep breath.

A battle that cannot be predicted? She couldn't see into the future, but she possessed a few techniques at her disposal that could accomplish it.

However, as long as the opponent could also see the future, they would have to constantly change their plans and confirm them through precognition, ending the discourse before it even began.

In this case, precognition was rendered ineffective.

But since spiritual energy-based techniques are more guarded and protected than those from the Material World, unless they possessed such abilities, only a few within the Spirit Realm had such skills, unlike the divines, who had catalogues of them.

They were also ineffective against stronger opponents who could manipulate the Spirit Laws of the Spirit Realm or the Laws of the Material Realm.

A few of them could sense when someone was watching them.

Others could outright block them.

She decided to give it a try. Spiritual energy gathered in her silver vertical slits, turning them blue as she activated the technique. Then, she gazed at the unfolding scene once more.

She saw nothing—only darkness. She deactivated her technique.

Glancing at the cat, she saw that it was staring at her with a smirk, revealing the sides of its fangs.

"Now that you have uncovered it yourself, let's watch everything unfold without interfering. I'm also curious to see how they will emerge victorious," the cat said, refocusing on the scene.

They both watched in curiosity as one of them ascended towards the mysterious Spirit Beasts.

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Above the floating island, Avarielle's figure floated high above, her short golden hair billowing in the unseen winds.

Some of the Spirit Beasts transformed into their true Spirit Beast forms, blotting out the misty sky. Others remained in their humanoid forms. Each exuded a formidable spiritual pressure as they refocused their gaze on her as she emerged.

Her voice, carried by divine power, reverberated across the surroundings. "I am Avarielle, a goddess of Paradise. It was by our hands that the 1112th Division of the Celestial Spirit Court was annihilated. If any among you have come seeking revenge, step forward now. Let us settle it without delay."

Silence stretched across the surroundings. Not a single Spirit Beast spoke or moved forward.

Avarielle nodded with a smile across her face.

"Since none have stepped forward, I take it there are no debts to be claimed. Then, let us proceed," she said. "We are also the ones responsible for drawing the attention of a King-ranked Spirit Beast that has cast its gaze across this territory."

Before her words could settle, countless voices erupted from every direction.

"That is what I am here for," growled a massive boar Spirit Beast covered in plates of brownstone. His tusks gleamed with a brown hue.

"Speak! Do not withhold such critical knowledge!" hissed a serpentine beast with green scales and eyes, her coils rippling through the air like rivers of green flame.

"I halted my extensive research on the Spirit Law of Poison and crossed vast regions to be here after grasping this information. You better not stir our wrath and give us what we are here for," said a man with purple skin, his antlers covered with poisonous flowers, dressed in a white robe embroidered with purple branches.

Chapter 1312: Avarielle's Foolproof Plan

"It has been a long time since I encountered a genuine divine being. I thought you were soon to be extinct. Well, if you don't want to be a step from extinction, give us the information that we seek," said a woman with a curved horn made of steel dressed in a long-sleeved knee-length fur dress.

Others watched coldly, finding no need to speak.

They awaited Avarielle's response.

However, her following words made them frown.

"Unfortunately, we are unable to release such sensitive information until you take a binding oath, and without the presence of our Supreme Leader," Avarielle spoke.

"What is this binding oath? And who is this Supreme Leader?" asked a crimson-furred wolf.

It wanted to dismiss the goddess's words. But with the number of formidable Spirit Beasts present, if anyone were to act recklessly, the others would follow suit, leading to a situation in which the individuals holding the information they sought might be harmed.

That was not the result they wanted. As long as they received the information they had come for, they were willing to entertain what she had to say, as long as it wasn't excessive.

This was the consensus they had all agreed on.

"The binding oath is simple. Each of you must swear before the Spirit Realm to not raise arms against us or this territory, interfere with our plans or betray our trust. You will lend your strength in driving back a dangerous entity — a Vylkr spawn — as we instruct," Avarielle said.

"Only through your restraint and cooperation will we grant you the information you seek before our Supreme Leader."

"If you do not wish to take this binding oath, then you will gain nothing and lose the opportunity forever."

In the Material Realm, a binding oath was a vow made on the Divine Mysteries. It was absolute. Nothing could break it unless one entered the Spirit Beast realm and chose to remain there for the rest of one's life. Such an oath would only last for one reincarnation unless specified.

It could also be rendered useless by a Mystery of equal standing—the Paradise Mysteries.

Similarly, the Spirit Beasts could make a binding oath, but it was upon the Spirit Realm itself, and it would not be broken until it had been fulfilled.

Avarielle had made this decision carefully. If the Celestial Spirit Court were cooperating with the Vylkr spawns, they could send more than one Vylkr spawn after the death of this one.

Though they were confident in their abilities, Paradise was not confident enough to face the Vylkr entities head-on currently. As such, they could only increase their forces within the Spirit Realm or pull in accomplices who would aid them.

Considering the innumerable numbers of formidable Spirit Beasts residing within the Spirit Realm—beings that could make even the Divine Corps approach with caution—even the Vylkr spawns would have to proceed carefully in order to stir up a problem they couldn't handle.

It was a foolproof plan that ensured their plan worked, their safety and the defeat of the Vylkr spawn should another emerge.

"Vylkr spawn? So that was its name. I knew that the being that had appeared here seemed familiar. Still, I couldn't place where I had previously encountered it," a lean, silver-skinned man with shaggy silver hair grinned savagely, baring elongated canines at her.

"Those cursed beings! I've killed one of them before. As long as one doesn't come in contact with the Vylkr energy, they're easy to handle," said a muscular bear covered in jade scales, slamming his paw against the sky, creating a rumble.

While others took her words into consideration, a few weren't pleased with the terms.

"As expected. You divine beings are just as cunning as I remembered. If you value your survival, you will drop these childish games and tell us what we need to know!"

"This reeks of deception! Let's start by tearing down your floating island and see if this Supreme Leader comes crawling out!

"Enough of these games! Hand over the information, or we will reduce this entire territory and the ones around it to ruins!"

Avarielle maintained an expressionless face upon hearing their words of disagreement.

But inwardly, she was filled with relief, understanding that the Spirit Beasts before her had encountered the Vylkr spawns and had even fallen out with some. This meant several of them already harboured enmity with the Vylkr spawns.

With this, there would surely be a few individuals desperate enough to accept the vow. And after gaining their trust, it would be easy to acquire information about the Vylkr spawns.

This was going better than she had imagined.

Suddenly, a loud voice resonated across the air, silencing the others.

"We accept the condition. However, you must also take a binding oath to show us that you are trustworthy and that you will keep your word!" said a man with warm orange skin and slick black hair.

He was dressed in a black feather-like suit of armour, with crow-like wings behind him and a white horn protruding from his forehead.

Besides him, there was a woman with the same complexion who was dressed in a similar attire. She had flowing black hair and a horn protruding from her forehead.

They were members of the same race and looked like a couple.

The surrounding Spirit Beasts went silent, glancing at them.

Even though many were hesitating to make the first move, they could still find a way to extract the information they sought, which was more favourable than accepting a condition obviously made to exploit them.

However, the couple ignored their gaze. Instead, they both wore solemn expressions as they looked at Avarielle, awaiting her response.

Avarielle shifted her gaze towards them and nodded with a smile.

"Alright, I will take the first step to show you my sincerity," she said.

She announced: "I, Avarielle of Paradise, swear this binding oath before the Spirit Realm: I will reveal the knowledge you seek once you fulfil the terms of our agreement. I bind myself to this vow with every fibre of my being. However, should you fail to honour the agreement, the binding oath will be null and void, for I shall never bind myself to those who do not uphold their word."

A rush of wind appeared around Avarielle, and the space rippled briefly before it swiftly vanished.

Avarielle felt a unique connection to her words.

She looked at them and asked, "Is that okay?"

The man glanced at the woman beside him, meeting her gaze.

He then refocused his gaze forward and nodded. "Yes, it's okay."

"I will go first," he said, attempting to take the oath.

However, before he could utter a word, a woman in a tattered black feathered robe, her clawed arms folded across her chest, approached them from a distance.

She narrowed her eyes at them and said, "Isn't it too reckless for you to agree to such a binding oath? If you are that desperate to grasp the information about the King-ranked being that has emerged in this territory, then please step aside and allow us to handle this conversation."

The man shook his head. "The binding oath only prevents us from acting against her, those around her, and the territory. We only have to lend our strength to push back the Vylkr spawn. After that, she will be forced to keep her oath, nullifying the entire oath, and then we leave after getting what we want."

"Unless you have other plans, then keeping the binding oath shouldn't be an issue. However, in that case, I would rather be far away than risk causing harm to those who have attracted a King-ranked beast's attention. You may step aside and wait until we are done before starting your squabbles."

The air around the couple solidified, indicating that they weren't going to change their minds and were ready to fight anyone who stepped in their way.

He glanced around at the Spirit Beasts, both above and below him, and continued, "If any of you are still unwilling, we will honour the binding oath ourselves and share all the information we have gathered with you."

His underlying message was clear: he desired a peaceful resolution to the confrontation despite being prepared to fight.

The woman clenched her teeth. She sensed that the power they both exuded was equivalent to that of Duke-ranked Spirit Beasts. Though she was a Duke-ranked Spirit Beast herself, she had no idea how many years they had lived, the kind of race they were, the Spirit Laws they had grasped or their abilities.

It would be foolish to fight two of them at once.

She snorted and returned to her position.

The man refocused his gaze on Avarielle. "I, Zaelthar, swear a binding oath before the Spirit Realm and all who are listening that I will not raise arms against you, Avarielle of Paradise, nor those around you, nor this territory. I will not interfere with your plans, nor will I betray your trust. My strength will be lent to driving back the Vylkr spawn as you instruct. Should I fail in this vow, may I suffer the consequences."

Chapter 1313: Avarielle's Foolproof Plan (2)

The woman said, "I, Rhylla, swear a binding oath before the Spirit Realm and all who are listening that I will not raise arms against you, Avarielle of Paradise, nor those around you, nor this territory. I will not interfere with your plans, nor will I betray your trust. My strength will be lent to driving back the Vylkr spawn as you instruct. Should I fail in this vow, may I suffer the consequences."

A rush of wind appeared around them, with the space rippling briefly before it swiftly vanished.

Just like Avarielle, they felt a distinct connection with the words they had just spoken.

Avarielle nodded, her expression filled with satisfaction.

She looked at the other Spirit Beasts and asked, "Is there anyone else?"

"I have heard about the legends of your humble and chivalrous character, Duke Zaelthar, as you go from region to region, helping tribes and secluded Spirit Beasts in danger. So if you choose to accept this vow, then I know no reason to hesitate any longer," said a Humanoid crocodile with water-like veins, snorting hot vapours of water through his nostrils.

"I have encountered a Vylkr spawn once, and I detest the atrocious way they carry themselves within our realm, so I don't mind eliminating one as long as I get the information that I have come here for."

"I will also take the binding oath..."

"I, Jaros, swear a binding oath before the Spirit Realm..."

As Jaros completed his vow, a similar phenomenon emerged.

"I also want to take the binding oath and hear the information myself. If any of you don't want to, you can stand aside. I will make sure to inform you of what I learn," said a tall, pale Arachina woman with eight gossamer limbs and a shawl of glistening threads. Her violet eyes gleamed beneath a loose black robe.

She smiled, sensing the attention drawn toward her.

"Hmph! Why should I wait for you when I can get the information myself? Anyone who thinks otherwise should step out of the way," said an 18-meter (56ft) Treant made of gnarled bark, grey fur, and mossy vines.

"Since we've all come to an agreement, I will be joining Duke Zaelthar, Duchess Rhylla, Duke Jaros, and the others in taking the binding oath," said a man with semi-translucent wings resembling frozen leaves. His skin gleamed like frost-covered quartz, and snow crystals drifted around him as he moved.

"I will also be taking the binding oath."

As more Duke-ranked Spirit Beasts stepped forward to take the binding oath, the once-hesitant weaker ones soon joined them.

Even a few who had been hiding, hoping to exploit the situation or observe from the shadows, emerged from concealment. They realized there was no longer any reason to hide their presence.

Meanwhile,

Avarielle and the others observed more Spirit Beasts than they had initially sensed gathered before them, taking the binding oath one after another.

Suddenly, Avarielle frowned.

She received information that the Vylkr spawn would soon break free.

It had been ten minutes since she dragged the Vylkr spawn into the Mirror Realm.

No matter how confident she was, Avarielle knew she couldn't kill or entirely suppress it without Margona's aid. She could only stall for time until her plan came into effect.

Her expression gradually softened.

The Vylkr spawn would either do as she commanded or regret ever stepping into this territory by triggering a battle involving the entire Middle Layer of the Spirit Realm.

Avarielle was certainly hoping he would choose the latter.

The other women also sensed the same danger.

However, their expressions soon relaxed as they realized there was no longer any need to worry.

Everything was going according to plan.

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Nyzzorak clenched his hand around the short, golden-haired goddess. His expression twisted with rage as he glared at her.

"Did you really think you could defeat me with such petty tricks? Before I end your life, answer me truthfully! Are you also a clone? How can you wield Vylkr energy? What kind of goddesses are you all?" he demanded, his voice hoarse.

His crimson armour was tattered and slowly repairing itself, wisps of flame still flickering along its surface.

Below them stretched a boundless chasm, spanning billions of kilometres in radius, as if the earth itself had been obliterated by a catastrophic event. The crater glowed with residual energy from the devastating attacks unleashed upon it.

A void of endless darkness stretched above them, surrounding them. Only Avarielle and Nyzzorak stood within its depths.

Despite the fact that only her upper body remained, Avarielle responded, "When did you realize?"

"When I devoured that goddess who tried to shrink me," Nyzzorak growled. "I sensed she was a clone. A genuine goddess would've offered far greater nourishment."

"Does that mean you gain the abilities of the goddesses you devoured?" Avarielle asked, unbothered by her condition.

"No. Even if I wanted to assimilate their unique abilities, it's far too complex. I only gain a pitiful glimpse into the laws of the universe they've grasped. But even that is barely useful. My own arsenal contains laws far more powerful."

He narrowed his eyes.

"But you're different. Though your mastery over the laws of the universe is low, your understanding is the most profound I've ever encountered. You're a reincarnated goddess, aren't you?" he snarled.

Avarielle remained silent.

"Answer me!"

"It's fine if you don't want to," he said coldly. "Once I leave this place, I'll find your real body and beat the truth out of you. Then I'll devour you and your companions. No matter how far you run, you'll never escape me."

Crimson flames gathered at his fingertips, searing through Avarielle's neck.

As the fire consumed the rest of her upper body, Avarielle spoke calmly, "You won't have to search for us. We'll be waiting for you outside." She smiled as her body turned to ash and dissolved into countless flickers of light.

Nyzzorak's armour opened like the jaws of a beast, swallowing the countless motes of light and consuming them completely.

Then, it returned to its original flawless state.

Nyzzorak frowned at her parting words but quickly dismissed them. Instead, he focused on the essence he had absorbed from the clone.

It was filled with fragments of myriad Laws of the universe, valuable insights he could use, and an immense reservoir of Vylkr energy.

"Humph! It has enabled me to recover to my peak state," Nyzzorak said.

He looked around, sensing that the Mirror Realm still held firm.

"Strange," he muttered with a frown, having never encountered anything like it.

"No matter. Just another petty trick."

Flames erupted from his body, burning several times brighter than a star.

Suddenly, the Mirror Realm began to crack.

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Spatial fissures began forming in the sky.

Avarielle, the others, and the surrounding Spirit Beasts watched with intense focus.

A being with crimson skin, clad in armour, emerged from the spatial cracks.

Then, the spatial cracks vanished.

Nyzzorak turned his attention to Avarielle and the women, his frown deepening. Then he scanned the gathered Spirit Beasts surrounding the floating island. Confusion furrowed his brow.

He had arrived with the intent to destroy the island before pursuing the divines who had attacked him, but they were here, facing him openly.

They had not run.

Not only that but every Spirit Beast he had sensed while approaching was now hovering in place before the floating island.

A sense of foreboding crept into his heart.

Spirit Law of Shadow: Shifting Darkness!

A Spirit Law of the darkness materialized, transforming into tendrils of shadow that coiled around Nyzzorak.

"Vylkr spawn," Zaelthar said, "you have made a grave mistake by acting so brazenly within the Spirit Realm. You have threatened one of our kind and an ally. And for that, we are forced to act."

He bound the Vylkr spawn in place with his technique.

He and Rhylla surged forward, arriving before Nyzzorak in an instant.

BOOM!!

Crimson flames exploded outward from Nyzzorak, engulfing him and scorching the surrounding space. He ignited the shadow tendrils wrapped around him, attempting to burn them away.

The heat emanating from the flames was so intense that it was enough to turn the entire region into a purgatory of fire.

Spirit Law of Water: High Sea Submerge!

Jaros, the humanoid crocodile, swiftly summoned a massive seal around Nyzzorak. A wave of clear water materialized from thin air, enveloping the bound Nyzzorak.

The water absorbed and sealed the searing heat.

Instantly, it began to boil almost.

Steam hissed outward in all directions, but no matter how much evaporated, the water was endlessly replenished.

Jaros nodded toward Zaelthar and Rhylla. "I can't let you two do all the work," he said with a grin, his elongated jaw stretching into a smirk.

"WHAT'S GOING ON?! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH?!"
Nyzzorak roared telepathically across the area. His tone was filled with fury and wariness.

"You don't need to know what's transpiring," Zaelthar replied coldly. "And we don't need to know who you are. All you need to do is remain still while we transport you elsewhere."

Chapter 1314: A Special Delivery For The Supreme Leader

Nyzzorak's expression twisted with rage. "Since you dare to interfere in matters that don't concern you... none of you are leaving here alive!"

His gaze snapped toward Avarielle, only to notice the smile on her lips.

Was this... a trap from the beginning?

No. It couldn't be.

If it were, they would've ambushed him immediately. There was no reason to waste time with theatrics and delay.

But slowly, he realized the truth.

That goddess had somehow gained the allegiance of an unknown number of powerful Spirit Beasts.

"Tsk, ts. A vermin from the Material Realm dares to challenge us," Jaros said, his tone heavy with disdain and irritation. "You should be grateful we weren't allowed to kill you on the spot."

The pressure inside the watery prison intensified, beginning to crush Nyzzorak's body.

Nyzzorrak stared at him with intense fury.

The intensity of the flames increased. Inky black strands began dying the flames, saturating the water with an inky black colour.

"Get back!" Avarielle shouted, vanishing from her position and materializing before Nyzzorrak.

She enveloped him with her Vylkr energy.

Witnessing the clash of Vylkr energies, Zaelthar and the others glanced at Avarielle with heavy expressions and narrowed gazes. They immediately distanced themselves from the unfolding battle, yet maintained their control over the suppression technique.

Nyzzorrak was stunned.

Avarielle was suppressing the Vylkr energy he had unleashed to infect the surroundings with precise, skilful control. During their earlier clash, she had only shown the ability to resist Vylkr corruption and suppress his assaults.

But now... she was manipulating it.

At this moment, she seemed more like a Vylkr spawn than he did.

How could such a being exist?

Avarielle moulded the Vylkr energy into inky black chains, wrapping them tightly around the Nyzzorrak until he resembled a mummified figure. She quickly etched a series of suppressive inscriptions onto the chains.

Due to the volatile nature of Vylkr energy, the inscriptions would only hold for a brief time.

It was only because of her profound understanding of Vylkr energy that she had successfully cast the technique. If anyone other than Margona or Zera had attempted it, the outcome would have been disastrous.

She let out a quiet breath of relief.

They had succeeded.

The Vylkr spawn was finally captured.

Now, it was time to deliver him to Paradise.

Avarielle turned to the Zaelthar and the others.

"Follow me," she commanded.

She dismissed their questioning stares.

She understood their curiosity; they wanted to know how she was able to control Vylkr energy, but she ignored it. Their agreement only required her to share everything related to the King-ranked Spirit Beasts.

If they wanted to learn more about her, they would have to offer something in return.

And if they ever tried to exploit her after the contract expired, she had prepared contingencies.

Avarielle nodded at the women, signalling them to look after the floating island. Then she turned and led the way toward the Spiritual Link Point that connected to the Paradise Realm.

Zaelthar, Iyla, and Jaros exchanged glances and nodded, following closely behind her.

They had to maintain a constant grip on their attacks to prevent the Vylkr spawn from breaking free. The corrupted energy still gnawed it, threatening to erode through it.

The remaining Spirit Beasts stayed in position.

If the Vylkr energy burst free from the trio's control, they would instantly converge on the site.

In the meantime, they surveyed the surrounding territory, preparing for any potential attacks.

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Avarielle grabbed the mummified Zaelthar by the neck and pushed him into the Spiritual Link Point.

"A special delivery for the Supreme Leader," she said, a soft smile touching her lips. Then she added, "Consider it a wedding gift."

She tossed him through the portal, then withdrew her hand and calmly dispersed the gathered Vylkr energy around them.

Turning back to the trio who had helped subdue Nyzzorak, she said, "You've fulfilled part of your agreement. Now we wait for the Supreme Leader's return."

"How long will that take?" Zaelthar asked.

"A few days, no more than a week," Avarielle replied. "In the meantime, make yourselves comfortable. I'll ensure word spreads of your role in protecting the territory from a Vylkr spawn."

"Don't mention it," Zaelthar said, shaking his head. "There's no need to broadcast it. We were only fulfilling our part of the agreement."

"We wouldn't mind waiting a few hundred or even a thousand years for the Supreme Leader's return," he added, "but sooner is better."

Rylla nodded in agreement.

"However, I'm curious about one thing... Where is your Supreme Leader currently? And where does this Spiritual Link Point lead?" Zaelthar asked, narrowing his eyes at her.

"It leads to our realm—the Paradise Realm. The Vylkr entities are enemies we must deal with harshly, so we send them there for proper sentencing," Avarielle replied.

Zaelthar's eyes lit with understanding, but his expression shifted into a complex array of emotions. "Does that mean your realm has individuals capable of handling Vylkr spawns?"

Avarielle nodded.

"Interesting," Zaelthar muttered.

He fell silent, offering no further words.

Avarielle turned her attention to Joros.

"You are more intriguing than I initially thought," Joros said with a chuckle.

"I look forward to meeting this Supreme Leader, to learn who he is and why we're expected to wait for his return. I hope it's worth it," he added.

"It is," Avarielle said with a nod.

She offered nothing more before vanishing into an undulating space, returning to the floating island.

The trio followed, utilizing the Spirit Law of Space to cross vast distances in an instant.

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Far from the White-Winged Gryphon territory...

A woman with white four furry ears and a tail and a black cat with orange spots, wearing an exaggeratedly long pointy crown, observed the events that had transpired with calm interest.

The woman narrowed her eyes at the golden-haired goddess and the others beside her.

If that one could manipulate Vylkr energy, it wouldn't be far-fetched to think the others could as well.

She finally understood what her instincts had been warning her about.

"That was quite entertaining. I can't wait to meet this Supreme Leader in person," the cat said, yawning and stretching its limbs. "However, there's somewhere else I need to be. I'll leave an avatar here in the meantime."

"You still haven't told me what you know about this event," the woman said, watching as the cat rose onto its hind legs.

She realized she had three choices: wait for official information to be released, step forward and take the binding oath, or...

She could take another route, extract the truth from the unfathomable being before her.

"Fine. Since it seems that you would learn about anything regardless, I will tell you," the cat responded. His expression became serious.

The woman's expression turned serious as she listened attentively.

"A few days ago, a divine being impregnated a Spirit Beast with his divine seed, creating a divine-spirit beast hybrid. This pregnancy had also enabled her to break through the strength of her natural age limit into a new level of power."

"This inconceivable, impossible event created a phenomenon that resonated across the Middle Layer of the Spirit Realm. Many of us weren't close by, so it took some time before we arrived here and learned about what had transpired ourselves."

"I suspect that the King-ranked Spirit Beast that had emerged here had come from the Upper Layer and was simply passing by."

"Fortunately, he was only observing and had restrained himself from taking any action. Nonetheless, his aura had still spilt, drawing everyone's attention. "

"It was after you entered the borders of this territory that you sensed the strange phenomenon. If not, it would have gone unnoticed except for others within and those aware of it."

The woman's expression turned into a mixture of shock and disbelief.

A divine being impregnated a Spirit Beast?

A divine-spirit beast hybrid!

This shocking information overshadowed even the presence of a King-ranked Spirit Beast.

If she had heard it from another being, she would have dismissed and punished them for trying to make a fool of her. Yet, even when she had heard from the lips of the being before her, she still didn't dare to believe it.

It took several minutes before she could recover her composure.

Now, she was aware of why the King-ranked Spirit Beast had been present in this area.

"I know that this would make you more interested in this divine being. But you should tread carefully. There are a lot of formidable Spirit Beasts whom you can not contend with that are interested in him as well, should you take action that they aren't pleased with. Your end would be horrific," the cat said.

The woman attempted to speak, but before she could, she paused.

He had disappeared.

She could no longer sense his presence. She frowned. She turned her focus to the floating island in the distance. She needed time to digest the information she had just received properly. She planned to meet them after the information had been released to the public.

Chapter 1315: The Secrets Of The Vylkr Armour, The Enemy Of My Enemy Is My Friend

Suddenly, she disappeared into thin air, leaving no trace of her presence in the area.

...

Paradise Realm

Unknown Planet,

Nyzzorrak landed on the other side of the Spiritual Link Point; his body was battered and beaten.

He was furious. He had never been treated with such a level of disrespect in his entire life.

"I will kill all of them!" he growled, rising to his feet as he assessed his surroundings.

"Where is this place?" Nyzzorak frowned.

He could sense the entirety of the planet he was currently on. There was no sign of Vylkr vines or Vylkr energy.

Was this... a sanctuary?

No. It couldn't be.

Nyzzorak could feel the vastness of this realm. The laws here were similar to the Material Realm laws, yet they were distinct.

No known sanctuary was this vast.

None possessed the complexities he was now perceiving.

This wasn't the Spirit Realm, nor was it the Material Realm. It was an entirely different realm altogether.

Suddenly, a presence appeared from above.

Nyzzorak's eyes narrowed in alarm as he sensed the terrifying aura descending upon him.

In desperation, he tried to unleash his Vylkr energy. As long as he could corrupt this world with Vylkr energy, his chances of survival would increase drastically, even against the overwhelming odds.

But in that very moment, the terrifying aura crushed down on him from all directions, seizing him.

It was as though the world he stood in had frozen—isolated from the vast cosmos he had sensed earlier.

This power was beyond anything he had ever encountered, second only to the Creator himself.

Then, a strange force pierced into his mind.

Every attempt to resist or purge it from his body ended in utter failure.

For the first time in tens of thousands of years, Nyzzorak felt fear.

Orion, General Reynold, and Oberon appeared in the sky above the Vylkr spawn.

"They did well, delivering the Vylkr spawn to us intact," General Reynold said with genuine appreciation.

He was beginning to reconsider—perhaps allowing the ancient goddesses to remain permanently in the Paradise Realm wasn't such a bad idea after all.

"Now, we just need to wait for the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs to extract the information we need."

Orion nodded.

He had received the message she left him.

A wedding gift.

He couldn't help but smile. He had given her a daunting task, and she had handled it flawlessly. Perhaps he had allowed his prejudice against the ancient gods to cloud his judgment of her.

But now, she had proven her sincerity, standing boldly against the Vylkr spawns and even their creator, Naka. There was no longer any reason for him to withhold his own.

He watched as the crimson suit of armour expanded and contracted with the flesh inside, reacting violently to the suppression exerted by the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs.

Strands of Vylkr energy burst into the atmosphere, fracturing the space above and shattering the ground below. Yet it remained suppressed.

In the Material Realm, such an event would have been impossible—unless the Divine Mysteries had manifested its Will directly.

Though Orion was uncertain of the exact cost the Divine Mysteries paid to manifest its Will, from what he'd learned from General Reynold and Oberon, it was no small feat.

"How is this possible?" Nyzzorrak gasped, his voice strained. He could feel his mind and body being torn apart, bit by bit.

He still had his revenge to take—against those goddesses, the Spirit Beasts, and the mysterious beings who ambushed him.

He couldn't die in such a disgraceful manner.

But slowly, Nyzzorrak felt his consciousness slipping.

He regretted coming here without first sending a clone to scout the situation. He had been overconfident.

And now, it was too late.

Nyzzorrak's last thread of consciousness faded.

He was dead.

All that remained was a cracked crimson armor, filled with inky-black organs corrupted by Vylkr energy.

"Now, let's see what information we've managed to extract from it," General Reynold said.

He and Oberon felt a surge of information flood into their minds.

They both frowned.

General Reynold quickly sorted through the influx and began transferring it to Orion, little by little, so as not to overwhelm him.

As Orion processed the information, he couldn't help but be astonished.

The Vylkr spawn that just died was a homunculus, crafted from various biomaterials gathered from races across the realms.

These creatures were mass-produced and engineered to adapt to the volatile nature of Vylkr energy from the very moment of their creation. One of the primary components in the biomaterial used to create these homunculi was human tissue.

Some Vylkr entities were also constructed with human biomaterial as a core component. The rest were evolved lifeforms bred from the Vylkr vines. Like them, they mindlessly pursued consumption and evolution, attacking any perceived threat.

However, due to their unpredictable nature, they were only used sparingly.

In other words, these were terrifying abominations, capable of threatening all life if ever released.

Yet, a Vylkr entity had been sent to their Village even before the Vylkr spawns had arrived.

Orion shuddered to think of the catastrophe that might have unfolded if not for Oberon's presence.

He had already received scattered reports about the state of humans beyond the Village, how few and weak they were. So rare were they; one couldn't find a single human in any of the Runaway Cities that had pledged allegiance to Paradise.

He had once considered searching for them and bringing them back to the Village, but the opportunity had never come.

One crisis had followed another, derailing all his plans.

Now, regret tugged at his heart.

Another revelation from the memories detailed how the Vylkr spawns were able to utilize the Laws of the Universe. They employed a corrupted artefact formation—known as a Vylkr Artefact Formation—in a ritual to forge Vylkr armour.

This armour served as a proxy to resonate with the Laws of the Universe on their behalf.

However, even with this armour, the Vylkr spawns could not directly comprehend or grasp the Laws. The only way they could do so was by taking them from those who had.

Due to the devouring nature of Vylkr energy, which allowed for adaptive evolution, the Vylkr armour was crafted with the ability to consume a Law from a divine being who had fully integrated it into their being.

The consumed Law would then become part of the Vylkr spawn's own essence. The armour worked in tandem with the Vylkr entities, aiding them in their ascent to godhood.

Orion's expression shifted into one of sheer disbelief.

Even though he had mentally prepared himself for the shocking revelations stored in a Vylkr spawn's memory, the truth still left him speechless.

Without hesitation, he summoned the Vylkr armour.

It materialized before him in a cascade of flickering black light.

Staring at the full suit of inky-black armour he had previously set aside, a storm of emotions surged within him.

When they had first recovered it during their initial clash with the Vylkr spawns, he knew the armour was special. But never had he imagined that he'd been holding the key to godhood in his hands all along, completely unaware.

Suddenly, excitement surged within him. With the corpse of the Vylkr spawn before him, if he donned the Vylkr armour and followed the proper process, it would become more than just an artefact.

It would literally become a part of him, a tool he could use to comprehend the Laws of the Universe and ascend.

The Village could potentially replicate this method.

However, before anything, he would speak with General Reynold, Oberon, and the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs to see if there was a way to lessen the limitations or corrupting effects of the Vylkr armour.

There was more.

Another piece of information detailed the conflict between the Divine Corps and the Spirit Beasts Coalition. Initially, the coalition had formed to repel the Divine Corps, who were aggressively invading and seizing lands.

But through the Vylkr spawns, they discovered insider knowledge: the actual reason behind the Divine Corps' expansion.

It was linked to the final resting place of an Omnithriallian.

This confirmed what Ilse had told him about the Omnithriallians.

Perhaps... the Omnithriallian were all hidden within the Spirit Realm.

One must never underestimate the value of an Omnithriallian's corpse. Naka had used such a body to usher in the era of man-made gods. Some of them still live even now.

More importantly, it was one of the primary components used in creating the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs.

Its other uses were unknown, but its value remained incalculable.

It was unclear what the Divine Corps intended to do with it, but whatever it was, it had been enough to spark a significant shift across all realms.

This was why the Spirit Beasts Coalition had united against the Divine Corps. Neither side trusted the other, and both were already preparing to fight over the Omnithriallian resting place once the Divine Corps had been removed from the equation.

A classic example of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend.'

.....

Chapter 1316: The Secrets Of The Vylkr Armour (2), The Divine Archetypes?

All three groups unanimously decided to keep this information secret to maintain their monopoly over it, which also explained their aggressive expansion.

'But something's still missing,' Orion frowned deeply.

Why would the Omnithrialians choose to make their final resting place within the Spirit Realm?

Did they die willingly or not? If they had, then why? And if they hadn't... that was a terrifying thought he hoped would remain just that—a thought.

There was also information about the New Order of Divine Apostles.

It detailed how the Sanctuaries had been created by various divine beings and members of the Blessed Order of Divine Apostles to help mortals untainted by the Vylkr escape to safer realms.

This realm, however, was more like enormous layered pocket dimensions made to be inhabited by both divines and mortals.

The information also listed the various branches of the divine corps bases across the Spirit Realm and their constant skirmishes.

There was no deeper information.

"Are you done?" General Reynold asked, sensing as Orion's emotions settled.

Orion nodded.

General Reynold sent Orion another piece of information.

Orion furrowed his brows in thought, wondering why he had sent this information along with the others.

Soon, he realized the reason.

It was related to the Vylkr armour. The Vylkr energy was a curse that defied the very rules of the world. Without the world's natural suppression, it would have devoured everything in its path.

Even Vylkr artefacts had their limits, like Aurora's staff, which could also be classified as a Divine artefact.

It was impossible for a Vylkr artefact formation to create a Vylkr artefact capable of utilizing the Laws of the Universe without being destroyed by those very laws. Such a feat could only be achieved through a catalyst.

The primary catalysts used in the creation of a Vylkr armour were the remains of an Omnithriallian.

It made sense. The Omnithriallians were the race responsible for the triggering of the curse, which had once deteriorated Oberon's half-Omnithriallian form during its initial outbreak.

Though Oberon could still manipulate the Laws of the Universe then, it had left a permanent mark. In that sense, the match was eerily perfect.

However, it was still unknown how many Vylkr armours a single Omnithriallian corpse could produce.

Orion was left speechless once more.

His mind spun.

Was this why the Vylkr spawns were targeting the Omnithriallian resting place?

Was this the Omnithriallians' retribution for the curse they had unleashed upon the Material Realm?

But if that were true, didn't it mean that gods who had reached the pinnacle could also serve as catalysts for Vylkr armour?

To use the corpse of the divine as a stepping stone to create the 'perfect race'—was an act of blasphemy.

To use the remains of one's own progenitors was—

Despicable.

Immoral.

Orion found it challenging to accept, but he had no choice because the truth was crystal clear.

He had gained deep insight into the present age, just as they had anticipated. And yet, there was still no information about Naka.

He remained an elusive figure, someone even a high entity like Nyzzorak had never met. They received orders only from those above them. Beyond that, they acted freely, just like any average race.

Orion looked again at his Vylkr armour, Morphic Puppet, this time with a complex expression.

General Reynold stretched out his hand.

A mysterious force enveloped Nyzzorak, tearing a portion of the crimson Vylkr armour from his internal organs. Invisible pressure slamming in from all sides crushed the broken armour.

It was ground down until only a cloud of sparkling, cosmic dust remained, exuding faint strands of Vylkr energy.

"Once the ritual has been completed, it can't be reversed," General Reynold said.

The cloud of sparkling, cosmic dust scattered over Nyzzorrak's corpse.

Then, he sighed softly. "To think that he would go this far."

"He needs to be stopped," Orion said, his tone firm and resolute.

General Reynold and Oberon nodded.

First, it was the Omnithriallian corpse.

Then, the man-made gods.

The human race.

The other mortal races.

The Divine Apostles.

Now, the Vylkr spawns and other entities.

If Naka wasn't stopped, who knew what other kinds of abominations he might create once he laid his hands on something new?

"I need to grow more powerful than I am now if I'm going to face him," Orion said.

"We now have intel on the coordinates of many Divine Corps bases and access points to the Sanctuaries. The divine beings, the Blessed Order of the Divine Apostles, and many Spirit Beasts are not on good terms with the Vylkr spawns."

That means we could forge the necessary alliances to fight against him. As Paradise continues to develop, we might even uncover the presence of other ancient gods in the process."

He still remembered how, some time ago, a demigod had appeared in their territory—but they had scared him off, lacking the strength to confront him at the time. Back then, Orion had assumed the being resided in one of the Runaway Cities.

But now he realized the figure might have come from a sanctuary, possibly emerging to rescue mortals who hadn't yet been infected by Vylkr energy.

It had seemed like an imaginative notion right now, but based on the information he had recently received, it wasn't far-fetched.

As for Naka, his gift made him a particularly difficult opponent. Even if someone else possessed the same power, they likely wouldn't pose as much of a threat. After all, not many were willing to betray the world and turn it upside down for their own selfish ambitions.

They wouldn't be surprised if Naka had earned himself some powerful enemies, judging by his track record. That might be why he was still hiding—and why, despite previously being able to sense their movements, he hadn't dared to approach them.

"Can any changes still be made to the Vylkr armour?" Orion asked.

"It's complicated," General Reynold replied, shaking his head.

"The only thing we can do is assist your ascension through the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs. But even that would bring tremendous changes to your divine archetype."

Orion's expression turned solemn.

This was the first time General Reynold had spoken of his divine archetype after Orion repeatedly asked questions about it.

Noticing Orion's expectant gaze, General Reynold sighed and continued, "As you know, a divine archetype is a manifestation of an individual's unique path to godhood. They don't conform to the established rules of divine ascension. Instead, they force the rules to adapt to their existence. And due to the unique nature of divine essence, only anomalies, due to their inherent nature, can possess a divine archetype."

"Your beloved wife, Aurora, forcefully ascended because of the child you gave her. Due to her unique nature, her divine archetype is tied to both Vylkr and Divine energy. Nonetheless, when the divine mysteries foresaw the magnitude of what was to come, they intervened, granting her ascension through the divine trials."

"Now, not only can she ascend like other divine beings, but she can also do so through the Vylkr armour. That is the nature of her divine archetype."

"The others who could manipulate Vylkr energy and had awakened a portion of their Omnithrallian heritage, manifesting through their gifts, ascended with the help of the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs. They now possess not only a Vylkr heart, allowing them to produce Vylkr energy independently and granting them a massive energy reservoir, but they've also become embodiments of their individual gifts and their shared connection to the Mysteries."

"However, with Vylkr energy as their main source of power, they can't grow stronger on their own. Their Divine Archetypes are far more complicated because of this. That's why the Vylkr armour is a perfect fit for them."

"With its power and the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs, we might be able to alter the nature of their Divine Archetypes—a normally impossible task that would cause irreparable damage. But with our combined strength and the full support of the Mysteries, there's a chance it could succeed."

"The rest of your wives can ascend normally," he added after a pause.

Then he continued, "But for you, your ascension was directly triggered by Vylkr energy, which helped you break your mortal limits, and the White Flame, the corrupted remnant of my own divine essence, and the Divine Mysteries, and failed ascension tainted by the Vylkr energy."

"That flame is the result of my failed ascension. It's the reason you became a demigod instead of a fully-fledged god. The White Flame still burns within you, beyond even my control. That is the nature of your Divine Archetype."

"The only path left for you to ascend now is through the Vylkr armour. And if you succeed, you might be able to reignite the White Flame and take a true step toward godhood, just as you've seen in the creation of the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs. Using the old paths of divinity to forge a new one ahead, that is the essence of your Divine Archetype."

Orion was shaken by the revelation.

Chapter 1317: The Ninth Maw, Devour!

General Reynold fell silent, allowing him time to absorb everything.

Orion also learned that a Divine Archetype could not only be forged by oneself but could also be influenced by external factors.

It made sense.

After all, becoming an anomaly meant breaking away from the chains of fate and opposing the Divine Mysteries. Not everyone could carve a path to divinity alone.

If it were that easy, then Naka wouldn't have relied so heavily on the Vylkr armour ascend, especially considering its inherent limitations.

Orion didn't dare boast, but even with General Reynold, Oberon, and the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs, he knew that if not for him, the villagers would never have tasted divinity.

The other inhabitants of Paradise would have had no choice but to ascend through the path of the Divine Apostles. Others would have been lucky just to become demigods.

But at the end of the day, everything in this universe was built upon the past.

Even his Divine Archetype, though unique, was no exception.

After several minutes, Orion concluded his contemplation.

He had long suspected that General Reynold and Oberon were hiding something related to their ascensions, but he hadn't pressed them. They had proven their integrity. He trusted them, not just with himself, but with his family and all of Paradise.

And now, as always, they revealed the truth when the time was right.

"So there's a chance my divine ascension could be achieved more smoothly with the help of the Vylkr armour?" Orion asked.

They both nodded.

"It will be a difficult path," Oberon said. "But yes, there is a chance."

"The only thing I will have to warn you is that while the White Flame might aid in developing your divine archetype and help in your ascension. If you fail..." General Reynold said, "Though your memories would remain untempered, you might lose the right to ascension; there's a chance that

you might end up as my former self. A failure where there once was hope - a living embodiment of the White Flame."

General Reynold gazed at Orion.

"But if you can succeed. As I said, your future would be limitless."

"As long as there's a path, I'll walk it," Orion said. "I want to know what true divinity feels like."

With that, Brane, Zara, and the others would no longer need to search endlessly for opportunities to ascend. Soon, they would only need to hunt the Vylkr spawns, just as the spawns had once hunted them.

Despite the warnings they wanted to voice, they knew it was no use. They couldn't stop him, so they held their tongues.

Still, they were proud. With Paradise having such a trailblazer, their rise was inevitable.

Orion nodded and made sure his lucky coin was still in his pocket.

Then he donned the Morhic Puppet.

The armour crept onto his skin, transforming into a full suit. Once fully equipped, Orion was protected from any external force unless it matched or exceeded his own strength.

He clenched his fists and sighed. Despite accumulating Vylkr energy for several months, the Morphic Puppet had only grown marginally in strength. That was why he'd put it away for a while; his own power had far surpassed it.

Now, he realized that this wasn't how Vylkr armour was meant to grow.

It was meant to devour.

Orion turned toward the corpse of the Nyzzorrak. It was already severely damaged, with part of its armour crushed.

He hoped it would be enough to fuel his ascension.

He pushed aside any doubts. From the Nyzzorrak's memories, he knew the other Vylkr spawns within the Spirit Beast Coalition had already learned of its death and would now act with caution.

Capturing them would be nearly impossible unless they launched a full-scale assault.

Orion enveloped himself with his divine power and sat before the corpse.

He instantly activated Vylkr Warrior Mode, channeling his Vylkr energy through Morphic Puppet.

A surge of power erupted from his body. Around him, dense strands of Vylkr energy twisted and coiled, intertwining like serpents.

His armour began to shift, expanding and contracting, inflating and deflating as if it were trying to break free of his body.

Then, after a few minutes, it began to settle.

An inky radiance shimmered across the sleek surface of the Vylkr armour.

Morphic Puppet had stabilized.

Orion activated the sealed process within the armour, the ability to devour an essence rather than simply infect it.

Ninth Maw.

Deep within the armour, a black, veined lotus-shaped tear formed, spreading across the chest plate, glowing with mysterious inscriptions. It then transformed into wide jaws resembling those of a voracious beast.

The jaws lunged forward, clamping down on the Nyzzorak's corpse.

Slowly, the essence of the corpse was drawn in.

Even the crimson Vylkr armour it wore was not spared.

As Morphic Puppet devoured the remains, Orion felt a mental attack strike his consciousness.

Devour.

Devour.

Devour.

For others, a mental attack powered by raw Vylkr energy was enough to fracture their consciousness or implant a seed of that urge deep within. However, Orion, having grown used to wielding Vylkr energy, resisted it with ease.

Within seconds, the entire corpse was consumed.

Suddenly, Orion sensed that something was wrong. He opened his eyes.

The Spiritual Link Point had vanished.

He could no longer sense General Reynold or Oberon's presence.

He was alone on this planet.

And standing before him... was an enraged Nyzzorak, the very corpse he had just devoured.

"YOU? I WILL KILL YOU!! I WILL KILL YOU!!" Nyzzorak screamed hysterically and surged forward.

His crimson armour opened its carnivorous jaws, seeking to devour Orion whole.

This was Nyzzorak's final dying will:

To kill and devour him.

To kill and devour all of Paradise.

Had this encounter occurred beyond the bounds of Paradise, Orion might have needed to put up a serious fight. After all, the dying will of a Vylkr spawn that had lived for over 30,000 years wasn't something he could shrug off without effort.

However, since they were still within the range of the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs, Nyzzorak's will was naturally suppressed, allowing the process to proceed smoothly.

Orion closed his eyes, giving him no attention.

A transparent barrier enveloped his consciousness, shielding him.

A crushing pressure descended upon Nyzzorak, compressing him from all sides.

"NNNOOO!!" He let out a gut-wrenching cry as his form was obliterated into dust.

But this time, there was no one around to hear him.

He vanished into nothingness.

Orion felt a shift in his consciousness and could once again sense the others outside.

He exhaled in relief.

Soon, the armour began to assimilate the essence it had devoured, sending waves of ripples across its surface.

Orion felt a foreign essence begin to meld with his being through the Vylkr armour.

It was the essence of the Nyzzorak.

As Orion forcefully assimilated it, searing pain coursed through his body.

The process of integrating a foreign essence filled with the laws of the universe was no easy feat.

His skin cracked. His body convulsed. Organs twisted and crushed under invisible force.

His mind trembled as cosmic truths surged into his consciousness, law after law flooding in all at once.

"AHHH!!"

A raw scream tore from Orion's lips.

Devour.

Devour.

Devour

The mental attack returned, stronger and more persistent, riding on the waves of pain.

However, Orion didn't falter.

If he faltered now, his body would become a hollow husk, overtaken by the primal instinct of the Vylkr armour.

Hours passed.

Orion no longer knew how long the assimilation had lasted. His body was being crushed and reforged repeatedly.

Every law that Nyzzorrak had consumed was now being etched into Orion's very being.

If not for the armour holding him together, he would have either exploded or, worse, fallen apart molecule by molecule.

He could feel the Vylkr armour itself becoming imprinted onto his existence.

He sensed its instincts and understood that the Vylkr armour was a sentient entity. Unfortunately, its intelligence was lacking.

If it had been more aware, he doubted he could have withstood its will.

As if in response to the changes occurring within him, the White Flame suddenly burned more vigorously.

'Finally,' Orion thought.

He had no control over the White Flame. All he could do was observe and hope it would react to the assimilation process, especially before the next stage, his ascension.

He was grateful that it had.

"Now then... let's see what kind of power lies within my Divine Archetype."

The flames expanded from their dormant position within his heart. Wisps of white fire flowed outward, spreading through every inch of his body as though trying to purge the assimilated essence of the Vylkr spawn.

Within seconds, every fibre of his being was flooded with these purifying flames, easing the torment that had been wracking his form.

Then the wisps intensified, coalescing into a full flicker of pure White Flame.

The fire ignited his tissues, organs, and every cell within him, transforming his insides into a blazing furnace.

Orion felt no heat, but externally, something else did.

The Vylkr armour began to melt, turning to liquid as it wrapped tightly around his body, sealing him in like a cocoon.

Chapter 1318: Purge

It moved like sentient mercury. Mysterious inscriptions rippled along its surface, warping chaotically.

BOOM!!

A blazing white flame erupted from the liquefied Vylkr armour, bathing it in radiant brilliance.

At that moment, Orion understood: the White Flame was attempting to purify the Vylkr armour and the essence they had both consumed, just as it had tried to do when he had previously attempted to create two Vylkr containers, nearly dying in the process.

Surprisingly, the Vylkr armour resisted.

The Vylkr armour fought back, resisting the purge.

It was sentient enough to know something terrible was about to happen to it.

Orion was taken aback. But still, if the Vylkr armour had truly been forged from the corpse of an Omnithriallian, then it wasn't unexpected that it could resist even the White Flame's purification.

As the intense clash between the two forces reached its peak, Orion felt his consciousness beginning to fade.

"I have to hold on," he gritted his teeth.

Unfortunately, his awareness continued slipping away.

Suddenly, Orion felt a jolt in his mind and realized he had been struck by another mental attack.

"Huh?" He opened his eyes in confusion.

Around him burned a flickering white flame within a vast, empty void—he was inside it. And before him stood an enormous morphic puppet, towering in the flame, its head bowed as it stared directly at him.

Yet it remained completely unharmed by the fire.

Its sleek black surface shimmered with a radiant sheen.

Orion couldn't tell how large the Vylkr armour or the surrounding white flame truly was. But in comparison, he felt as small and insignificant as a mote of dust before a colossal being.

It took him a moment to realize he was completely naked. Even though this was a space within his consciousness where such things held little importance, he wasn't about to face what was about to happen unclothed.

With a thought, he manifested new attire: a black shirt embroidered with gold and matching trousers adorned with various precious gemstones.

Exactly as his wives had designed.

He turned his attention back to Morhic Puppet, which had begun to vibrate. Its smooth black surface began to shift, morphing into a tall, slender figure whose skin shimmered with an opalescent glow and shifting colours that pulsed within the flickering flame.

Its hair flowed backwards like shooting stars arcing through the void, illuminating it with radiant trails of light.

As the being solidified, Orion trembled.

The being that had emerged from the Vylkr armour was something he recognized with a single glance.

The progenitor of humanity.

His ancestor.

An Omnithriallian.

The Omnithriallian gazed down at him. Its eyes shimmered with tiny orbs as though stars and celestial bodies were carved within them.

Then, Orion felt a resounding vibration ripple through his form, shaking his consciousness.

"You... are human."

The being had not moved its lips.

The words echoed telepathically through Orion's mind. He couldn't tell if the voice was male or female—only that it was vast, ancient, and absolute.

This was Orion's first time encountering an Omnithriallian. He was unprepared. He didn't even know how to respond.

The Omnithriallian turned its gaze to the flickering white flame surrounding them.

"A self-sustaining spiritual flame... forged from the collision of Divine Mysteries, the essence of a half-stepped true god, and the curse. As each force seeks to annihilate the others, its very nature has become one of purification, capable of cleansing corruption and tempering both soul and flesh alike."

The Omnithriallian looked at Orion.

"You want to use this... to cleanse the Vylkr armour."

"Yes," Orion responded. His voice reverberated across the burning flame.

"Why?"

Orion hesitated. He didn't know how to answer that question.

In truth, he had no idea what he was truly doing. No one had ever walked this path before.

There was no template or guidance to follow.

All he knew was that the White Flame was linked to his Divine Archetype, and with it, while devouring Nyzarrork's corpse, he could ascend safely to divinity, aided by the Mysteries of the Twelve-Step Stairs.

"I want to ascend to divinity," Orion finally said.

He looked up at the being who could crush him with a single thought.

"A being called Naka used your corpse to create the Vylkr armour and other abominations. He is a threat to Paradise, the only sanctuary left for humanity since the Material Realm was ravaged by the curse. I must become strong enough to stand against him."

Only now did Orion realize that it was likely the presence of the Omnithriallian's essence that allowed the Vylkr armour to resist the White Flame's purification?

Yet something still didn't add up. How could an Omnithriallian manifest from the armour after it had already been forged?

Silence enveloped them.

"I see. Paradise truly is a beautiful realm," the Omnithriallian said. "You've accomplished much... and gathered powerful allies on your path. If only we had foreseen how devastating the curse would become, perhaps we would have done more; perhaps we could have helped humanity escape."

A faint sorrow filled its voice.

"A moment of anger... led to such tragedy. But what has happened cannot be undone. We must now look toward the future."

Then the Omnithriallian added, "Very well. I will not only allow you to proceed with the purification but also aid you in your ascension."

Orion sighed inwardly in relief. He had never been so grateful.

His first meeting with his ancestor was ending on a hopeful note.

But then, the Omnithriallian continued.

"However... it will be under one condition."

Orion frowned. He had learned from Oberon's fate that Omnithriallians never did anything for free.

Still, he hadn't expected such a condition to be placed upon their own descendant. He forced himself to remain calm and listen.

"You will withdraw all your companions into this realm and remain here permanently. I do not know how you managed such a feat, but a realm comparable to the Material Realm and Mysteries akin to the Divine Mysteries... that should be more than enough to serve as your hope for the next million years."

Orion's expression hardened.

"I'm sorry, ancestor, but I can't accept that," Orion responded, his tone firm.

"To agree to your condition would be the same as turning our backs on the world. Naka, the Vylkr spawns, and all other Vylkr entities must be stopped. Surrendering now, after all we've endured, would be tantamount to accepting defeat."

"We've toiled too long and come too far to abandon our mission at this critical juncture."

He gritted his teeth.

He never expected that this would be the Omnithriallian's condition.

He swiftly received his answer.

"My child, listen to me. I am telling you this for your own good. Do you think Naka can desecrate our corpses and use them to create the Vylkr armour without our permission?"

The response struck him like a boulder.

"What... do you mean?" Orion asked, doing his best to keep his voice steady, his heart sensing a forbidding chill.

"This was meant to be a private matter, but since you are my child, no different from him, I will disclose this to you. Naka's goal is to break into heaven, and our race's lifelong wish was to exterminate the gods. But now that the gods are trapped in the Material Realm, losing their heavenly rights, it is much easier to kill them."

"So in exchange for aiding his desire to break into heaven once more, he must eliminate the gods." The Omnithriallian's words stunned Orion.

"The only reason that the world still stands is because of the safety measures we have put in place in case the gods find our dimension. They did, and they recklessly attempted to turn it into the same ruins they had left the other worlds and dimensions in before arriving here. With the Vylkr energy continuously ravaging it, no one can save it."

"As such, we have no issue with what he does as long as he accomplishes it. Because he is the only one who can do it. Attempting to fight Naka would be the same as going against your ancestors' lifelong wishes."

Orion found it hard to believe what he was hearing.

The Omnithriallians were aiding Naka?

He had never seen things through this lens before. Now that he did, he realized that Naka's goal—to create the perfect race and break into heaven by any means necessary—slightly coincided with the Omnithriallians' goal of eliminating the gods.

No wonder Naka had known that Oberon would encounter an Omnithriallian.

No wonder the Vylkr armour consumed the gods in order to ascend to divinity; this wasn't just due to its inherent limitations but because of them.

No wonder he had come this far.

Naka and the Omnithriallians were working hand in hand.

Orion didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the fact that he had overlooked such vital information.

"Does heaven even still exist at the moment?" Orion asked, his voice tinged with a myriad of emotions. "I had heard that after its countless rebirths, it is now a void where only the Divine Mysteries exist."

Chapter 1319: Purge (2)

"Yes, it exists. Beneath the layer of the Divine Mysteries, there you will find heaven. It is now much more difficult to break into, so attempting to do so would not be an easy feat," the Omnithriallian responded, staring at Orion.

"If you don't believe me, then can you explain where all the true gods are currently? Or why the Divine Mysteries solely focused on aiding beings in ascending to divinity while avoiding harming the Material Realm?"

"In the beginning, there was heaven and the Material Realm. No matter how much time the gods spent in heaven, toying with the Material Realm, it always reformed itself after its destruction, just as the other still exists."

"The only difference now is that it's much harder for the two to meet, making it difficult for anyone to truly understand its existence."

"I speak not for myself but for all members of the Omnithriallian race. I may not have personally agreed to this decision, but I am in support of it. I am certain that everyone will agree as well."

"Naka has committed so many atrocities. Even humans are not exempt from his goal. I am the result of one of his failed experiments. That is why I can use the Vylkr energy. Are you saying that as long as you achieve your goals, you will allow him to do all of this?" Orion responded.

He did his best to remain calm.

"You don't need to worry about that. For all the harm he has done to his fellow humans and will continue to do in the future, Naka will face his own retribution. We have made sure of that. As for the details of that retribution, I cannot share them with you, unfortunately."

"Is it the divine corps?" Orion asked, narrowing his eyes at the Omnithrallian, his suspicion rising.

He had already suspected this from the beginning, but after piecing the clues together, he arrived at a reasonable conclusion.

Apart from the Spirit Beasts, the Divine Corps were the only entities he had seen go toe-to-toe with—and even completely eliminate—the Vylkr spawns.

From the information they had gathered about the Divine Corps, their creator was most likely the sole survivor of the seven great gods, or perhaps she was one of their formidable figures standing behind them.

But if that was the case, it made sense why they acted like this.

There was no response.

Despite the silence, Orion received his answer.

Though he didn't know how the Omnithriallians had managed to do it, it seemed they had indirectly or directly contributed to the existence of the Divine Corps.

"Child, why do you wish to continue chasing such a meaningless pursuit?" The Omnithriallian's voice was tinged with sadness. "Can't you see that I'm doing this for your own good?"

"I understand. I appreciate the care you have shown toward me," Orion responded, nodding.

"I want to know, if I fail to ascend, will I die?" he asked.

"If you fail to ascend, the White Flame will continue to burn. Even your body will not be spared. Your mind might survive since this flame is also a part of you," The Omnithriallian responded.

"But you will become a burning entity with a constant urge to purify everything around you. Neither human nor god. It's a fate far worse than death."

Orion nodded. Aside from the last sentence, it was the same thing General Reynold had told him. Still, he wasn't too surprised. He had noticed this trait from observing General Reynold within the mountain.

Even if his memories were sealed, if General Reynold could fall into such a state, then Orion understood he could also become a victim of it.

"Without the White Flame, could others like me, who can utilise the Vylkr energy, ascend?" he asked again.

"Yes. In truth, this armour only contains a fragment of my consciousness. The rest are scattered across other Vylkr armours," the Omnithrialian said.

"Why do you ask such an irrelevant question? Do you perhaps... plan on rejecting my condition?"

Its tone was filled with questions, its voice tinged with surprise and curiosity. It had never expected Orion to outright reject its condition after everything it had just said.

The Divine Corps?

Naka?

Does he really think he can go against them alone?

Considering his accomplishments, it was worth considering, but it was also too risky. It would be better if he remained in the realm he had built, ensuring that their children had survived.

Meanwhile, Naka continues his goal of breaking into heaven and eliminating the gods.

"Paradise is not limited to this realm. There are Spirit Beasts who have pledged their allegiance to me. There are companions whom I have promised to bring back to Paradise upon uncovering their whereabouts," Orion responded. "If I agree to your condition, it would be the same as betraying them. As the Supreme Leader of Paradise, I cannot do that."

"However, one thing I am ready to do is stop my ascension here. The residents of Paradise are more powerful than you think. They can stand on their own... I trust them to do so," he added, his tone reigniting with confidence.

"I understand that your need for vengeance is strong, so I will not get in your way."

The Omnithriallians were not only the second race in existence but also the second strongest race. Created by the combined efforts of all the ancient divines while they were still in heaven, they possessed a strength he couldn't even fathom—even the ancient gods were afraid of them.

He couldn't bargain against such a being set on revenge.

What could he offer that might change their minds?

Nothing.

He didn't mind putting up a struggle, but just a fragment of its consciousness was enough to dwarf his. Orion understood that if he couldn't resist...

There wouldn't even be a chance to struggle.

What was left was to surrender.

"You know, I have always wanted to ask the ancestors. I wanted to know how it felt to be the second race in existence. Why did you create the human race, leaving us powerless until the emergence of the gods, when our realm was broken through? Are you the ones who created the Spirit realm? How did you all die, and why within the Spirit Realm?" Orion asked.

Since he was unsure when he would meet another Omnithriallian, he decided to use the opportunity to resolve some of the questions that had been at the back of his mind.

Silence descended.

He received no response.

One week passed.

Orion was uncertain about how much time had passed outside, but according to his internal clock, seven days had elapsed. During this period, neither he nor the Omnithriallian had said a word to each other.

Orion felt that the Omnithriallian was weighing this matter carefully, which was a good thing for him.

It meant that the discussion was still open.

Orion didn't know how long it would remain silent, but he wasn't in a hurry to leave. No matter how long it took, as long as there was a chance for him to ascend, he would continue to be patient.

So he continued to wait.

Two weeks later.

Four weeks later.

One month later.

...

Five months later.

Orion slowly began to lose his patience. This reminded him of a similar moment with Oberon. However, that had only lasted a few days before Oberon had given up.

Orion used his imagination to create many constructs to keep himself busy and maintain a sane mind.

...

One year.

Three years.

Five years.

Seven years...

Though time was simply numbers to divine beings, he had never stayed this long without meeting his family or friends. Those connections kept him going.

How could he continue to call himself the Supreme Leader of Paradise if he had remained here all this time, only to give up?

Eight years...

In the seventh month of the eighth year, the Omnithrialian finally uttered a sentence.

"I do not wish for it to be known that a parent struggled with their child because of their own selfish desire. I will put two paths before you: You take my commands to heart, withdraw your companions to Paradise, and permanently reside here."

"By doing so, I will ensure that Naka neither harms you nor Paradise. Regardless of what happens outside this realm, it will not be affected. Whoever attempts to do so will be our enemy and will face our wrath."

"Two, because you have chosen to struggle against your creator's wishes, should you decide to continue as you desire, we will not be held responsible for whatever happens to you or this realm."

"One child chooses to aid in his parents' ambitions. Another wants to go against it."

The buildings, islands, and other constructs Orion had conjured vanished into thin air.

His face was expressionless, and his heart was steady. Thanks to his divine memory, which allowed him to recall specific details in an instant, Orion had managed to remember what their discussion had been about.

Chapter 1320: A Good Proposal, Iyriath Zi'ria!

Orion looked at the Omnithriallian and shook his head.

"Are you going to refuse this proposal I have laid before you, too?" the Omnithriallian asked, its tone filled with confusion.

It couldn't understand what was transpiring within this child's mind.

He had been silent for the past eight years, waiting for it to change its mind. Now that it had finally spoken, and because it didn't see it right to struggle with its descendants, he refused it once more.

Was he willing to struggle for another eight years or more?

Although the Omnithrialian could end this entire conversation and cause Orion to fail his ascension, it couldn't bring itself to do it. Instead, it was more curious to see how far Orion could go.

Could he change their mind like Naka, or had he achieved all of this with the aid of his companions?

Orion shook his head. "I have thought about this clearly and do not wish to fight against the ancestors while my enemies have your support," he said.

They already had the odds stacked against them, from the Divine Corps, the Divine Mysteries, the King-ranked Spirit Beast, and other Spirit Beasts who had noticed them during their time in the Spirit realm, to Naka and the Vylkr spawns.

They were strong, and so were they.

They had an ace, and probably so did they.

They had powerful backers and connections, and probably so did they.

As such, gaining another enemy—humanity's creator—would be nothing more than foolishness.

"You say the reason you support Naka is because his goals align with yours, correct? What if our goals also align with yours?" Orion asked.

"What do you mean?" the Omnithriallian replied, its tone filled with bewilderment.

"I also wish to make a proposal. As long as I ascend, I—and the entirety of Paradise—will kill every other god who refuses to submit or pledge allegiance to Paradise. Naka alone cannot destroy all the gods. If he could, he would have done so already," Orion responded.

"If I don't ascend, Paradise will still function without me. And once they learn the reason behind my failed ascension, they will hunt down the Vylkr spawns along with Naka. Do not underestimate their strength."

"That is an interesting proposal... You are right. It would be better to have the two of you working toward the same goal," the Omnithriallian pondered. "Our goal was to eliminate all the gods in this plane of existence, but after seeing the realm you have built, I am not that foolish to think that it is still realistic."

"No matter which era, there will always be gods in it. However, if you can put a considerable percentage of them under control, dealing with the others will not be so difficult."

Orion remained silent. He remembered that its last words were eerily similar to something it had said during their previous conversation.

"And how will you ensure they pledge their allegiance to you? They are crafty beings who only know how to rule. They do not know how to follow."

Orion summoned his Throne of Infinite Edict and the Divine Medallion of Sovereign Accord.

"I will use this," he said, presenting them before the Omnithriallian.

"Oh, you possess Divine Mandates. You are truly an interesting human," the Omnithriallian praised. "I sense that one is a Mystery tied to this realm, and the other is connected to the Divine Mysteries. I can understand the first, but what did you do to receive a Divine Mandate from the Divine Mysteries?"

"It was a gift. A Will of the Divine Mysteries took an interest in Paradise and saw potential in me, deciding to grant it," Orion replied.

"These are only given to a rare few whom the Divine Mysteries deem worthy of investing in for their future agendas. Be careful when and how you use it. The Divine Mysteries never give something so valuable for free."

Orion nodded in understanding. He had already grown cautious of the strange behaviour of the Will of the Divine Mysteries, who had granted him the Divine mandate.

"Is this proposal acceptable?" Orion asked.

"It is. Do not think that I have struggled with you because you are merely capable. I have done so because you are special, just like those other children. You are just as stubborn as they are. If either of you were to meet, you would probably try to kill each other, or at the very least, part ways differently than you had met," the Omnithriallian said.

"Although it pains my heart to let go of our obsession with our children, this is a situation we cannot avoid."

Orion sighed inwardly with relief.

"However, if you choose to walk this path, I have a condition."

Orion was already prepared for this, so it no longer took him by surprise.

"You must not ask any ancient god, or any divine being who participated in the Great Migration, to follow you a second time. If they refuse the first time after being given a choice, kill them and their children. Only those who hear your words and surrender should you accept," the Omnithriallian said.

It had sensed the presence of other divine beings and various others within the realm and understood that it would be unrealistic to kill every divine being they encountered.

Every society needed a divine to guide it. In the future, other races would surely ascend to divinity as well, and ruling over them would be far more beneficial than constantly purging them and weakening one's own strength.

It was unwise to demand that this realm be inhabited only by humans, who now made up a mere fraction of the population compared to the past, and human divines.

Otherwise, they risked repeating history and falling prey to other divine beings who might possess the strength to break into this realm.

"If you accept this condition, I will have no issue with the path you have chosen."

"I accept," Orion said without hesitation.

Among all the conditions placed before him, this was the most favourable. Refusing it would make him an ungrateful descendant of the Omnithriallian, who had set aside its hatred for the gods for his sake.

He was grateful that the Omnithriallians had a soft spot for the human race. Some might call it a glaring weakness, but it wasn't.

It was love.

Without that love, this conversation wouldn't have made it this far.

"This matter is hereby concluded. I will place a thread of my consciousness within you, so that any of my kin will recognise the agreement made between us, and honour it," the Omnithriallian said.

"Just so you know, I am proud of you. Of all of you. Regardless of the atrocities some of you have chosen to commit on the paths you've walked... You are all our children."

"However, if you choose to continue down this path, you may one day walk the same path as Nakamura. I do not want you to follow in your brethren's footsteps. I will aid you in ascending to divinity and grant you a gift.

Orion's expression lit up. He bowed respectfully. "Thank you, Ancestor."

"If it's possible, I would like to know the ancestor's name," Orion said.

Just as every race had its own identity, Orion believed the Omnithriallian before him possessed one as well.

The Omnithriallian was briefly silent. "It's been a long time since I've used my name... I am Iyriath Zi'ria."

Orion noticed her voice no longer sounded neutral; it had begun to take on the distinct tone of a woman.

"Iyriath Zy'ria... Iyriath Zi'ria."

As Orion tried to pronounce her name correctly, Iyriath Zi'ria let out a soft laugh. Fortunately, he had gotten it right on his second attempt.

"Ancestor Iyriath Zi'ria, I wonder if it would be possible for you to remain in Paradise?" Orion asked, his tone filled with curiosity.

Even if this was only a fragment of her consciousness, having the presence of an Omnithriallian within Paradise was something worth treasuring.

It was also an opportunity to uncover some of the questions she had yet to answer.

"Unfortunately, I cannot. My era ended epochs ago. Clinging to life now would only bring more chaos into the planes of existence," Iyriath Zi'ria responded with a soft sigh.

"There are many who should remain dead so the next era can thrive. The future is built upon what transpires today."

Orion nodded in understanding, his expression filled with a myriad of emotions. He realised that Iyriath Zi'ria and the other Omnithriallians had chosen to remain dead so the future could continue progressing more stably.

If all the Omnithriallians had chosen to return, they would have torn through the realms and dimensions one by one, annihilating all the divines, leading to a calamity far greater than the one they now faced.

Still, Orion couldn't understand why they had left humanity so powerless. Given what humanity had accomplished after the invasion of their dimension, if they had been able to harness even one of the higher ranks of energy, they could have achieved far more than they had.