

## Village Head 351

### Chapter 351 Within The Mountain (2)

His current predicament was less challenging than his previous one, although now he was faced with the added difficulty of dealing with several one-star Vylkr vines.

Nonetheless, he couldn't help but notice that their numbers seemed to dwindle gradually.

As he released Saria from his hold, he gently arranged her on the ground, ensuring her comfort against the rocky wall. Then, he sank onto all fours, his breaths coming in ragged gasps, feeling his broken shoulder begin to grow numb.

"HAAAHH!! Hahh!!"

He held that position for a brief moment, exhaling a slow breath, "Haaa...", before seizing his cutlass and lunging into action against the encircling one-star Vylkr vines. With swift slashes, Orion felled a number of them, wasting no time in crouching down to devour them whole.

He consumed and digested their bodies with a haste that matched his speed, then darted off to another section, repeating the cycle.

Ensuring he feasted on the freshly defeated Vylkr vines, he absorbed their energy, replenishing both his Vylkr energy and stamina.

An hour later, Orion descended to where Saria lay, dropping to a knee before her. A sense of relief washed over him as he observed the returning vibrancy in her complexion. "Looks like you're getting better," he murmured to himself with a sigh, carefully lifting her onto his shoulders, and proceeding to resume his march forward.

In intervals of around five to six hours, Orion would carefully lay Saria down and set about clearing away the encroaching Vylkr Vines. Though this dual task helped him replenish his stamina and Vylkr energy, what interested him during these moments of rest was that each time he placed Saria on the ground, her skin seemed to regain a hint of its natural radiance.

He noticed the subtle transformation in the shades of blue and crimson that covered her arms and legs, which provided him with a glimmer of hope.

Of course, he couldn't begin to drag her from the ground because of this, so the best that he could do was prolong the amount of time that he rested, which was helpful, but at the same time detrimental to their journey forward.

Also, after delving deeper into the cave for another eight hours without finding any signs of an exit, he began to notice something else, which was that although he was recovering, his hunger for the Vylkr vines had also increased a lot.

He hadn't eaten anything for a while now, so he thought that it was understandable as the Vylkr vines were the only thing that he could use to nourish his body at the moment.

However, also understanding that he was just an inch away from falling under the warrior's addiction, Orion held back a little to protect his mind and body.

Nonetheless, it was only a matter of time before he realized that he had failed.

The sensation was both powerful and intoxicating, the Vylkr energy coursing through him in a satisfying torrent. However, the thrill soon gave way to agony as the tide turned against him. The Vylkr vines, once his source of sustenance, now threatened to overpower the strange energy within him and destroy him.

The collision of these forces wracked him with pain, contorting his body and triggering uncontrollable spasms that racked his frame.

Amidst this torment, his throat constricted, and he choked on the very vines he'd been consuming. "COUGH! COUGH!" The coughing grew deeper, becoming more intense until Orion forcefully coughed out the Vylkr Vine with a hefty retch. Wiping his mouth with trembling hands, he battled the urge to turn back and rush to Saria's side, planning to hoist her onto his shoulders and continue onwards.

However, he couldn't stop his hand that extended involuntarily, reaching for the Vylkr vines.

"Huhh"

Orion's eyes widened in astonishment as he witnessed the Vylkr vines retracting. For the first time in his life, he found himself doing the opposite of running away or wanting their destruction. He was now consumed by an irresistible urge to capture the retreating Vylkr vines, his hands reaching out to grasp them even as they slipped between the cracks in the walls.

Suddenly, the Vylkr vines became the hunted, and he the hunter. His actions mirrored those of a snake, as he wriggled his hands through the narrow openings, desperation driving him to scratch at the walls to fulfil the addiction that had taken control.

Orion didn't stop until bruises formed around his arm, attempting to force it into the hole. Even then, he didn't concede, using his other arm.

But then, a faint glow emerged, piercing the shadows and infusing the darkness with light. The source was the end of the passage. As Orion noticed the glow emanating from the passage's end, he gritted his teeth, biting his tongue as he stood on his feet to face whatever was approaching their direction.

From the tree nymphs to the Vylkr vines, and even including the village itself, the mysterious caravans, and the beast he had encountered with Stronghold Leader Drakar, Orion had come to realize that this world held numerous enigmas he hadn't yet uncovered.

When the glow at the end of the passage intensified, Orion reacted and capitalized on the element of surprise and the remaining shroud of darkness, propelling himself forward.

After all, whatever was capable of making the Vylkr Vines retreat must be much more capable and more formidable than it was. A four-star Vylkr Vine, a five-star Vylkr vine, or perhaps even a six-star Vylkr vine, Orion didn't know what it was. Therefore, in order to safeguard Saria, the last thing he wanted was a confrontation playing out in her presence.

As such, within the ever-widening expanse of light that slowly brightened up their position, they charged forward - both man and sword.

Blind to what awaited him on the other side, Orion activated his gift, infusing his cutlass with an immense, lightning-forged energy that blazed, seared, and tore through the walls.

Emerging on the brink of the overwhelming brilliance, he found himself instantaneously blinded by its intense radiance. Squinting and shielding his eyes, he struggled to discern the identity of his opponent, yet his grip remained steady, guided by his instincts to stri—

"BOOOM!!!" Orion was sent soaring upward, performing an unintended somersault over the blinding radiance.

## Chapter 352 The Resident God

He felt his lightning retracting into his body as he landed on the ground with a sharp "pop," echoing from his fractured shoulder.

Gradually recovering his footing, he groaned in agony, "UaaHH!" Rising despite the pain, Orion hurried to Saria's side, fearing the assailant was still on the attack.

His worst fears appeared to be validated when he noticed a presence halting near Saria. Looking closer, he was forced to kneel due to the sheer brightness, pain, and stress. He caught sight of a blinding, whitish, flame-like wisp suspended in mid-air.

The wisp advanced once more, prompting Orion to sigh in relief as he observed it moving away from Saria's location. "Thank goodness," he muttered, standing up again, only to pause as the wisp shifted, reversing its course to confront her once more.

"NOO!!" Orion's scream reverberated. Although he was unaware of what it was going to do or what he was looking at, his legs surged forward as he approached it. But he was suddenly blown back as though repelled by an invisible wall.

Feeling his eyes growing weaker by the moment, Orion watched as all the light that was spread around the narrow cavern withdrew back towards it and Saria, causing the Vylkr Vines to emerge from their cracks.

This led him to activate his gift once more, forging it into a giant fist and throwing it, only to watch helplessly as the lightning-forged fist scattered into fragments of lightning strokes, disappearing into the air. He could only helplessly watch the scene unfold.

"I.. Said... NO!" Orion's voice echoed with an unexpected strength and vitality as he deactivated his gift. He controlled the raging Vylkr energy in his body, guiding it to seep into every corner of his flesh and bones.

Rising from the ground, it was as if the energy itself was lending him support. Blackish strands of Vylkr energy erupted from his body and began to float upwards, as though borne aloft by an invisible breeze. His eyes shone with a blackish hue as he charged forward.

"Booom!!"

He activated his gift once more in this form, and with a resounding "Crackle!" he forged an electric blade to slice through the invisible barrier that held him back. However, just as Orion was about to strike the barrier, his body immediately froze in place.

In the next moment, he found himself hovering above the ground, the flame-like wisps that had left Saria now faced him.

Feeling his body gradually being torn apart from the inside out, Orion became painfully aware of the forceful ignorance regarding the repercussions of using the Vylkr Warrior's form.

He felt his skin splitting apart, and a searing, mind-numbing headache overwhelmed him, forcing him to open his mouth and scream out in agony.

"AHHHHHHH-----"

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"Will you stop screaming? You're beginning to make me want to pluck my ears out... at least if I still had one," a strange voice interjected, cutting through Orion's chaotic thoughts.

He snapped his eyes open and looked around, only to discover that he was in a pitch-black, confined space with no sense of up or down, or even walls.

He searched around for the source of the voice, and suddenly, Orion snapped his head sideways, his gaze darting as he continued to look around. He began to sense that he was being held somewhere and that somehow resembled the way he felt when the Village Chieftess used her gift on him.

'Even the injuries are gone,' Orion thought as he examined his body, then he shifted his attention to his tulga, which looked as new as the first time it was sewn. Casting another glance around, Orion parted his lips and screamed "Who are you?"

"It seems you've quieted down," the voice replied unhesitatingly. It sounded like a strange mixture of an arrogant, emotionless tone and vibrating frequencies that seemed to reverberate through his body.

"Strange... Strange indeed..." the voice muttered again, as though deep in thought.

Orion then felt as if a thousand eyes were staring at him, piercing through the darkness. The voice continued, asking, "Who are you?".

Orion's brows furrowed in response to his question, an immediate urge to retort welling up within him since he had asked the question first. However, he quickly regained his composure, reminding himself that Saria was not present.

This once again led him to the realization that his current experience was no different from when the Village Chieftess had used her gift on him. Which meant that his actual body wasn't here; instead, it was a projection, with his true self outside with Saria and that mysterious entity.

Connecting the dots, Orion's mind started to race, weaving together a believable lie. After all, the worst-case scenario was that his entire physical body was trapped in an alternate space, implying that this entity possessed far greater power than he had ever imagined.

"I am Silvester. I'm trying to reunite with my family after our uncle suddenly attacked us and threw us down the mountain. He wanted to see us die slowly for his own satisfaction," he lied, smoothly. The silence of the darkness lingered before suddenly erupting around him.

"LIIIIIEEESSS!!!" The Voice's response boomed, and a dim light bathed the surroundings as the landscape brightened. Before Orion stood the wispy, burning flame-like entity, its flames now burning brighter than before. Regardless, he could still observe it clearly.

"I'll ask you again, and this time, tell the truth," the Voice's command resonated. Orion nodded, his eyes fixed on the pulsating flame that seemed to have a heartbeat as it spoke, "Where do you come from?"

"Down the mountains," Orion responded almost immediately, offering a vague reply. He didn't wish to reveal the truth or tell a lie, especially since he still didn't know the identity of the person he was conversing with. He had no intention of endangering his wives, the village, or risking his own life.

"HMMMM!!" The flame resonated in silence, its flickering dance resembling a probing gaze scanning his entire being. Then, reappearing before him, the flame continued, "And by the looks of you, you're still quite young. Boy, do you have any idea who I am?"

## Chapter 353 The Invasion

Still struggling to understand his current situation, Orion's gaze remained fixed on the concentrated flame. The blaze grew brighter, a radiance that managed to increase without blinding his eyes. Orion shook his head slowly and responded, "No. I'm sorry, but I don't have any knowledge of what or who you are. If we've intruded, please know that we'll quickly retreat the way we came."

Silence once again reigned, heavy and contemplative, before the flame's voice crackled back to life. "As if I would permit that," its words surged with increasing severity. The entity's tone shifted, growing more intense, "And why in my name would I allow that monster to escape my presence?"

There were many things that Orion had heard; however, his mind focused on one particular thing - him calling Saria a monster.

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Observing intently, I remained fixated on the flickering white flame as it seemed to contemplate its words before adding, "But, I could entertain the idea if you were to take me out of here as well."

I blinked, clearly caught off guard by its words.

As though noticing my expression, the white flame continued, "I believe you should carefully consider it. After all, having a god on your side should grant you an edge out there, shouldn't it?"

"God," My eyes widened in disbelief, the word escaping my lips almost involuntarily, "You're a god."

"Of course, I am," the Flame responded, its demeanour oddly serene as its flickering ceased. "How many years have slipped by since the invasion?" it asked. "Two thousand, three thousand, eight thousand, perhaps even sixty thousand?"

Shaking my head, I couldn't help but reply, "I'm sorry, but I have no idea what you're referring to."

Silence!

"I see..." The Flame's tone shifted to a tinge of disappointment as if it had expected a different response. "I see," it repeated, now chuckling as if finding irony in my lack of knowledge.

"No wonder you're involved with and even shielding a monster. You truly have no clue," its voice adopted a solemn tone, and somehow I couldn't help but feel like it was scrutinizing my being, from my tulga to every inch of my body. It continued, "However, I suppose it's no surprise, given your lack of awareness about history. It seems that our efforts were in vain."

'Failed,' I thought. At this point, the more it spoke, the more the conversation grew increasingly confusing, to the extent that I honestly had no idea what it was talking about or the direction it was heading towards.

"Hah! You can't even grasp the meaning of my words," the flame said with a scoff, a short laugh escaping its lips. "Your naivety, boy... it infuriates me." The flame's form began to swell, expanding until it consumed the darkness around me with its blazing, whitish light.

"Boy, before we proceed," the flame's voice resonated, "would you like to uncover the truth? The truth about the past..."

Listening to its words, I couldn't help but internally gulp, at least if it was possible in my current state. Admittedly, my curiosity about this world had grown, especially after hearing Stronghold Leader Drakar's reasons for leaving the Village.

However, considering the identity of the being I was currently conversing with, caution was my natural response to any offer it made.

Still, I couldn't help but nod my head in agreement. "Yes," I responded.



After all, who knew when I'd stumble upon another opportunity like this—a chance to unravel the mysteries of the world around me? It was uncertain if such an opportunity would arise again.

Plus, it appeared that I was going to remain in this place for a while, so I might as well play along.

"Very well," the flame echoed, and its radiance spread across the encompassing darkness. Its brightness began to enshroud everything, blinding me temporarily as the light penetrated my eyes, rendering me sightless. Then, as if prompted by an unseen cue, the voice returned, "...you can open your eyes now."

And so I did.

I opened my eyes, pondering what had changed. However, the moment I took in the current view in front of me, my mouth hung open.

"What you are witnessing, boy, is a time before the invasion... a time before it all started... and the reason for my anger behind your naivety?"

Stunned, I struggled to find the right words. The view stretched out before me showcased towering structures, ranging from six to eight stories high and even reaching as high as forty stories.

These were not the primitive homes I had known but advanced skyscrapers housing machines, fueled by complex combinations of mechanical and electrical mechanisms.

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Holding his breath, Orion absorbed the staggering sight before him, fully aware that he must conceal any hint of understanding.

He needed to maintain the facade of an ignorant boy, clueless about the events unfolding around him. Allowing his curiosity to surface, he asked, "Where are we?"

"..... a day just before the invasion," the white flame replied. In an instant, a portion of its luminous form flickered, and the landscape before Orion underwent a dramatic transformation.

"Though I can't determine the exact span of years or millennia that have passed, in the year 3000 of Juan, gateways—structures resembling bridges between space and time—manifested across the world," White Flame's voice resonated. As it spoke, the vision before Orion grew clearer, revealing scenes of shadowy, inky structures emerging in various locations.

The perspective shifted from one to another, even showing a gateway hovering above an ocean.

"At first, their nature, origins, and purpose puzzled everyone," White Flame went on. "But then, unexpectedly, beings—creatures and beasts—appeared. Some were gigantic, reminiscent of ancient majestic creatures, and others were entirely new, beyond any previous description. Yet, they all shared something—destruction. They laid waste and killed, taking over the areas around the gateways as their own."

"They acted as conquerors, obliterating everything in their path as if reclaiming their rightful dominion. The governments and the people were slow to react due to the abruptness of the assault and the fact that these invaders didn't utilise the technologies native to the world they invaded. Instead, they wielded bows, swords, armours, and... magic."

"But that wasn't all," added White Flame. "Amidst the chaos of the invasion, an astonishing phenomenon emerged. Men and women, young and old alike, experienced a profound awakening, performing extraordinary feats of magic," it articulated, and Orion's jaw felt as if it were hanging by a thread, threatening to tumble from his mouth in response to the astonishing revelation.

#### Chapter 354 The Invasion (2)

He managed to quell his disbelief and swallow a gulp of saliva, all the while the White Flame's narrative carried forward, "As these occurrences burgeoned worldwide, humanity perceived it as an opportunity—a chance to strike back, to reclaim the lands that had been wrested from their grasp. And strike.... they did."

Orion saw men whose trousers shredded as they morphed into beastly forms, and witnessed others conjuring ice seemingly out of thin air, flames dancing at their command, steel bending to their will.

Among them were those whose skin seemed to transmute, becoming as solid as stone. Orion was struck by a sudden realization as the true reason behind his awakened gift began to dawn on him.

Regardless, this newfound understanding only raised further questions. 'This doesn't add up,' he mused, recalling his own awakening experience in detail. His recollection painted a different picture

– plucking an immaterial fruit from a tree that appeared almost unearthly, emerging from beneath a giant sundial.

This scene contrasted with what he now witnessed, where individuals seemed to awaken their powers almost effortlessly moments after the start of the invasion.

Orion realized that if he had been more interested in movies or fantasy novels, he might have encountered scenarios like this before.

Unfortunately, all he knew how to do was work and enjoy the money he had earned, so he didn't exactly pay much attention to them.

Absorbing its words, Orion watched as the scene flickered and changed entirely to humans fighting against these creatures. Men, women, children, and even the elderly participated in the battle.

"We caught them off guard, reclaiming our territories. They were eventually forced to retreat into the very gateways they emerged from. Although some lands remained beyond our grasp, the ones we reclaimed outnumbered the losses," White Flame spoke confidently.

Just as it was about to divulge more, a pressing question surged within Orion's mind, and he interjected, "You keep mentioning 'we.' You claim to be a god, so didn't you possess the power to prevent all this? Or are you also...?" His words trailed off, silenced by the volatile flickering of the flame, causing him to swallow his unfinished question.

If the White Flame had a face, it would have appeared to sport a wry smile right now. However, a moment later, the White Flame continued, "Yes, you're correct. With the abilities I held at that time, I could have halted them. Yet, I was nothing more than a general at that point, watching as battalions of troops dwindled from thousands to mere hundreds."

The scene before them shifted, and suddenly, Orion found himself amidst men armed with levitating tanks and guns that fired thick laser beams. They were facing off against a horde of centaurs, each clad in thick, heavy armour, wielding swords and bows of immense proportions.

Orion found himself thrust into the heart of the battlefield, a front-row seat to the chaos and the clash of beams and arrows whizzing right through him.

But in the blink of an eye, the scene shifted, revealing an entirely new kind of conflict with the same army now engaging an entirely different breed of creatures

The tanks bore the scars of previous battles, and the soldiers' dirtied uniforms indicated they had pressed on relentlessly, victory after victory, leaving only their dwindling numbers as the toll of their conquest.

Among the tumult, Orion's attention was seized by the figure of a man who seemed to be a constant presence in every scene. In certain instances, he appeared with the scars of severe injuries from their previous battles, standing at the forefront; in others, he kept a safe distance, launching attacks from a vantage point.

"As you can see, each battle ended in our favour, these creatures proved no match against the hail of plasma ammo raining down on them. Yet, with each triumph, our ranks dwindled significantly until we were left with just a solitary battalion of a thousand men," White Flame unexpectedly sighed, a tinge of weariness in its voice, "I'm sure this concept is foreign to you."

It then continued, "Despite this, the gateways remained open, persistently spewing forth more of them. Our machines and weapons faltered, and it wasn't until later that we realized, for inexplicable reasons, piece by piece, no matter their complexity or location, that our machinery was failing progressively. We couldn't even call upon ordinary men for help, as they were powerless in the face of it all. At least, that was before their gifts awoke... before mine awakened too..."

Orion observed as the man he deduced was the White Flame conjured several illusions of himself and those around him, leading a charge with fewer than a hundred men, yet appearing to be an army of over a thousand.

'Brilliant,' Orion thought. Although it was a risky move, it was still amazing in its own right.

Observing Orion as he gazed upon the reflections of his past, White Flame couldn't help but imagine a wry smile gracing its fiery form, if it were capable of such an expression.

"However," White Flame continued, "our leaders weren't about to lose their power. They perceived the threat to their authority and the world's fragile state. So, they unleashed the full might of their arsenal in retaliation that shook the very foundations of the world. And they succeeded....."

"....almost." White Flame's voice held a solemn weight, a momentary hesitation that added a touch of gravity to its words. Then it continued, "You see, in a world driven by logic and reason, the

government would have rallied those with these newfound abilities, enlisting them to stand against the invaders. Survival, common sense, and shared interests should have united us against the threat that threatened all of our lives and the world we cherished."

".....In a sane world, power would have shifted to those who proved their strength, though veiled in the guise of order..... In a sane world, we would have triumphed, driving the invaders back, and persistently pursuing them even within their own realm. But that morning, when you awaken to the sight of a dragon effortlessly tearing a plasma cannon from your tank... that was not... a sane world."

### Chapter 355 The Invasion (3)

"...And in a world that's far from sane, where the unimaginable is now wielded and known by all, what do you expect when magic, 'an inexplicable beauty so profound it defies explanation,' encounters science, 'a man's quest for discovery that seeks answers to all and questions everything,' woven together by the hands of individuals driven by their urge for survival and, selflessly, for protection, as they stand at the edge of extinction, fueled by their selfish desire to dominate?"

By now, Orion could sense that the White Flame's attention had shifted away from him. It felt as if he was conversing with himself, recounting and reliving past events.

Despite this, Orion chose to remain attentive, his face reflecting bewilderment. He didn't want to reveal that he understood the White Flame's lesson, while still remaining vigilant, absorbing every word. The information was too significant to overlook, even for a moment.

If this had been recounted to him while he was in his physical body, he might have slumped to the ground, exhausted and with a pulsating headache, needing to sit and absorb the weight of White Flame's words.

Fortunately, the circumstances spared him that ordeal.

"While I had some knowledge of the event," White Flame admitted, "I hadn't been given the complete details..."

Nonetheless, Orion found himself transfixed as the scene shifted, revealing the man engaged in conversation with a group of individuals donning the same military attire as him.

Although his understanding of the military was limited, the stars on their shoulder pads hinted at varying ranks, some clearly superior to his own, while others were fellow comrades.

Soon, the scene shifted again, depicting the same man lying on a levitating table, with numerous wide tubes invading his mouth, ears, and even his eyes. It seemed to be some kind of experiment. From the cues Orion picked up, it certainly didn't appear to be good.

"So, just picture my ordeal when I found myself bound to that table, ensnared by tubes and wires that seemed to stretch my very consciousness. They injected unknown concoctions into me, driving me to wield my gift incessantly until I could flawlessly weave illusions into reality and connect these two boundaries seamlessly..." White Flame's voice temporarily wavered, as though his next words were being chosen with care.

Then, the echo of a deep sigh enveloped their surroundings before he continued, "I was engineered into a god of sorts. A manmade god... quite literally."

Shaking his head immediately, he said, "Regardless of whether I was created by man or not, I knew within myself that I had become a god, not because someone told me so, but because I could feel it."

In a quick shift of perspective, Orion found himself no longer observing from above, but immersed within the scene itself. His attention was drawn back to the levitating table as the tubes that had been connected to the man's eyes were lifted away as if guided by an unknown force.

The remaining tubes followed suit, suspended in mid-air before descending to the ground.

He continued to watch as the man's eyes began to take shape, shifting through various irises and pupils as if mending themselves and seeking a perfect match.

Suddenly, they paused, as if having made a decision.

He then parted his lips. "Let there be darkness..." Omnipotence declared. And in the blink of an eye, Orion witnessed the world around them being veiled and tainted with mind-numbing darkness. Then, as if light itself had been temporarily blinded, a ray of brilliance shone, enveloping everything and dispelling the darkness.

Orion's throat tightened in response to the astonishing display before him.

"After that," White Flame continued, "I decided to test the limits of what else I could do." Orion's eyebrows furrowed as he pondered what other feats this man could perform.

His question was quickly answered when he witnessed the figure rise from the examination table, still dressed in his hospital gown. In the blink of an eye, the man materialized before one of the gateways.

Orion's eyes widened in astonishment as he observed the chaotic battlefield freeze before him. The ongoing clash between the goblin-like invaders and the humans armed with an array of weapons and abilities abruptly halted, as though they had all been caught in a trance.

Suddenly, the goblins turned on one another, their once coordinated attack devolving into a brutal internal struggle. Spears and arrows were turned against their own kind, tearing through flesh and severing alliances.

In the end, only a handful of goblins remained, weakly clutching their weapons, before they were quickly overwhelmed and eradicated by the humans on the opposing side.

"In order to control the new brand of chaos that had erupted, to quell the ceaseless tide of invaders pouring forth, to prevent the delicate balance that held our society together from spiralling into collapse, I stepped into the gateway..." White Flame's sighed once more for what seemed like the umpteenth time, and continued, "While some of my memories remain inaccessible, and the circumstances that trapped me here still puzzle me, one unforgettable memory remains."

"As I stepped through that portal, my ears were assailed by anguished screams that were far from human. And when I emerged, I carried Covenant in my hands, the gateway sealing shut behind me."

Orion's gaze remained absorbed as the scene before him shifted once again, revealing the man emerging from the gateway, now dressed in a ragged hospital gown, yet brandishing an enormous crimson-coloured greatsword that spanned four meters (13 feet). Its hilt was adorned with a polished bloodred jewel at its centre.

The imagery faded, leaving Orion once more enveloped in the obsidian void, only the gentle flicker of White Flame illuminating the space ahead.

"Having seen all of this," White Flame's voice resonated, "I hope you now understand why I'm driven to escape this confinement. I must find whoever imprisoned me here, and stole away my memories."

Orion nodded slowly. Despite the lingering possibility that he could question everything the White Flame had conveyed and revealed, given the chance that it might be lying or fabricating everything, as a transmigrator who had just received answers to some of his lingering questions, Orion found himself free from the need to doubt the White Flame's claims.

Chapter 356 The Mountain Inhabitants

"Good... Good...." White Flame's voice held a tone of satisfaction. "Now that we've reached an understanding, I shall impart the history of the world before our downfall, though some of it may seem irrelevant for now, knowledge is always a valuable asset."

"Furthermore, if you have awakened your gift, I will guide you in harnessing its full potential," he continued, "However, to leave this mountain, I need a body, and that monster beside you appears to be a fitting candidate."

Orion's eyes widened in disbelief, and he vigorously shook his head in response to White Flame's proposal. "I don't think that would be possible," he retorted without hesitation.

Silence!!

Soon after, White Flame's voice echoed once again, its tone solemn. "And why is that?"

Witnessing the White Flame's violent flickering, Orion released an exasperated sigh before speaking, "I'm not certain of how much time has passed since you've been in here, but the world has evolved significantly since then. And..."

His sentence was cut short as the White Flame's intensity fluctuated, causing interruptions. It began to expand and contract, its voice breaking as it continued, "Are you suggesting that after revealing all this, you won't be able to..."

Orion strained to hear amid the cracking voice, "...understand the magnitude of devastation and chaos they've br..."



The world around him began to blur, his head spinning from the White Flame's words, and darkness crept into his vision as if he were slipping into unconsciousness.

"GET HIM OUT OF HERE!" A soft, feminine voice suddenly echoed in his ears, as he felt his body being pulled back by a pair of cold, smooth arms.

Orion heard another voice, a loud, firm, masculine one say, "HOW ABOUT THE OTHER ONE?"

"NO TIME!!" The other voice responded.

Just as he was about to utter a word, his eyes fluttered open, causing the unknown person dragging him to stop speaking as their eyes met.

Orion couldn't even begin to describe what he was witnessing. From her smooth skin to her plump cheeks and exquisitely full lips, there was one feature that captured Orion's attention—the girl's hair.

She possessed an exceptionally long and glossy translucent mane that resembled silk, with each strand appearing as thick as a loc of hair, cascading down her back even though it seemed to be gathered into a ponytail.

"Hey, are you alright? Where do you come from?" the girl asked, tilting her head further downwards from behind him. As he gazed at her from an upside-down perspective, he took in her eyes, which mirrored the same hue as her hair, showcasing a white translucent iris that appeared to reflect his image, while a bright grey pupil rested at the centre.

Attempting to regain his bearings amidst the lingering headache, Orion was cut off from responding as another voice chimed in, "Princess, I will carry him!" Without warning, strong hands hoisted him onto a sturdy shoulder.

While scanning his surroundings, Orion's gaze froze as he caught a glimpse of the White Flame following closely.

However, it wasn't the presence of the White Flame that held him transfixed, but the eerie glow it emitted. Through that light, he could see Saria's form, unconscious against the wall, vulnerable to the Vylkr vines that stealthily crept through the cracks toward her.

Allowing the strange energy to surge through him, Orion's muscles tensed as he instinctively activated his gift at that very moment.

Instantly, his body abruptly propelled off the person's shoulder, streaking through the air with crackling lightning dancing around his outstretched hands. Arcs of electricity seared the walls and ground as he controlled the raging Vylkr energy within him.

Just as he was about to collide with the White Flame, a colossal shield forged from his lightning, towering two meters (6.6ft) in height, materialized before him, forming a protective barrier.

"BOOOM!!!" The shield shattered into a torrent of lightning as the surge of impact launched him upwards, soaring over the flickering form of the White Flame.

Predicting the repercussions from their previous encounter, Orion's reflexes kicked in once more. He quickly activated his gift again, conjuring a colossal hand wreathed in lightning this time around.

"Bam!!" His colossal electric hand materialized just in time to cushion his landing, preventing a harsh impact. Capitalizing on this momentary pause, Orion executed an agile backflip mid-air, landing with precision in front of Saria's unconscious form. Gently hoisting her tall figure onto his shoulder, he surveyed his surroundings.

Spotting his cutlass within arm's reach, he snatched it up and immediately enveloped the blade in crackling lightning.

With every swing, the electrified weapon cleaved through the Vylkr vines, sizzling and slicing them. The once-thriving foliage now lay defeated on the ground, tendrils of smoke curling from their lifeless plant fibres.

Meanwhile, on the other side, the man who had intervened to save Orion couldn't shake the sensation of his scorched back where Orion's gift had torched while he leapt forward to protect Saria. "Wow!" he exclaimed, caught up in awe as he witnessed Orion's agile manoeuvre, soaring over the White Flame with amazing finesse.

"Hey! When we get back, I will personally cover the cost of your treatment. For now, let's make sure we can get them out of here quickly," the young girl who stood close to him said, "he seems angrier than usual today."

The young man let out a sigh, instantly nodding in agreement. After all, he had been the one who insisted on rescuing them. "Alright, princess," he replied, his voice tinged with determination.

He activated his power, causing his clothing—a light blue shirt and matching pants—to transform.

The fabric hardened, assuming a glass-like texture. Despite its rigid appearance, it retained enough flexibility for the young man to move swiftly. He raced forward, stretching out both of his hands to conjure a wall resembling glass. This barrier intercepted the White Flame's advance, holding it at bay as he swiftly reached Orion's side.

"We will get you out of here as quickly as we can," the young man said.

#### Chapter 357 The Mountain Inhabitants (2)

Before long, the girl approached as well, executing the same gestures as the young man had. When she extended her hands, a wall of translucent crystal emerged, halting the advance of the White Flame.

Now, the two of them stood before Orion as a protective barrier.

As he observed the duo, Orion felt an immediate urge to ask about their identities and origins, noting their distinct and peculiar hair, unnatural skin tone, and eyes.

However, he refrained from posing the question, realizing that they likely harboured similar curiosity, given that the girl had already broached that topic with him.

"Come on, let's go!" the princess instructed, at least that's what Orion had heard the young man call her. Following closely behind the girl and the boy, with Saria still draped over his shoulder, the sound of glass and crystal shattering echoed behind him, signifying that the White Flame had broken through the barrier. Orion quickened his pace.

The trio sprinted, navigating through various corners and passages, some of which Orion hadn't traversed before. They kept up this frantic pace for another thirty minutes until they arrived at an apparent dead end.

Gazing at the sizable boulder obstructing their path, Orion watched as the two of them exerted their combined strength to roll it aside, revealing a narrow passage on the other side.

Following their gestures, Orion carefully lowered Saria and cradled her in his arms before crouching down and entering the passage.

Once he stepped through, he sensed the large stone door rolling back into place behind him, effectively sealing the exit.

In the dim illumination offered by the wall crystals, Orion observed the young man's clothing shift from the hardened glass-like state to a light blue shirt and trousers, while the girl's attire transformed into a thin yellow gown extending just above her knees, shimmering and emitting a soft glow. Although he couldn't fully take in the details, he could discern that she had a striking dick-erecting figure just by glimpsing at her plump thighs that peeked out from beneath her raised dress.

With his curiosity reaching a tipping point, Orion found himself unable to contain his questions any longer. He was on the verge of asking where they were headed when the girl's voice abruptly cut through the air, announcing, "We have arrived."

The three of them then carefully emerged from the narrow passage, and Orion's eyes widened as he observed the stone entrance smoothly opening and closing on its own.

Looking at the other end of the cave wall, Orion couldn't see it because of the various stone houses that surrounded the area, some were large, others small, and various others were connected to the walls, instead of the ground, looking like a multistory building that had been embedded in the cave walls, while up above, various kind of crystals shined brightly providing them with light as unsurprisingly lit up the whole area.

The girl suddenly turned her gaze toward Orion and extended her hands forward with a gesture.

Initially confused by her actions, he soon understood her intentions when her hands began to emanate a brilliant yellow light.

In a moment of realization, Orion watched as a piece of cloth started materializing in her hands, taking on a distinct texture. "Here, take this," she offered, handing the cloth over to him. "Use it to cover yourself, especially your hair. We don't want to draw any attention as we make our way back to the castle," she added, her eyes flickering to the unconscious form of Saria in his arms. "Make sure she's not visible either."

Orion nodded quietly, sensing her relief that he understood her instructions.

He observed as the girl draped another piece of yellow cloth over her own form, shrouding herself completely. With a signal, she urged him to follow, accompanied by the young man standing beside her.

They cautiously descended the narrow path together, hugging the side of the wall to avoid any missteps.

Their footsteps echoed in the dimly lit passage as they ventured onward. Soon enough, they reached a tunnel-like path that seemed to narrow down with walls closing in from both sides.

Advancing through this constriction, they eventually came to yet another dead end. However, this time, the path was guarded by two men with distinct hair similar to the girl and the boy.

Unlike the girl's neatly tied hair, the guards had shorter hairstyles, with one of them letting his hair flow freely. Orion also noticed that despite the colour difference, their clothes bore a resemblance to the rough glass-like texture of the young man's attire when they had faced off against the White Flame.

This led him to deduce that this might be a shared ability among them, as he observed the crystalline spears held by the guards and the swords tied at their waists.

The two guards, noticing the arrival of their princess, glanced briefly at Orion before tapping their crystal spears against the ground. In response, the passage before them began to transform. The stone pathway ascended, revealing one of the stony passages that led to their hidden underground kingdom.

As the group prepared to proceed through the stony doorway, one of the guards, dressed in red attire with tousled hair and appearing to be in his early twenties, spoke firmly, "Princess Crystalia, we must inform you that if any matter arises from the King or Queen, you are responsible for addressing it, as the guards are unaware of your departure and escape routes."

The guard directed a stern gaze at the young man beside the princess. He continued, "You were the only one privy to this information and still chose to accompany her in this recklessness."

"Don't worry, I won't involve you two if any problems arise," Princess Crystalia spoke, a frown creasing her face.

With a flicker of a warning glance, the guard returned to his guarded stance, concluding with, "You may pass."

She then scoffed at the pair before striding through the passage, gesturing for the rest of the group to follow as they entered the city. "As long as you keep quiet and don't speak out, we shouldn't encounter any issues either," she added, as she and the group stepped into the city.

#### Chapter 358 The Prismations

Meanwhile, the two guards exchanged deep sighs. They tapped their crystal spears on the ground, causing the stone slab to descend once again and seal the entrance shut behind them.

"As you've probably heard, I'm Crystalia. So, what should I call you?" Princess Crystalia asked, her gaze focused on the unfamiliar man wrapped in her crystal-imbued cloth, cradling a tall, unconscious woman in his arms. With just one glance, she could easily gauge the woman's impressive height.

"I'm Orion," he responded straightforwardly, his gaze shifting from the guards stationed by the other entrance to Princess Crystalia. Her face remained concealed behind the peculiar textured cloth, aided by the dimness of their subterranean surroundings. The same type of covering hid him and Saria.

Though he could have made a false identity, he found it unnecessary in this situation.

After all, they had just saved him, and it seemed more prudent to establish a positive rapport from the outset.

So, despite maintaining his guarded stance, much like he had with the White Flame, he saw the potential benefits of starting on the right foot with them.

"Orion," Princess Crystalia repeated, nodding her head in a way that suggested she was committing his name to memory.

She then gestured toward the young man standing beside her and introduced, "And this is Flintor. He's the one who proposed the idea of rescuing you while we were out practising, so you can thank him, not me."

Flintor raised his hand, a faint smile gracing his features as he waved it dismissively in response. "Don't worry about it," he said with a reassuring tone.

"The fact that you were attacked by White Flame and ended up injured shows that we're on the same side." His gaze shifted forward as they moved through various tunnels, eventually emerging into an open space within the ground.

It was heavily guarded yet bustling with people engaged in their daily routines.

Among them, Orion noticed individuals of all ages, heights, and appearances, all with the same unnatural smooth skin that seemed to glow and unique hair like Princess Crystalia and Flintor, though in a spectrum of colours.

Interestingly enough, Orion could even spot a few individuals with the same skin colour he had seen like the tree nymphs, albeit without the two distinct shades.

Their attire appeared relatively uniform, yet unique in colors and designs.

Moreover, casting his gaze further down the path, Orion stumbled upon another intriguing sight. As they strolled along what appeared to be streets, or at least resembled them, he observed a myriad of stone-built stores lining their path.

Nestled among these structures were stone homes, their interiors slightly visible through open windows that revealed glimpses of families within.

Suddenly aware that he had momentarily lost focus on their conversation, Orion quickly redirected his attention to Flintor and managed, "Of course, I understand," in response.

Flintor, who had been keeping a watchful eye on him to make sure he didn't get lost or fall behind, nodded slowly with a smile. "Stay close so that you won't get lost," he advised, as they ventured deeper into the bustling market section.

Then, Flintor turned his head towards Orion, noticing that he seemed eager to say something. Orion's gaze remained fixed on the two figures ahead, his curiosity overwhelming him. "What..... Who are all of you? Where do you come from?" he asked.

When he had begun his descent down the mountain, he had expected many things: navigating through dimly lit caves, contending with the Vylkr vines, dying or making even it down the mountain hopefully. Yet, encountering a mysterious imprisoned being claiming to be god with amnesia, who proceeded to show him a vision of the world from centuries or perhaps millennia past, and stumbling upon an underground community, all in a matter of hours was definitely not on his list of expectations.

However, what Orion was most curious about, beyond the revelations and encounters he had already faced, was how was it possible that their paths had never crossed until now.

He wondered if their cultures and worldviews aligned in any way—perhaps in how they approached matters like relationships and sex.

Were they more informed or as uninformed as his fellow villagers?

Princess Crystalia unexpectedly halted and turned to face Orion, causing him to come to a stop as well. He gazed at her, his eyes catching hints of her features through the interplay of faint silver, orange, and other hues of light that radiated from the vast crystals suspended from the subterranean ceiling.

"When we arrive at the castle, I will personally address all of your questions and provide you with all the information you need," Princess Crystalia said with a slight smile. "Also, my father and his council will likely have some questions as well." She continued walking, with the rest of the group following her.

Her words reached Orion's ears once again, "So, let's make our way back to the castle as soon as possible to gain a better understanding of what is happening."

Orion nodded slowly, then let out a deep sigh. He quickened his steps to avoid colliding with a passerby and hurried to catch up with the rest of the group.



"Furthermore, we are known as Prismerions, beings with a special connection to crystals. After our world was destroyed, we migrated to this world and settled down. However, our ancestral teachings tell us that we have been trapped here ever since. Despite this, our god Naka has granted us peace and paved the way for us to thrive and flourish in this world." Princess Crystalia suddenly added.

Orion's eyes widened at Princess Crystalia's words, causing him to momentarily lose his balance.

Luckily, his heightened senses allowed him to remain steady. "Naka," he repeated, unable to contain his shock.

Princess Crystalia gave a nod of agreement. "Yes," she replied thoughtfully. "And now, even though I'm still struggling to understand the situation or how you've ended up here, there's one thing that's certain." She glanced at Orion from the corner of her eye and continued, "...perhaps, Naka has decreed that it's time for us to leave this kingdom."

#### Chapter 359 The Prismerian Kingdom

"What course of action do you suggest, then?" King Brylon, the Fiftieth sovereign of the Prismerian kingdom, asked. His gaze swept downward from his majestic Crystal-forged throne, settling upon his council members.

They were seated in their respective positions around a long rectangular table, crafted from a fusion of stone and crystal, with an intricately carved stone base and a top covered by a fine layer of Crystal-forged material.

"I propose we wage an all-out war against it and eliminate the threat once and for all," declared Garnet Gemheart, leader of the Gemheart clan. He directed his intense gaze towards the assembled clan leaders seated beside and across from him, then shifted his attention to King Brylon.

"My king, the situation has reached a critical point. The once-thriving garden is now withering, the tree's life force is fading, and the garden itself diminishes year by year. If we continue down this path of inaction, we might as well start digging our own graves, given that you all seem more than willing to do so."

"Clan Leader Garnet, if you're so eager to plunge us into war, feel free to do so, but know that my clan will not be a part of it," retorted Maya Crystalforge.

Her gaze held a mixture of defiance and disappointment as she regarded the ambitious and often manipulative leader of the Gemheart clan.

She was well aware of his motives – the Gemstones in the garden were dwindling year after year, forcing clan members to compete fiercely for a chance at obtaining one. Yet, Maya recognized that the scarcity affected all five clans who shared the garden, and Garnet's single-minded proposition struck her as misguided.

So, the fact that he would go to any length and suggest such a thing was more than enough to make her frown in displeasure at his train of thoughts.

"I agree," King Brylon muttered, his gaze fixed squarely on Clan Leader Garnet, an inscrutable expression masking his thoughts. "If the Gemheart Clan believes it can take on the might of White Flame and simultaneously eradicate the vines plaguing our kingdom, then by all means, proceed."

"The kingdom will throw its full support behind you. In fact, I have no doubt that our people will rally alongside you, even contributing their own precious gemstones to aid your cause and ensure your success." His eyes narrowed as he studied Garnet, his tone laced with a subtle challenge. "So, Clan Leader Garnet, does the Gemheart Clan still wish to embark on this war, in honour of our kingdom?"

Garnet Gemheart clenched his teeth, his gaze shifting momentarily from Maya, the present seating leader of the Crystalforge Clan, before returning to King Brylon Crystalforge, the Clan head of the Crystalforge Clan.

Even though he might have considered using the perceived bias of the King and the current leader against him, given their shared clan affiliation, the disapproving glances from the other clan heads warned him that it was best to keep his words in check for now.

Still, he couldn't help but shake his head at the King's statement: "I believe that honour should be shared equally among all the clans, to prevent the perception that the Gemheart clan is monopolizing the glory," he said before continuing, "However, considering the growing strength of the Crystalforge clan and their increasing number of capable heirs and members, it would be fitting for the princess and her guards to take the lead in the war against White Flame, given their willingness to confront the threat."

Before Garnet could proceed, the armrest of the King's throne began to transform, numerous crystal spikes emerging from it, forming a protective circle around his arm instead of posing any harm.

Witnessing this, Garnet concealed a knowing smile within, observing as the spikes gradually extended towards his location.

"Forgive me if my words have incited any offence, King Brylon," he calmly spoke, carefully choosing his words, "What I intended to say is that this presents a prime opportunity for the Crystalforge Clan to improve the princess's reputation among the people of the kingdom..."

"Garnet!" A powerful yet composed female voice rang out beside King Brylon.

Garnet shifted his attention with a visible frown, his gaze locking onto the queen of the Prismerian kingdom. His eyes traced the ornate crystal tiara resting upon her long, radiant red hair before descending to meet her intense ruby-like irises and her stern expression.

"Clan Leader Garnet, I find it unwise to propose that a young girl should lead a war and shoulder the responsibility of liberating our kingdom from an ongoing threat that has plagued us for generations," she spoke, her voice unwavering. "Unless, of course, you also believe it appropriate for the current heir of the Gemheart Clan to face the same fate. In that case, as the Queen of the Prismerian kingdom, I hold the authority to make such decisions a reality."

Garnet Gemheart found himself rendered speechless the moment he was met with the intensity of the Queen's fierce scowl.

However, as her expression swiftly transformed into a calm demeanour, she began to gently soothe the King's anger by caressing his arm.

This intervention halted the crystal spikes, which had been inching closer to Garnet's neck, causing them to retract into the armrest of the crystal throne.

Watching this scene unfold, Garnet could sense the collective disappointment and exasperated sighs emanating from the other clan leaders, prompting him to bite back any further words.

At least, that was the case until...

"BAAMMM!!!"

The echoing sound of the door being forcefully flung open reverberated through the crystalline chamber. Rushing in was Princess Crystalia, the potential future Queen of the Prismerian Kingdom—although that prospect hinged on her triumphing over all odds against the other heirs from the clans for the throne.

She was accompanied by two others racing in behind her. One of these figures was immediately recognized as Flintor Crystalforge, the future head knight of the Crystalforge Clan, who followed behind her closely.

Though they tried to discern the identity of the second person accompanying the Princess, struggling with the sight of them carrying something small yet seemingly larger than their stature, the council members couldn't help but direct their gazes primarily toward Princess Crystalia.

After all, it was quite unusual for her to interrupt a crucial council meeting unless the matter was of utmost importance.

#### Chapter 360 The Prismerian Kingdom (2)

However, it wasn't the first time she had exhibited such behaviour, leaving them wondering whether this situation was truly worthy of their concern.

Garnet, however, couldn't help but suppress a smile, finding amusement in the situation. However, like the others, he maintained his composure, awaiting Princess Crystalia's explanation.

"Crystalia, what is the meaning of this?" King Brylon's voice echoed throughout the chamber as he observed his daughter approaching him, stressing his frustration with her habitual disruptions during their council meetings.

"Haven't I warned you about disrupting council meetings?" The king's hand moved to his forehead as if already sensing a headache forming from the disruption.

Coming to a stop before her father, Crystalia took a deep breath, using the moment to collect herself. "Haaa... haa..." Her exhalation was audible as she faced her father, her gaze shifting from her mother's fierce glare to her father's fatigued and contemplative expression.

Her throat bobbed nervously as she composed her thoughts, well aware of the gravity of her interruption. She said firmly, "It's really important, I promise."

The King's brows arched slightly, his expression shifting into a thoughtful frown as he considered her confident demeanour.

Contemplating her intention, he finally nodded in reluctant agreement. "Very well, proceed," he granted, though his tone held a hint of scepticism. "I hope it's as important as you claim, considering you've disregarded my warnings and interrupted the council meeting."

Sensing the urgency, Crystalia quickly shifted her gaze to Orion and gave him a subtle nod.

Recognizing the signal, Orion responded with a decisive nod, exhaling deeply before acting. Swiftly, he removed the cloth that Princess Crystalia had provided him.

The cloth sailed through the air, landing on the other side, and as it fell, he stood, revealing his presence before the assembly.

An audible gasp spread throughout the room, a chorus of surprised reactions echoing among the figures seated around the beautifully crafted rectangular table constructed from a fusion of crystal and rock.

"Crystalia," the king's voice, now edged with a more intense tone, rang out in the chamber. His gaze bore into his daughter with a stern furrow forming on his brow. "What... Who is this?" he asked seriously.

Princess Crystalia winced at the intense tone that accentuated her father's words. Despite the inner turmoil, she met his gaze head-on, her expression showing both determination and unease. "Father, I found him in the upper section of the mountain," she replied, pausing before quickly adding, "I mean, I believe they came from outside the mountain."

When her words ended, the sound in the room quietened. Even Garnet, who had been about to interject, now directed his attention to Orion, who stood somewhat awkwardly, holding the still-unconscious Saria in his arms.

"..You.. Went.. To.. The.. Upper.. Section, After.. All.. My.. Warnings," the king's voice rumbled, his arms vibrating with anger as he clenched his fist to maintain his composure.

While phrased as a question, the slicing anger beneath the king's words was perceptible to everyone in the room, including Orion. Princess Crystalia swallowed nervously before responding, "Yes. But, this time around, I believe it was worth it. I managed to rescue someone who seemed to be from outside the mountain," she explained.

"CRYSTALIA!!" King Brylon's voice thundered through the room as he fixed his enraged gaze on his daughter.

He took a deep breath, attempting to quell his anger as he observed her avoiding his eyes.

Shifting his attention back to the Council table, the King addressed the clan leaders representing various clans in the kingdom, "This meeting shall be postponed for now."

"King Brylon, I believe this issue should be addressed by the entire Council," Garnet stated gravely, his face etched with a deep frown. As he saw the other members nodding in agreement, he particularly noticed one of the Clan leaders—a middle-aged woman with emerald eyes and deep green crystal locs—solemnly nodding in agreement.

Witnessing the overwhelming support for Clan Leader Garnet's suggestion, King Brylon managed to temper his anger once more.

He heaved a deep sigh and nodded, his voice a blend of weariness and understanding. "I understand your point. However, at this moment, I must address and reprimand my daughter for breaching a rule that I had set. Afterwards, I will arrange another meeting to address this matter and resume our discussions. Therefore, as the ruler of the Prismerian kingdom, I grant each of you permission to leave."

With the conclusion of King Brylon's statement, a perceptible shift took hold of the room's atmosphere. The Council members, prompted by his assertion of authority, let out a collective sigh of resignation.

Slowly, they rose from their seats, their movements carrying an air of defeat, and one by one, they filed out of the throne room.

However, their eyes still lingered on Orion and the unconscious Saria cradled in his arms. Even Garnet, as he followed the retreating figures, maintained a keen gaze fixed upon Orion, his thoughts occupied with the revelations from Princess Crystalia's words.

Swiftly, he departed the meeting hall, to relay the startling news to his clan's elders.

Naturally, Garnet anticipated that the other clan leaders would follow suit, as the arrival of an outsider like Orion from beyond the mountain's confines couldn't be casually brushed aside, even if dismissed by the king himself.

The heavy door sealed with a soft "click," enveloping the room in silence. Now, only Orion holding Saria, Princess Crystalia, Flintor, King Brylon, and his wife remained. King Brylon and his wife both silently looked at Princess Crystalia with a frown on their faces.

"Crystalia, why don't you explain once again how everything had taken place," the Queen interjected, recognizing that her husband was struggling to contain his emotions.

Her gaze shifted momentarily to Orion and the unconscious Saria, then back to her daughter, her eyes narrowing with curiosity. Princess Crystalia, taking note of her mother's intent, cleared her throat and began narrating the story anew.

She sensed that her father was now receptive to hearing the full details of what had happened and how they had rescued Orion away from the White Flame.