

## Village Head 431

### Chapter 431 The Unexpected Ambush

The sudden noise reverberated through the carriage, jolting everyone inside and sending shockwaves through the King and Queen. They had never expected to face another ambush.

"Baanngg!!!"

"Banng!!!"

"Banngg!!!"

Despite the unexpected attack, they had prepared for such situations before, primarily for the sake of their status. It wouldn't befit them if they hadn't. However, this time, it seemed there were more attackers than before.

"ATTACK THEM!!!"

"PROTECT THE ROYAL CARRAIGES!!!"

A resolute voice rang out from outside, followed by the clamour of battle erupting in the vicinity of the carriages.

"Don't worry, the royal guards will handle it soon," Queen Selene reassured Orion. She believed in the capabilities of her guards, no matter how dire the situation seemed.

Contrary to her expectations, he didn't seem tense or worried like before; instead, he appeared strangely relaxed.

'Hmm, it would be strange for him not to have even a shred of confidence after his previous fight,' Queen Selene thought. Observing Orion's relaxed demeanour, she surmised that his confidence stemmed from the results he had achieved in his battle with the Clan Heirs.

Therefore, she didn't say anything else and refocused her attention on the commotion outside the carriage.

"Baanngg!!"

However, after a few minutes more, the battle had lasted a bit longer than usual.

"What's going on?" King Brylon couldn't contain his curiosity any longer. He reached out and pulled the carriage's curtain open, eager to peer outside and understand the reason for the unexpected delay.

The moment his eyes met the unfolding scene beyond the carriage, King Brylon's body froze.

As the King of the Prismerian Kingdom, there were few things that could truly surprise him. "So many," he muttered slowly as his gaze darted back and forth, scanning the window's view.

Observing her husband's stunned reaction to whatever was happening outside, Queen Selene furrowed her brows and couldn't resist asking, "What's wrong? What's happening out there?"

It was only after hearing his wife's voice that King Brylon broke out of his daze and withdrew his head. He held the curtains apart with one hand and let out a deep sigh as he leaned back in his seat.

"Why don't you take a look?" he suggested.

Queen Selene observed her husband for a moment, then turned her attention to the window.

The sounds of battle still echoed in the air, and her curiosity got the best of her. She leaned forward slightly to see what was happening outside the carriage.

As Queen Selene's eyes locked onto the scene before her, they immediately widened. She scanned the area, taking in the sight of tens, if not hundreds, of warriors who had surrounded the carriages.

They were engaged in a fierce battle with the royal guards, who had formed a protective circle around the three royal carriages to shield them from the ongoing onslaught.

"They are..." Queen Selene began to speak, but she halted abruptly, closing her lips slowly as the answer to her question quickly formed in her mind.

"The descendants of the forgotten clans," she muttered quietly, wondering how they had been able to gather such a number.

Despite the overwhelming numbers of the descendants of the forgotten clans, the royal guards managed to hold their ground as the battle raged on.

Queen Selene withdrew her head from the view outside the carriage and shook her head with a tired sigh escaping her lips.

"They never seem to learn, do they?" she muttered. It was evident that there was only one group of people capable of creating such chaos within the sealed walls of the Prismarian Kingdom.

"It looks like the royal guards won't be able to hold them for long. Why don't we let the Starforged Knights division take care of them?" King Brylon proposed.

The Starforged Knights comprised the fourth of the twelve divisions of the Crystalforged Clan. Each division was ranked based on its strength, power, status, and capabilities, and they were more than capable of handling the attackers if the royal guards found them too formidable.

"Don't worry. Despite their overwhelming numbers and the fact that some of the royal guards have already escorted the earlier attackers to the castle, it appears they still don't stand a chance," Queen Selene reassured, shaking her head in refusal.

She adjusted her position to relax more comfortably. Although she could easily intervene and end the battle in the blink of an eye, engaging the descendants of the forgotten clans outside the carriage was a bit excessive in her view.

Meanwhile, Orion, who had been silently listening to their conversation, could only shake his head tiredly. Outside the carriage, there was a group of people whose lives were currently hanging in the balance, while those inside the carriage waited as though they were watching a show.

'Being royalty must be quite the experience,' Orion thought wistfully for a moment, imagining what it would be like if he had been born into royalty.

However, as the faces and smiles of the women he cared about flashed through his mind, he quickly dismissed the thought. He found the simplicity and comfort of his village life far more appealing and couldn't imagine trading it for anything else.

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Meanwhile, far from the ongoing battle as the descendants of the forgotten clans continued their persistent charge towards the barricaded carriages, hoping to breach the royal guards and reach the royal family, their efforts were met with swift and deadly resistance.

Before they could even breach the threefold barricade, they were cut down, rendering their attempts futile. Watching the scene unfold from a distance were ten individuals, hidden in the shadows. Disappointment filled their eyes.

"I knew it wouldn't be easy despite their numbers, but this difference is staggering. It seems we'll need to intervene if we want things to go smoothly," one of them remarked.

Like the others, this figure was cloaked in black, concealing their identity. They wore a black scarf that covered their face, with openings for their eyes and mouths, allowing them to see and speak.

## Chapter 432 The Gem Shroud Legion

"I agree. The longer we wait, the more disheartening it becomes to watch," another member of the group responded. This individual was Neal Gemheart, the leader of the Gemheart Clan's third division known as the Gem Shroud Legion.

With their leader concurring, the group collectively sighed in relief. They knew that their mission was already difficult, involving assassinating the royal family, abducting the foreigner from outside the mountain, and framing the group currently in front of them for the act. They hadn't expected an easy task, but the quick defeat of their allies had been demoralizing.

Eager to proceed with their mission, Neal covered his mouth with his scarf and signalled decisively, "Let's go."

"SWOOSSSHHH!!!"

"SWISSSSSHHH!!!"

"SSWWOOOSSSHHH!!!"

Immediately after those words were uttered, each member of the group surged forward, their magical energy pouring from their bodies and forming a vibrant, dark green aura that surrounded them. The leader's aura shone the brightest, radiating an indescribable magical pressure that spread like a wave.

This magical pressure was so intense that it alerted some of the descendants of the forgotten clans, making their hair stand on end and sending them scrambling out of the way in fear. Others were simply thrown aside as the Gem Shroud Legion charged forward.

"Only at the Crystal Radiant Rank," Neal muttered, noting the dark cyan auras enveloping each of the thirteen royal guards ahead of him.

These guards were relentlessly cutting down the descendants of the forgotten clans. Neal drew his dagger from beneath his black robe's sleeve, and his comrades did the same, each focusing on a different guard ahead of them.

"Gemheart Surge!"

Neal activated one of the Gemheart Clan's initial specialties, temporarily enhancing his physical strength to deliver brief but intense bursts of power. Using this ability might have seemed like overkill against Crystal Radiant Rank opponents, but with thirteen royal guards facing them and only ten of his group, he needed to incapacitate each guard in a single strike before their presence was detected.

So, before the nearest royal guard could sense the impending magical assault...

"BANNGG!!!"

His dagger slammed into the head of the royal guard in front of him, tearing through skull and flesh with gruesome ease. In a seamless motion, he drove his elbow through the royal guard's gut, launching him backwards with a resounding "thud."

Simultaneously, before the next guard could react, he harnessed the force of the collision to twist his body in the air. Instantly, he sliced open the necks of the two other royal guards beside him before they could even register his presence.

"Three down," Neal muttered under his breath, his voice barely audible. He surveyed the scene around him and realized that the other thirteen royal guards were now lifeless bodies.

Glancing at the guard who had slammed into the royal carriage, Neal muttered almost inaudibly, "Fall back!"

The rest of the Gem Shroud Legion heard his whispered command and quickly retreated into the crowd. They knew that the royal carriage served as a protective artefact, and they were unaware of its triggering ability. So, as a precaution, they concealed themselves and waited to see what would happen next.

While doing so, they remained vigilant in case the royal family had been prepared for this, and had protection hidden in the shadows. The plan was, after all, quite straightforward. Even if they couldn't eliminate the entire royal family, killing the Queen alone would still achieve their desired outcome.

Meanwhile, those who had witnessed this scene were momentarily stunned before their eyes widened in surprise.

"The royal guards are dead!"

A voice murmured from deep within the crowd, and although it was unclear who had uttered those words first, they quickly triggered a ripple effect that surged through the assembled masses.

"THE ROYAL GUARDS ARE DEAD!!"

Every descendant of the forgotten clans, each one a Crystal Initiate Rank, with the eldest among them reaching the Crystal Adept Rank, surged forward, their voices united in a furious chant.

"KILL THE ROYAL FAMILY!!"

"KILL THE QUEEN!!!"

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Hearing the resounding 'Baannngg!' followed by the abrupt silence that blanketed the atmosphere within seconds, Orion couldn't help but mutter with a furrowed brow, "It's quiet," he remarked.

Based on the earlier sounds of battle and the glimpse he'd caught outside the carriage when Queen Selene drew back the curtain, he knew that this confrontation would take some time to conclude, unlike the earlier clash. So, the sudden cessation surprised him.

Just as he was about to ponder the overall strength of the royal family, the carriage shook once more.

"BOOOOOM!!"

Gradually, it began to sway from side to side, and only then could they hear the commotion from outside the carriage.

Their eyes widened in realization as the truth of what had just occurred settled in.

"They've lost," King Brylon muttered aloud, voicing the words that echoed through everyone's thoughts.

"Impossible!" Queen Selene exclaimed loudly, snapping out of her shock-induced daze.

Although some of the royal guards who had accompanied them had returned to the castle to detain the attackers from earlier in the day, thereby reducing the strength of the royal convoy, it was still negligible.

The remaining royal guards were all in the high-tier Crystal Radiant Rank, nurtured with invaluable resources, and had undergone special training as protectors of the royal family.

Given their resilience and skill, the idea that they could be defeated by a group she was almost certain consisted of low-tier Crystal Initiates, at best, and Crystal Adepts was utterly inconceivable to Queen Selene.

However, as the constant force around the carriage grew stronger, causing it to tilt precariously from side to side, Queen Selene's expression turned cold. She realized that they had, indeed, been defeated.

Witnessing the transformation in his wife's eyes and sensing her anger, King Brylon's body stiffened. She muttered, "Open the door."

Taking a deep breath, Queen Selene composed herself, her anger receding. She refocused her eyes on her husband, sighed, and then turned her attention to Orion.

"Stay here for now," she instructed him before she took matters into her own hands and pulled the door open, stepping out of the carriage.

#### Chapter 433 The Gem Shroud Legion (2)

The moment she stepped out of the carriage, Queen Selene's ears twitched as she clearly heard the chants echoing around her. "Kill THE QUEEN!!"

"KILL THE ROYAL FAMILY!!"

She slowly turned her head from side to side, her gaze fixating on the lifeless royal guards. A deep frown marred her lips as she observed their corpses.

Almost instantly, as her presence became known, the crowd unanimously took a step back, creating a visible gap around her.

However, soon after, murmurs began to circulate through the air.



"Quick... That woman who just stepped down from the carriage is the queen... Heheh... We can finally get rid of her."

"Although she's a hundred times more beautiful than I had thought, if we capture her and make her suffer the same way we suffered, then kill her later, I don't think it would make much difference."

"Hah, that's right... That's right... Then, what are we waiting for!"

As the voices grew louder and more fervent, Queen Selene's eyes twitched, but she managed to regain her composure.

Even though she wished to end this immediately, dealing with them all at once would be overwhelming.

She looked at the descendants of the forgotten clans as they approached, each with their own intentions burning in their eyes. With an indifferent tone, Queen Selene spoke, "What are you waiting for? Take care of all of them."

In an instant, powerful waves of magical pressure erupted and spread out from all four directions.

"BARRIER STANCE!"

Several loud cries echoed from every side, and a protective barrier made of crystal shards began to form from the sides of the wide stony terrain. It spread widely, encompassing the space around them until the area was entirely sealed off by a wide dome of clear crystal shards.

Neal, who was hiding behind a boulder along with several other members of the Gem Shroud Legion scattered around at a distance from the crowd, couldn't help but furrow his brows as he witnessed this scene.

'Which division is guarding the Queen?' he wondered.

If the division was as weak as they expected, they had no chance of winning this battle. But if they were stronger, the losses for the Gem Shroud Legion would be greater than anticipated.

Nonetheless, a streak of light caught the corner of his eye, prompting him to turn his gaze toward the crowd.

"What's happening?"

"IT'S THE ROYAL FAMILY'S ELITES?"

"THIS.... WE ARE TRAPPED... WE ARE TRAPPED!!"

The descendants of the forgotten clans had all witnessed this scene, voiced out their thoughts, and couldn't help but be vigilant of their surroundings. They didn't dare take another step because they didn't know what would happen next.

However, after a few minutes of nothing occurring, a few of them gritted their teeth and refocused their attention on the Queen.

"KILL THE QUEEN!!"

"KILL THE ROYAL FAMILY!!"

A few of them screamed, and like ripples, they all surged forward like a wave with the same thoughts in their minds, their eyes intensely focused on Queen Selene.

"SWOOOSSHHH!!"

"SWOOOSSHHH!!"

"SWWISSSSHHHH!!"

However, just before they reached her once more, several waves of magical pressure erupted, causing the descendants of the forgotten clans to stare wide-eyed at the scene unfolding before them. They watched in horror as their comrades fell one by one, their bodies brutally cleaved in half.

Flashes of light streaked left and right within the crowd, cutting them down one by one until only a fraction of the previous group remained.

"RETREAT!!"

"RETREAT!!!"

Realizing that they had no chance against these overwhelmingly powerful opponents they couldn't even see, they all turned and fled.

What was the use of staying and dying when they couldn't accomplish their task?

They decided to retreat and plan another ambush for the royal family on a different day. However, it was already too late.

The moment they turned around to flee, they were immediately struck down. Within a matter of minutes, every single one of the gathered descendants of the forgotten clans was silently slain, without even the chance to scream out in pain.

"SWISSSHHH!!"

"SWISSSHHH!!"

Shortly afterwards, five tall figures emerged, all clad in pristine black heavy armour with varying colours of gems on their chest plates, each carrying a great sword strapped tightly to their backs. Three of them guarded Queen Selene, while the other two protected the carriages.

Queen Selene shifted her gaze from the Starforged Knights to the bloody scene surrounding her.

Although she would have preferred a quicker response, she understood the need for caution. Given the situation, she didn't focus on the ground littered with corpses and blood from the fallen descendants of the forgotten clans.

Instead, she surveyed the rocky landscape around her, paying particular attention to the various large rocks scattered about.

"Whoever you are, show yourself!" Queen Selene shouted loudly into the air. "Come out now; I am giving you the chance to surrender!"

Of course, by simply examining the dagger marks on the necks of the deceased royal guards and the ruthless efficiency with which they had been killed, Queen Selene deduced that there was a cunning mastermind orchestrating this ambush, someone who harboured a burning desire to see them all dead.

The very thought of it ignited a fiery anger within her as she scanned her surroundings, waiting for the hidden figures to reveal themselves amidst the dazzling light emanating from the crystal-laden walls and ceiling.

"Don't tell me you actually believe you have a plan that can successfully work against the royal family?" Queen Selene said, her eyes twitching with irritation as she glanced at the three members of the Starforged Knight division.

"Find them," she ordered, realizing the danger of allowing this situation to persist. They had no knowledge of how many assailants were lurking or how strong they might be.

Though she currently held the title of the most powerful, she hadn't ascended to this pinnacle through recklessness.

The trio of Starforged Knights nodded resolutely and surged forward with astonishing speed. Not even the weight of their heavy armour or the greatswords strapped to their backs hindered their speed as they darted from one area to another, determined to ferret out their concealed assailants.

With the crystal shard dome still intact, they held the confidence that their foes were still lurking, and it was only a matter of time before they were either discovered or forced to reveal themselves.

## Chapter 434 The Confrontation

Observing this unfolding scene, Neal couldn't help but crack a sly grin. He discreetly patted the side of his cloak to ensure his trump card was safely concealed. Then, he gripped his dagger once more.

Despite his unwavering confidence in their victory, Neal decided to wait for the armoured knights to draw nearer before launching his assault. He intended to dispatch them with quick and decisive strikes, conserving his energy for the impending battle with the Queen herself.

Although facing these knighted warriors might have been a formidable challenge for most, considering their armour appeared to enhance their speed, Neal remained unperturbed. To the Gemheart Clan, that armour was little more than a flimsy piece of paper he could effortlessly shred with his prodigious strength.

"WHOOSSHH!!"

Neal acted swiftly, his dagger piercing into the gap in the armour of one of the Starforged Knights. He activated an intermediate speciality of the Gemheart Clan.

Gleaming Heart Scale!

As he did, Neal's skin underwent a startling transformation, becoming covered in a set of dark grey scales. With a ferocious scrape, his dagger clashed against the armoured surface, shattering it into two with a resounding crack.

Undeterred, Neal clenched his hands into fists, driving them forward like a battering ram.

The result was an explosive "Bang!" as he punched through the helmet, leaving his opponent reeling and sent flying backwards, helmet crushed inwards, and landing some distance away from the royal carriage.

As Neal initiated his attack, the other members of the Gem Shroud Legion promptly joined the battle, taking their opponents by surprise and quickly gaining the upper hand.

"Baannggg!"

"Booomm!"

"Banng!!"

However, these skirmishes proved to be brief, lasting only a matter of seconds to a few minutes before the Starforged Knights members were hurled backwards, landing at a distance from the royal carriages.

Queen Selene's eyes widened in shock as she beheld the lifeless bodies of the fallen Starforged Knights before her. Three formidable members of the fourth division from the twelfth division of the Crystalforge Clan had been slain with alarming ease.

"CRAACCCK!!" "CRAACCKKK!!"

She glanced upward, her gaze fixated on the Crystal Shard Dome that was beginning to crumble. It started with subtle spiderweb-like cracks that quickly spread, branching out in various directions.

Then, abruptly, the dome shattered into countless fragments, dissolving into the air like scattered specks of dust.

"Swisshhh!!"

"Swisshhh!!"

"Your Highness!!!" The voices of the two remaining Starforged Knights echoed in her ears, their backs facing her, their hands clutching their greatswords tightly in anger at the sight of their fallen comrades.

"I know," Queen Selene replied, her eyes narrowing in the direction of the battle. She had caught glimpses of the entire skirmish and could already discern their opponents. After all, the only group capable of defeating the Starforged Knights, one of the top-ranking divisions of the Crystalforged Clan known for their exceptional training and prowess, would likely be another top-tier division.? A division of such calibre could only belong to one of the major clans.

Queen Selene commanded, "Protect the royal carriages. It seems they are stronger than any of you can handle." She entrusted the remaining two Starforged Knights with the task. Her gaze bore forward with a hint of coldness as she strode ahead, stopping at a distance from the royal carriages.

With a raised hand, she cast "Barrier Stance," before activating another speciality of the Crystalforged Clan, known as "Armour Weave." Immediately, bluish scales of rough crystal manifested on her skin, spreading across her entire body.

Her exotic dress disintegrated, replaced by a bluish crystal armour-like bodysuit that covered her entirely.

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Orion, who had been inside the carriage for several minutes, furrowed his brows uncomfortably as the sounds of battle reverberated through the air outside the royal carriage.

He turned his head and saw King Brylon with his eyes closed, resting his head against the seat's foam. Sensing Orion's gaze, King Brylon abruptly opened his eyes and turned to look at him.

"You don't need to worry about anything," King Brylon reassured him. "Apart from the royal guards, we also have an elite warrior division protecting us from the shadows. And even if they are defeated, which I highly doubt, the Queen alone would be more than capable of handling any escalation."

As King Brylon finished his sentence, the atmosphere around them immediately grew quiet. "Humph! You see, there's no need for you to worry. This will be taken care of soon, it will end shortly," he added with a smile, his eyes focused on Orion.

Orion raised his eyebrows at King Brylon's words.

Was he really that confident in the Queen's capabilities?

Back when he had first arrived, he might have readily believed in the Queen's strength, equating it to that of the Village Chief, or perhaps Strong Leader Zogar or Drakar. But now, he had doubts about whether she could handle the current situation.

After all, if there was an enemy bold enough to attack her despite her status and strength, didn't that suggest they had the means to restrain or, worse, eliminate her?

Orion remained cautious about Queen Selene and the royal family's intentions, but it didn't mean he wished for a coup or her death. Such events would surely lead to instability in the kingdom, endangering Saria's safety and causing him unnecessary trouble – something he wanted to avoid at all costs.

"If you're still worried, why don't you take a look for yourself? I'm sure they're wrapping things up by now," King Brylon suggested, letting out a sigh as he noticed Orion's sceptical expression.

Although he had been quite impressed by the young man's abilities, especially after his battle with the Clan Heirs, perhaps it was time for him to witness the strength of the royal family firsthand.

Orion nodded in agreement with King Brylon's suggestion and leaned closer to the window. Swiftly, he reached out and tugged at the curtains, creating a narrow gap that allowed him to peer outside and get a glimpse of the ongoing situation.

#### Chapter 435 The Confrontation (2)

Although Orion believed that he had already accepted and fully integrated into this world, embracing its reality, he couldn't deny that there were still many aspects he wasn't entirely accustomed to.

And one of those aspects, in particular, was the sight of a dead corpse.

Until this point, the closest thing to a corpse that Orion had encountered were the petrified villagers within the Village Chief's compound and the pit filled with the lifeless remains of infants transformed into stone by the Vylkr vines. While these experiences were still relatively mild compared to the gruesome scene before him, they had been enough to trouble his senses.

Thus, when Orion laid eyes upon the numerous mangled and severed corpses of hundreds of Prismerians, both men and women, a deep frown etched itself across his face. An overwhelming feeling of disgust welled up within him.

Shifting his gaze from the severed corpses of the deceased descendants of the forgotten clans, Orion directed his attention towards the three lifeless figures clad in pristine, oversized knight armour, sprawled awkwardly at a distance from the royal carriage.

His focus then moved forward to another figure that seized his interest.

"Is that...?" Orion wondered as his eyes widened in recognition.



Observing the bluish, scale-like armour enveloping her body, forming a sleek bodysuit that accentuated her remarkable figure, Orion didn't need to speculate further to realize who it was.

Observing Queen Selene's slowly walking forward, while the royal carriages were flanked by two knight-like armoured guards resembling the deceased figures lying on the ground, Orion couldn't shake the feeling that something had gone awry.

Just from the name, he deduced that these knightly figures were the Starforged Knights. With three of them already dead and Queen Selene now resembling a supernatural warrior goddess, poised for battle, Orion immediately concluded that the situation had escalated.

Turning his gaze away from the window, he fixed his attention on King Brylon, who was comfortably reclining nearby.

"King Brylon, what does it mean if the Starforged Knights can't handle the situation or are killed?" Orion asked, his eyes locked on King Brylon's form from the corner of his vision.

King Brylon, who had kept his eyes closed, promptly opened them to gaze at Orion. "The Starforged Knights, while not the absolute strongest division in the Crystaforged clan, still rank among the finest. If they were to ever fail, it would imply they were facing an upper-ranked division significantly more powerful," King Brylon replied, a furrow forming on his brow as he maintained eye contact with Orion. "But why are you inquiring about such a matter?"

Orion sighed and withdrew his head from the window, widening the curtains enough to create a viewing gap for the king as well.

"Why don't you take a look as well?" Orion suggested.

King Brylon's brow furrowed slightly as he attempted to quell any suspicions about the young man's hidden intentions.

After exhaling deeply, he leaned in to catch a glimpse of the ongoing scene outside.

What he witnessed left him utterly stunned.

"This..." King Brylon exclaimed as his eyes fell upon the lifeless bodies of several Starforged Knights.

His gaze then shifted to his queen, who was clad in one of the Crystalforge clan's intermediate specialties. She seemed to have activated yet another one, 'Wave's Barrage,' as her form pulsed with a soft, pure light, conjuring arrays of spikes and swords that surged forward with incredible speed. They struck and obliterated the massive rocks at a distance.

Meanwhile, Orion, positioned beside the king, couldn't resist looking as well upon hearing the thunderous sounds resonating from outside.

"BOOOOMMM!!!"

"BOOOOMMM!!!"

Observing Queen Selene wreaking havoc on the terrain around them, Orion witnessed the emergence of two figures rushing towards her. Soon, more joined their ranks until their numbers reached ten.

Thankfully, Queen Selene's stubborn creation of crystalline spikes and swords of various sizes and lengths had already dispatched two of her attackers. As the last one fell, the sound of teeth grinding against each other became audible to Orion.

Orion shot a glance at King Brylon, who seemed to be boiling in anger as he muttered through his clenched teeth, "Gemheart Clan... This ambush is the work of the Gemheart Clan... TCHH! I knew something was amiss when he decided to leave the banquet early," grinding his own teeth in frustration.

'The Gemheart Clan,' Orion thought, his mind drifting back to his encounter with Zephyrion Gemheart.

He now realized that the tension between the two clans had escalated far beyond mere political rivalry. They seemed to harbour a burning desire for each other's demise.

Orion kept his eyes trained on the ongoing battle between Queen Selene and the remaining ten black-cloaked individuals. This was his opportunity to gauge her power and compare it with what he knew of his village.

Also, he remained vigilant, ready to step in if the need arose.

"BAAMMM!!!"

"BAAAMM!!!"

The ground tore open once more as Queen Selene missed her target yet again. These cunning opponents continued to dart around, dodging her attacks without making any effort to confront her directly.

Despite managing to eliminate two of them through surprise attacks, the remaining eight divided her attention, preventing her from focusing her attacks on a single individual without interference.

Ordinarily, facing such foes would pose no challenge for her, and she could dispatch them swiftly. However, their agility, combined with their coordinated tactics, and the ease with which they dispatched three Starforged Knights, led Queen Selene to conclude that they were indeed a top-ranked division.

As for which clan they belonged to, she decided to figure that out later, after she had completely dealt with them.

Glancing up at the still stable barrier, Queen Selene deactivated her "Wave's Barrage," feigning a bit of weariness from continuously unleashing such an attack.

"Swish!" Immediately, a shadow darted towards her from the corner of her eye. Smiling subtly, Queen Selene promptly activated an advanced Crystalforge Clan specialty, "Artificer's Masterpiece," which emitted an incredible, blinding light.

## Chapter 436 The Queen's Defeat

"Watch out!" Neal could only scream as he saw what Queen Selene was about to do, attempting to alert his team members. But it was too late.

The wind picked up as the light radiated brilliantly around Queen Selene's palms. In an instant, before the Gem Shroud member could react or evade the incoming attack, a crystal sentient serpent, approximately 10 meters tall, shot out from the light.

It pierced through the gut of the Gem Shroud member, completely shattering him and tearing him apart, dividing his body into two.

Seeing that one more of her attackers had fallen, Queen Selene shifted her focus to the remaining seven, who had retreated to a safe distance. With a tone of weary certainty, she addressed them, "Since you're here to kill the royal family, I assume you've brought something or someone capable of such an act." She shook her head as if foreseeing the outcome.

With a wave of her hand, she commanded the serpent to protect the royal carriage before she immediately withdrew her attention, focusing on her attackers, and swiftly reactivating the technique.

Atficer's Masterpiece!

Similar to the first time, several crystal shards of various sizes gathered beneath her feet, seemingly drawing energy from the light emanating from her hand. The winds beneath her picked up speed until a 15-meter-long crystal serpent formed under her feet, and only then did the wind subside.

'FUCK!' Orion cursed internally as he observed the scene unfolding. It appeared that the Queen's reputation as the strongest Prismerian in the kingdom was well-deserved. He pondered whether this was her limit or if she had more power in reserve, considering it seemed like she hadn't gone all out yet.

Nevertheless, he chose to continue observing, realizing that they might not require his help to handle the situation.

Meanwhile, realizing the intensity of the situation, Neal couldn't help but grit his teeth.

'A Crystal King is truly something else,' he praised the Queen mentally before shifting his attention to the remaining seven members of the Gem Shroud Legion.

"COVER ME!! NO MATTER HOW STRONG SHE IS, SHE DEFINITELY CAN'T TAKE ALL SEVEN OF US IF WE ATTACK AT ONCE!!" he screamed, then reached into his pocket to retrieve

a beautiful 15-inch green fabric strap resembling a choker with a brilliant ruby-like pendant at its centre, which contrasted strikingly with the bright green fabric.

Holding the choker tightly in his hands, Neal muttered to himself, "If we can manage to fasten the 'Amberian Soulbind Collar' around any part of her body, we might be able to restrain her strength to that of an ordinary Prismion and finish her." The 'Amberian Soulbind Collar' was an ancient artefact, said to have existed since before they were trapped within this mountain.

The clan leader had pinned his hopes on it to win this battle. And even if they had never considered challenging the Queen, who was at the Crystal King Rank, they couldn't possibly decline a mission handed down by the Clan Head.

Also, he hadn't forgotten the Clan Leader's promise to promote them to the second division if they succeeded.

As such, no matter what....

Gemheart Surge!

Gleaming Heart Scale!

Neal channelled all his magical energy into activating an advanced Gemheart Clan specialty.

"Earthshatter Pulse!!"

Neal slammed his left foot into the ground, sending visible shockwaves rippling through the earth. The barrier trembled, and the ground within it collapsed, forming a deep pit beneath his foot.

The shockwaves spread out like spiderwebs, extending towards the location of the royal carriage.

Seeing this, Queen Selene's eyes narrowed as she attempted to control the crystal serpent to move the royal carriage.

However, before she could do so, another wave of shockwaves slammed into her, momentarily destabilizing her control. "Gemheart Clan," Queen Selene muttered in anger as she immediately recognized this technique.

Looking downward, she spotted three more cloaked figures, with four of them approaching her beast from below and the other four soaring into the sky, rapidly closing in on her position.

Wave's Barriage!!

Without hesitation, she activated the Crystalforge Clan's intermediate specialty. The air tore apart with a sharp sound as various-sized crystal spikes and swords shot forward, instantly striking down one of the cloaked figures and sending them plummeting towards the ground.

Her attention immediately shifted to the next figure. However, realizing they were closing in fast, Queen Selene swiftly clasped her hands together at the front, using her bluish scale armour to intercept the oncoming collision. The dagger shattered, resulting in an impact that produced a resounding "Bang!" that nearly jolted her from the serpent's head.

Wave's Barriage!!

Her next opponent was pinned on the serpent's head, their brilliant crimson blood soon pooling beneath her feet.

However, before she could react once more, an enormous force collided with the side of her waist. Even though her armour managed to withstand it, the tremendous impact still sent her sprawling backwards, forcing her to forcefully divert her attention as she struggled to stabilize herself atop the serpent.

'BANG!' Another collision was aimed at the side of her face, momentarily disorienting her and sending her plummeting towards the ground. One of them immediately wrapped something around her neck.

Gritting her teeth in anger, Queen Selene screamed furiously, 'DIE!' as she activated 'Wave's Barrier,' sending it hurtling toward the attacker in front of her.

"AHHHH!!!" Neal managed to dodge the attack, but it came at the cost of his arm. He couldn't feel a part of his body anymore, and as they both landed with a heavy 'Bang!' on the ground, he could only grit his teeth and smile through the pain.

Queen Selene quickly came to her senses, feeling something tightening around her neck.

As she stood up and stabilized her body, she reached for the unseen object. The more she pulled on it, the tighter it constricted, causing her to yank on it in frustration. She soon realized her efforts were futile and redirected her focus to the cloaked figure who had sacrificed his arm to dodge her attack.

#### Chapter 437 Orion's Intervention

Looking at the figure, whose body was shrouded in a cloak and head concealed beneath a tightly wrapped scarf like the others, Queen Selene couldn't see his face clearly.

However, by the look in his eyes, she could sense a mocking amusement, causing her to furrow her brows. An unsettling feeling grew, especially as the strange object around her neck seemed to tighten with each passing moment.

Suddenly, her honed instincts, cultivated over years of experience, flared to life. She swiftly turned around and activated her "Wave's Barrage" towards one of the cloaked figures rapidly approaching her.

Yet, to her astonishment, nothing happened.

The light blue aura representing her Crystal King Rank briefly flared brightly before dimming and vanishing entirely, leaving her momentarily speechless.

"YOUR HIGHNESS!"

"BANNNGG!!!"

A formidable force collided with the centre of her chest, propelling her backwards like a cannonball.

Her body tumbled and rolled across the ground before crashing down with a resounding thud, coming to a painful halt.

"Ah!" Queen Selene groaned, bewildered by the intense pain she felt instead of the impact being absorbed.

She turned her attention to her armour, and her eyes widened in alarm. The crystal bodysuit armour was gradually shattering, piece by piece. They disintegrated into thin air until all that remained was her elegant royal gown, with her panties exposed for all to see.

"Armour Weave,"

She immediately activated the technique again, but to her astonishment, nothing happened. It felt as though her magical energy had been compressed within a sealed well, and whenever she exerted herself to break free from this confinement, the item around her neck constricted even tighter, threatening to choke her.

'What is this?' Queen Selene thought furiously.

She was well aware of the few rare ancient artefacts that remained in the Prismarian Kingdom, and she knew them all. Thus, she struggled to understand when and how the Gemheart Clan had acquired another ancient artefact and how it could have the power to suppress her, who was at the Crystal King rank.

"WHOSSSH!!!"

"WHOOSSSH!!!"

Immediately, three figures appeared around her, prompting a rapid change in her expression. Her eyes locked onto the bloodied figure with a destroyed right arm, who was now limping toward her with the support of another cloaked companion.



"STAY BACK, OR WE KILL THE QUEEN!!" Neal's voice thundered through the air, instantly halting the advance of the approaching Starforged Knights. A triumphant smile crept across Neal's face as he shifted his attention to the Queen, who wore a deep frown and clenched her teeth in a mixture of frustration and defeat.

"Restrain her!" Neal ordered the remaining Gem Shroud Legion, who immediately followed his command by pulling her hands together behind her and pressing the smooth edge of a dagger against her neck.

They stood ready to slice her throat open should she make any sudden movements or attempt to escape. Witnessing Queen Selene, the current strongest Prismion in the entire Prismirian Kingdom, defeated and held captive by his group, Neal couldn't contain his laughter. "Hehehehe!"

"What is... this? How is this possible? How is my magical energy being restrained like this?" Queen Selene demanded, her eyes fixed on the limping cloaked figure who appeared to be the group's leader.

She asked these questions with decisiveness, even as the sharp ends of the blades grazed her neck.

Neal gazed at her with a wide, menacing smile and responded, "That thing around your neck is an ancient artefact known as the 'Amberian Soulbind Collar.' While wearing it, your strength is suppressed to that of an ordinary mortal. There are a few exceptions, but I doubt I need to explain further since, after all, you're going to die soon, along with the rest of the royal family."

His grin widened even more beneath his scarf as he observed her growing pallor. "Don't worry; I'll make sure you have a front-row seat to watch, just as you've given me the opportunity to watch each of my team members being slain."

"Release me now, or I will make sure that you regret what you are about to do," Queen Selene declared, her words laced with cold determination.

Neal, however, scoffed at her threat, no longer giving her his full attention. He withdrew his arm from the support of his injured team member and signalled for all three of them to focus their efforts on the remaining Starforged Knight.

Meanwhile, Orion, who had been patiently observing the unfolding events, abruptly turned his head towards King Brylon.

"King Brylon... Huh!" His words paused as he beheld the unconscious king seated opposite him.

Orion furrowed his brows in disbelief before muttering, "He fainted... He's actually unconscious."

"Bangg!!"

"BOOOMM!!"

Orion tore his gaze away from the unconscious King and redirected it towards the ongoing battle outside.

The Starforged Knights appeared to be at a distinct disadvantage against the cloaked attackers.

He couldn't help but wonder why no one had come to investigate this location, especially the Quartzwraith clan. Despite the considerable distance separating them, the noise they'd generated should have raised some alarms, particularly since they were underground.

Orion shook his head vigorously, trying to dispel these thoughts from his mind, and refocused his attention on the battle outside.

It was obvious that one of the Starforged Knights had fallen, leaving only three against one, with the last remaining knight struggling to stand.

"Haaaa...." Orion's breath echoed loudly in the tense atmosphere.

Having assessed the strength of their opponents and gauged the limits, he decided it was time to go all out. Channelling the strange energy within his body and tapping into the Vylkr container nestled within his heart and brain, Orion felt an incredible surge of power flood through him.

His veins expanded to accommodate and control the chaotic Vylkr energy, and the strange energy clashed with it, further suppressing the resistance until it was nearly negligible. While Orion didn't fully comprehend how this strange energy could consistently restrain the Vylkr energy within him, he pushed that question aside and focused solely on the task at hand as he activated his gift.

## Chapter 438 Orion's Intervention (2)

"CRACKKLEEE!!" "CRRAACCCKLLEE!!!"

He carefully controlled his lightning, ensuring it didn't harm the unconscious King. Nevertheless, his immediate surroundings were not so fortunate, suffering from the scorching and burning effects of his intensely bright bluish lightning, which appeared as though it could spring to life with a will of its own at any moment. With a determined resolve to end this swiftly, Orion took measured breaths in and out, then took a step forward.

"BOOOOMMM!!!"

The carriage door exploded, capturing everyone's attention.

All heads turned toward the source of the blast, where Orion stood, his gaze locked on the restrained Queen Selene.

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'The Queen had been defeated.... The Queen had been defeated...' Flintor repeated the thought in his mind like a mantra as his gaze remained fixed on the restrained Queen Selene.

'What do we do?' he asked himself, his mind racing to find a solution.

From what he had witnessed, the Starforged Knights, one of the top-ranked of the twelve elite divisions of the Crystalforge Clan, had all fallen one by one at the hands of their attackers.

To make matters worse, only one last Starforged Knight remained standing.

"Flintor?" A sweet, feminine voice suddenly broke through his thoughts.

"Princess," Flintor immediately turned his head toward the source of the voice. There was only one person in the carriage with him, after all. "What is it, Princess?" Flintor asked, noting the resolute and determined expression on Princess Crystalia's face as she sat in the seat opposite him.

"I know I shouldn't be asking this, but I need to know if you are willing to lay down your life for the royal family," Princess Crystalia asked with a stern and determined expression on her face, though her trembling hands and racing heart betrayed her inner fears.

She had observed the attackers outside, and their sole intent seemed to be the elimination of the royal family.

If Flintor were to flee, they might not bother pursuing him, given their apparent injuries. Even if he chose to confront them, she feared he might meet the same fate as the Starforged Knights, who were on the brink of annihilation.

Flintor, however, had already noticed her trembling hands and instantly grasped the unspoken message.

A smile played on his lips as he clenched his right hand into a fist.

Without hesitation, he activated his magical energy. A handle formed in his palm and began stretching outwards, forming a long 100 cm smooth crystal blade that appeared deceptively sharp despite its non-metallic composition.

Placing the blade horizontally, with its flat side against his other palm, Flintor could feel his hands trembling even more. He looked at Princess Crystalia with a determined expression. "Even though I was assigned as your personal bodyguard due to special circumstances, it doesn't mean I'll sit back and watch you put yourself in harm's way. While I may still be afraid of dying, Princess, that doesn't mean I'll run away when the royal family, especially your life, is in danger," he said, his hands trembling even more, but his smile remained unwavering and as brave as the determined look on his face.

"So, please, sit here for the meantime, Princess. I'm certain this battle has attracted a lot of attention. In the meantime, I'll do my best to take care of this."

Seeing the stunned expression on the Princess's face, Flintor felt his smile widen as he reached for the door, intending to pull it open. However, just as he was about to do so, Princess Crystalia's eyes widened with realization, and she reached out to stop him from going outside.

Their actions froze in place as a resounding "Boom!" erupted in the air, the shockwave from the explosion hitting so close that it left them momentarily paralyzed.

Flintor, who had been ready to step outside, suddenly widened his eyes in shock as he shouted, "Princess! Princess! It's him! It's Orion!" His words rang out loudly, jolting Princess Crystalia out of her daze. She hurried to the window, peering through it just in time to spot a familiar figure standing beside her mother.

This figure had a dazzling, lightning-covered fist that appeared to be crafted from pure lightning, aimed directly at one of the cloaked figures who had restrained her mother.

"Orion..." Princess Crystalia whispered under her breath as she observed the cloaked figure being sent hurtling backwards, crashing forcefully into the ground with a resonant "Boom!" that reverberated in her ears.

She didn't dare to blink, her gaze locked on the broad figure in the distance.

In the blink of an eye, he had gravely injured one of the cloaked attackers and swiftly scooped up her mother before leaping back, increasing the distance between them once more.

"Princess, it... it seems like we are saved," Flintor's voice broke the silence, but Princess Crystalia remained fixated, her hope flickering even though she held doubts about whether Orion could truly protect them and defeat those who had defeated her mother.

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"Are you okay?" Orion asked, his eyes fixed on the Queen nestled within his arms.

"...Cough!! I can't use my magical energy," Queen Selene replied, her throat tightening once more before she sighed helplessly.

She furrowed her brows and continued, "But what are you doing here? Take Crystalia and run back to the castle now. Inform the Crystalforge Clan that the Gemheart Clan has revolted against the Kingdom. Considering your status, I doubt they would harm you, as they only want the royal family dead. Cough..."

She coughed lightly before resuming, "Run as fast as you can with Crystalia. Even if all the guards are dead, my husband and I will do our best to protect you two..."

"Queen Selene, the King is currently unconscious," Orion remarked with a wry smile, watching as Queen Selene's expression immediately turned dumbfounded at his words.

Nevertheless, he continued, "And the elite group you mentioned who would protect us will soon all be dead, while you have been defeated and somehow restrained."

Gently placing her on the ground beside the carriage, Orion's attention was suddenly drawn to the other carriage as it swung open. Princess Crystalia and Flintor sprang out, rushing forward to assess Queen Selene's condition.

#### Chapter 439 Orion's Intervention (3)

"So, since it seems like none of you are capable of protecting us, why don't you leave this to me? Don't worry; I'll take care of it," Orion said with a confident smile.

Princess Crystalia and Flintor turned their attention to him after assessing Queen Selene's condition, while Queen Selene herself looked at him with wide eyes.

"Wh-what are you talking about?" Queen Selene asked seriously before gripping her daughter's arm. "Quick, Crystalia, run away with him," she urged, uneasiness creeping over her face.

Then, she turned to Flintor and continued, "Quick, Flintor, do whatever you can to protect my daughter as she flees. No matter what happens, protect her, even if it costs you your life." Queen Selene's lips trembled as she finished speaking.

"I understand, Your Highness," Flintor replied with a nod, showing his determination.

Observing the scene, Orion let out an exasperated sigh and shook his head. "I said I'll handle it, so both of you should just look after the Queen," Orion insisted.

In response to his words, Queen Selene narrowed her eyes at Orion and retorted, "And what makes you think you can handle them? This is a top-ranked elite division with strength equivalent to a Crystal Sage. Forget about hurting them as you did with the Clan Heirs. It would be a miracle if you could even touch them. You're strong enough to escape with Crystalia, so please, do as I've said and don't do anything reckless."

Hearing her words, and sensing she had more to say, Orion didn't wait for her to finish and swiftly turned around, disregarding her pleas.

He interrupted, "Just stay here. I'll take care of this as quickly as I can."

With those words, he activated his gift once more, and the crackling sound of lightning filled the air.

"CRRACCKKLL!!!" "CRRACCKLLEEE!!!"

He took another step forward, racing through the air with astonishing speed. In mere moments, he arrived at the ongoing battle, just as the last standing Starforged Knight was about to be struck down.

Orion's veins pulsed with an incredible surge of power as he swung his lightning-coated fist with all his might. The instant his fist connected with the cloaked figure who was about to deliver the final blow to the last remaining Starforged Knight,

"BAANNNGG!"

"PPAAHHH!!!"

The cloaked figure's body exploded into a chaotic burst of blood and mangled, charred flesh. The collision and its ghastly aftermath left both of the other cloaked figures and the last remaining Starforged Knight momentarily stunned.

They were jolted back to reality by tendrils of Orion's scattered lightning, which seared their skin and disoriented them. Orion swiftly reined in his lightning and with a single focused thought, conjured two lightning-forged blades, each several inches long. In one swift motion, he drove these blades through their chest, dispatching them all at once.

"RIPPP!!!"

"AHH!!"

A mouthful of liquid spilt from their gaping mouths, staining the ground beneath them, as they gazed at Orion in sheer disbelief.

"BANNGG!!"

"PAAHH!!"

Orion thrust his hands into one of the two cloaked figures, reducing his head to a gruesome mix of liquid and charred remains, before repeating the same with the other cloaked figure.

"BBBANNGG!!!"

"PAAHH!!"

Within mere seconds, Orion had dispatched two of the cloaked figures who had nearly decimated one of the Crystalforge's top-ranked elite divisions.

It all happened in the blink of an eye, leaving everyone else bewildered.

Orion then turned his attention to the last remaining Starforged Knight, whose armour was in tatters, oozing blood in some areas, and asked, "Are you okay?"

The Starforged Knight nodded in response.

Letting out a sigh of relief, Orion fought back the irritation and disgust that threatened to surface as he surveyed the gruesome scene around him.

He then turned to face their last two remaining attackers.



'Ah, only one left,' Orion mused, noticing that the cloaked figure he had initially punched and assumed had recovered when he dashed to save the Queen was now lying on the unforgiving ground, with just half of his upper body intact.

Turning his attention to the side, Orion fixed his gaze on the last remaining cloaked figure, the one with the mangled arm who appeared to be the group's leader.

"I have just one question for you, so listen carefully because I won't be repeating myself," he declared.

Neal, who had been rendered speechless by the Queen's sudden freedom and the demise of the entire Gem Shroud Legion, snapped out of his stupor at the sound of the young man's voice.

"YOU!!" Neal roared in fury. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? DO YOU REALIZE THE GRAVITY OF YOUR INTERFERENCE? YOU! YOU WILL REGRET THIS!" His emotions surged, a turbulent mixture of anger over the loss of his comrades and fear at the unexpected power of the foreigner who had proven to be as strong as the Queen herself.

Neal's pupils contracted as Orion, in the blink of an eye, closed the distance between them, appearing right in front of him with a fist crackling with lightning hurtling toward his head.

"STOP!! DON'T KILL HIM!" Queen Selene abruptly snapped out of her dazed expression, her voice echoing loudly through the battered and destroyed surroundings.

She screamed at the top of her lungs the moment she understood Orion's impending actions. Warily shaking off her daughter's hands, she rose to her feet, her furious gaze piercing through the cloak-clad figure.

"We need him to extract every bit of information about this attack and the people behind it!" she said. Her words rang loud enough for Orion to hear, reverberating across the battlefield strewn with lifeless bodies.

"Although I already know who was behind this, it would be best if we capture one of them, especially the leader, so that we can extract a detailed explanation!" Queen Selene's anger was palpable in her voice.

Upon hearing the Queen's words and seeing that the lightning-covered fist had come to a halt, Neal immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

However, before coherent thoughts could form in his mind, a resounding wave of pain suddenly struck his cheek with a deafening "SMACK!" It sent him tumbling into the ground, executing a beautiful, full-arc somersault in the process.

#### Chapter 440 Returning To The Castle

"Ahhh!!" Neal moaned out in agony as the acrid scent of burnt flesh filled his nostrils. The pain overwhelmed him, eventually pushing him into unconsciousness.

Watching this scene unfold, Orion smiled with satisfaction as he withdrew his hand and deactivated his gift.

He turned and walked in the direction of Queen Selene and the others.

Coming to a stop in front of them, Orion glanced at the shattered carriage door and the numerous lifeless bodies strewn about, including the royal guards, the fallen Starforged Knights, and their attackers. His gaze finally settled on Queen Selene, who appeared poised, waiting for him to speak first.

"Considering we're the only ones left, why don't we all ride together in one carriage to ensure safety until we reach the castle?" Orion suggested, his eyes briefly flicking toward Princess Crystalia, who held a strange intense glint in her eyes.

Hearing his proposal, Queen Selene nodded in agreement.

Orion was currently their best hope for protection until they returned to the castle. It seemed wise to heed his advice, at least until she could figure out a way to remove the artefact from around her neck.

Queen Selene swiftly turned toward the last remaining Starforged Knight and instructed him to bring along the unconscious cloaked figure as they made preparations to board a carriage and begin their journey back to the castle.

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The Quartzwraith clan's manor

"Are you absolutely certain about what you witnessed?" Olivia asked, her gaze fixed on one of her clan's low-ranked elites who had been dispatched to investigate the source of the sounds and vibrations emanating from a distance.

She wanted confirmation that these disturbances were indeed originating from the direction the royal family had departed.

"Yes, Clan Mistress. I distinctly heard voices, the descendants of the forgotten clans, openly calling for the death of the royal family and the Queen herself. Furthermore, there was the unmistakable use of the Crystalforge's distinctive clan specialty, 'Barrier Stance.' It was impossible to overlook," assured a cloaked figure in ashen grey, bowing respectfully on one knee as they relayed their observations.

Olivia Quartzwraith nodded in solemn understanding. "Indeed, this is an unexpected and disconcerting occurrence," she remarked.

Although she had her suspicions about those who might have orchestrated such a plot, Olivia refrained from leaping to conclusions. She knew that a thorough investigation was required.

"Clan Mistress, what course of action should we take? Given our close ties with the royal family and the Crystalforge Clan, as one of the five other Major Clans, wouldn't it be prudent for us to intervene in this matter, especially since it's happening so near to our Clan's manor?"

"We will do nothing," Olivia interrupted firmly. "Our proximity to the royal family does not entail risking our lives needlessly. Our connections are purely political, and we must not forget that. Now, relay a message to the rest of your team to continue monitoring the situation for any significant developments."

"While I don't expect any major disruptions, the fact that this full-scale attack occurred indicates the other party's confidence in their plan. Rather than recklessly rushing in to play the hero, endangering our lives for a few accolades, we shall remain cautious. If their plan does fail, it's best to appear late and unaware." Olivia's voice held a tone of shrewd calculation.

The woman nodded solemnly, comprehending the instructions. She then straightened her posture and prepared to exit the room.

However, just as she was about to turn, the door abruptly burst open. Strangely, no one entered immediately; instead, a figure materialized out of thin air, taking a kneeling position much like the woman's.

"Clan Mistress!" the figure exclaimed urgently, removing a wooden mask adorned with dimmed crystals arranged in intricate patterns.

"What is it?" Olivia Quartzwraith inquired with a curious smile, intrigued by the unexpected turn of events and wondering if any developments had occurred regarding the ambush.

"Clan Mistress, all the descendants of the forgotten clans who ambushed the royal carriages are dead. The royal guards have also died, and part of what appears to be one of the Crystalforge's top-ranked elites is down, with only a few left standing," the figure reported, regaining his composure as he continued, "Furthermore, it seems highly likely that the attackers were a top-ranked elite group from the Gemheart Clan. They employed a few of the Gemheart Clan's signature techniques and defeated the Queen, rendering her powerless.

Olivia's thoughts ground to a halt, shock sweeping across her features.

"They defeated the Queen," she said, her mind spinning with a whirlwind of questions. She fought to regain her composure, though her heart raced incessantly.

"How?" she managed to ask, her frown deepening.

Noticing the Clan Mistress's impatient expression, the figure immediately launched into his explanation.

After he finished speaking, Olivia remained stunned and silent for several minutes, her mind processing the startling information. Finally, she opened her mouth and asked, "Ar... Are you absolutely certain that all of this occurred?"

"Yes, Clan Mistress. While it was unexpected to witness a foreigner of such extraordinary strength, suggesting that he held back significantly when confronting the various Clan Heirs, his intervention on behalf of the royal family signifies that, despite any initial success the Gemheart Clan may have had, their plan has essentially failed."

"Now, they must contend with an opponent nearly as powerful as the Queen herself. Given these circumstances, and the consequences of their audacious ambush, it appears that the Gemheart Clan's days may be numbered," the figure replied.

Olivia nodded in understanding, her brows furrowed deeply as she fixated her gaze on the two figures before her.

"Summon the second and third-rank elite teams, the Mystic Dawn Assembly and the Sentinel's Embrace. Instruct them to proceed to the castle, fake their lateness, and then pretend to urgently rush towards the castle to assess the situation," she directed, gesturing for them to leave.

After they exited the room and closed the door behind them, Olivia found herself struggling to maintain composure as her thoughts spiralled into chaos.