

## Village Head 501

### Chapter 501 Aerialia, The Goddess Of The Shining Light

The woman stared at him in silence, a deep frown etched on her face. Orion's eyes widened as he recognized who she was.

Suddenly, the woman's two large wings unfurled in the space around them as she hovered, turning her body around.

"Who art thou? Where is my child?" she demanded, her face contorting with anger.

Orion sensed the gravity of the situation and took a step back. He furrowed his brows, questioning how the goddess before him was still alive and why she had appeared right in front of him, even though he was no longer in the trial.

Despite the confusion, with the goddess awaiting his response, Orion quickly composed himself.

"I'm sorry, I don't know who you are or what you're talking about," he said, feigning ignorance as he met the woman's gaze.

As Orion pondered if there was a way to escape this place, his eyes suddenly landed on the bloody plane once more. Staring at it, a foreboding feeling gripped his heart as he observed the curved shape of the bloody plane before him.

At that moment, the image of a four-meter-long crimson great sword flashed in Orion's mind.

He gulped down his saliva, refocusing his attention on the winged goddess in front of him.

The tall winged goddess spoke with intensity, "I will ask thee this question once more, so 'twould be wise for thee to respond, unless thou dost wish to rue thy silence in the presence of this goddess."

Her face contorted in anger as she swiftly appeared inches away from him, wings flapping behind her. She fixed her gaze on Orion and demanded, "Where is my child, and what hast thou done with him?"

As Orion contemplated taking a step back, it felt like he had lost his foothold and tumbled backwards. Right on the brink of collapsing onto the ground, the world around him suddenly plunged into darkness.

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"Haaaa... Haaa..." Orion woke up from his sleep, sitting up straight as he breathed out loudly.

His head turned from side to side as though he was trying to find out what was happening, or if what he had just experienced was merely a dream.

However, after looking all about the room, Orion didn't notice anything or anybody escaping from his naked and scantily clothed partners, all lying close to him.

"...Orion, are you alright? Is everything okay?" Sura asked as she stirred up from her sleep due to the sudden disturbance and looked at Orion.

Orion turned his head to his left side to look at Sura, who was pushing herself up to sit upright, concern etched across her face.

Orion nodded in response, stretched his hand towards her, and gently rubbed her cheeks.

"Yes, I'm okay. I want to walk around a bit before I go to sleep, so don't worry about me. Go to sleep and rest for tomorrow," he said.

He watched as Sura nodded in response before she laid back on their mat and closed her weary and sleepy eyes.

Orion then gently stood up from his mat and went outside the hut, closing the door quietly to avoid awakening the rest of his women from their sleep.

Sura's eyes flickered open once more as she looked at the door, a look of concern etched within her eyes before she calmly closed them again and went back to sleep.

Meanwhile, Orion strolled along the wide, lush green grass, absorbing the breathtaking scenery of the towering trees in the distance. His gaze then shifted to the radiant moon hanging in the sky, casting a soft glow on the surroundings.

Suddenly, he felt an itch in his right hand.

Initially, Orion thought it might be a bug and instinctively reached to scratch the spot on his arm.

However, upon recalling the absence of animals in this world, he frowned and removed his hand to examine the itching spot more closely.

To his surprise, Orion discovered a tattoo-like shape resembling a crimson great sword with a cross guard on his arm. The ends appeared almost as sharp as a real sword.

Deeply perplexed, he extended his hand to scratch the area, but the itch persisted, intensifying rather than subsiding.

'What in the world is this?' Orion pondered as he observed the crimson-coloured tattoo on his arm, witnessing it gradually illuminate until the surrounding area was bathed in its light.

Just when Orion believed the pain couldn't intensify further, it abruptly ceased, replaced by an unexpected weight in his clenched fist.

He stared in disbelief at the four-meter-long crimson greatsword now in his possession.

As the glow from the tattoo subsided, he noticed it had become faint, as if he could wipe it away with a single sweep of his thumb. Nevertheless, recognizing it as a futile attempt, Orion shifted his focus to the massive greatsword in his grasp.

Despite its apparent weight, it felt as light as a feather, resonating with a weighty sound as it sliced through the air.

Just as Orion was about to explore further the capabilities of the greatsword, an eerie, spine-chilling voice echoed from behind him.

"Art thou finished, mortal?"

Orion found himself frozen in place, a warm tingling shiver coursing down his spine and reaching every inch of his body. A gulp resonated in the air, accompanied by the sound of saliva.

Slowly, Orion drew a deep breath to steady his heart before turning around to confront the speaker.

His pupils constricted to the size of a needle as he beheld the figure who had uttered those words.

Aerielia!

She's here!

Why was she here?

"What are you doing here?" Orion questioned abruptly, quickly widening the distance between him and the winged goddess.

He observed the winged woman with long white, shimmering, waist-length hair hovering in the air before him, her upper body covered only by several long pieces of cloth that left her stomach exposed, and a long white skirt of unknown material covering her smooth, fair legs, stopping just above her ankles.

## Chapter 502 Aerialia, The Goddess Of The Shining Light (2)

Two pairs of broad white wings, with the left one appearing more prominent than the right, both large enough to envelop her figure and the surroundings.

Orion realized with certainty that this was the same goddess who had given him the divine blood and had fought against White Flame, ultimately being killed by him.

So, Orion wanted to understand why she suddenly appeared here and in his dream.

"After what thou hast wrought, thou still dost pose such a query. It seems thou hast no fear in the presence of this goddess," Aerialia responded, narrowing her eyes at Orion, as though she were trying to see through him and read everything about him.

However, she ultimately failed to do so, shaking her head with a sigh escaping her lips. "But since thou dost desire to know who I am, then harken well, mortal. I am Aerialia, the goddess of the hunting moon."

Orion furrowed his brows as he heard her words. Aerialia had introduced herself as the former goddess of the shining light, so he was naturally confused.

"Do not be surprised; I once bore the title of the goddess of the shining light and had only the title of the goddess of the hunting moon during the 'Great War.' 'Tis understandable that thou knowest not who I am, for not everyone who hath beheld me hath had the chance to escape death, especially mortals," Aerialia said as a cold glint appeared in her eyes.

"So now that thou knowest who I am, who art thou, and what hast thou done with my child?" She asked, and a cold, chilling atmosphere filled the air.

"This is the last time I will be posing this query, so choose thy words wisely."

Apart from having a headache deciphering her words, Orion understood that this might have been the gods' way of speaking during that time, even though he still had doubts as Aegis of the Arctic Deity had spoken much clearer than her.

But understanding that it might not be a good idea to try further and avoid her questions once more, "I am Orion, I am the child whom you gave this divine blood to as a gift, to secure my journey into the new world," Orion said with a sigh escaping his lips as he brought the greatsword forward and tilted it to the side, resting its blade on his palm.

"LIAR!!" Aerialia screamed, her voice causing the air around them to tremble. At this point, Aerialia was visibly furious. But how could she not be?

After all, she clearly remembered giving the divine sword she forged from her blood and essence to one of her children before he fled through the stellar gate into the new world.

So how could she believe that the unknown mortal in front of her was telling the truth when he did not look like her child in any way or even feel like one?

"Tell me the truth, what hath befallen my child, mortal, and how didst thou acquire that blade?" Aerialia asked, clenching her teeth in anger, her words sounding even more chilling than before.

At first, she was momentarily stunned that she couldn't activate the mark on Orion's arms and punish him with it.

However, she didn't want to appear complacent; as such, she immediately increased the weight of the greatsword, causing the divine weapon lying between Orion's grasp to collapse, driving into the earth suddenly.

Its weight and sharpness were strong enough to pierce through until half of the divine greatsword was buried under the earth.

"Huh!" Orion looked at the greatsword in confusion before he tried to grab the handle and pull it out of the earth. Sure enough, although he could still move the greatsword, compared to before, he had to utilize his full strength to draw it out of the ground before letting go of it, allowing it to fall flatly on the grass below them.

"Boom!" The earth around the greatsword sunk and collapsed a little under the weight of the greatsword before it stopped.

Aerialia, who had breathed out in relief after finding out that she couldn't control the mark on Orion but could still forcefully increase the weight of the greatsword since it was still a part of her, couldn't help but frown when she saw that Orion could still lift the greatsword, even if it were for a mere moment.

As expected, he had somehow bonded with the divine weapon through some inexplicable methods.

"If you don't believe that I am the same Orion who you personally bound this weapon with, then I can explain every bit of our conversation, what transpired during the moment when I received it from you, and how it all led to this," Orion spoke, beginning to explain the events as if they had happened yesterday.

For Orion, it felt natural, given that he had immediately become unconscious the moment he completed the trial.

As he explained everything to Aerialia, her expression became stunned, her eyes slowly widening, showcasing her clear white irises as she slowly descended to the earth, her wings folding up together.

"Impossible," Aerialia muttered as her feet touched the ground, her hand tightening into a fist.

"Then, my children... Are they all dead?" Aerialia asked, her trembling gaze staring directly at Orion.

Orion closed his eyes and nodded, "Yes, they're all dead. None of them were able to make it past the gate."

Thud!

Aerialia collapsed and lay flatly on her knees. Her hand attempted to grasp the grass, but surprisingly, the grass merely went through her fingers as though it wasn't there in the first place before her hands finally met the soil.

Orion had immediately noticed this; however, he kept silent, seeing as Aerialia was currently wallowing in her sadness.

"Oh, what hath this goddess done to merit such? Why are my children lifeless after I have done everything to preserve them? Have I not sacrificed enough? Have I not done enough?"

### Chapter 503 Aerialia, The Goddess Of The Shining Light (3)

Suddenly, Aerialia focused her gaze on Orion with a bone-chilling intensity, "Mortal, doth that imply that where we currently reside is the new world?" she asked.

Orion nodded in response, observing as Aerialia turned her head to look around her, "It's beautiful," Aerialia said as she exhaled deeply. "Mayhap my children hath loved this place."

Seeing Aerialia admiring her surroundings with a stiff smile on her face, Orion didn't know what to say.

After all, it wasn't every day that he had the chance to comfort a goddess who had sacrificed everything to see her children's freedom, only to have them die in the end, with her being the only survivor.

So Orion remained silent, observing as she appreciated their surroundings, from the fresh green grass to the towering trees in the distance, and the clear sky with the beautiful moon casting its light on everything above them.

"It's beautiful."

Aerialia repeated once more before she withdrew her gaze and refocused it back on Orion, "The name of this newfound world is Earth, is it not?" she asked, locking her eyes with his.

Orion nodded in response, "Yes, we are currently on the new world, Earth."

Aerialia nodded before posing another question, "Art thou a child of this newfound world?"

Although Orion didn't know what she was getting at, he responded to her nonetheless, realizing he couldn't necessarily avoid her questions even if he wanted to.

"Yes. As I mentioned before, my name is Orion, and I am also of the human race, the only race on Earth, at least before the invasion took place."

Aerialia nodded in response, digesting every word that Orion had just uttered before she raised her head and asked once more, "Since thou wert present when mine children were compelled to kill each other, thou must also know something about the one responsible for all this, yes? Since he was a god that had come from Earth?"

Orion pursed his lips, understanding the hidden intent in Aerialia's question.

Unfortunately, how could he explain to Aerialia that the White Flame that had attacked her and her children was the White Flame from several thousand or even hundreds of thousands of years ago, and not the same as the White Flame of today?

In short, how was he going to convey that the new world she had fought so hard for, sacrificing so much for the future of both her and her children, was now threatened by a terrifying, unstoppable force bent on consuming every life it could get hold of?

"What is wrong? Don't tell me thou art pondering the concealment of that god's identity from this goddess. Thou shouldst be aware of what he hath done to me and mine children. Even if he be the god of thy race, shouldn't I, as a being of divine blood, be granted the right to repay the deed he hath inflicted upon me?" Aerialia said, narrowing her eyes on Orion's figure.

Listening to Aerialia's words, Orion remained silent for a little while longer before he replied, "I can definitely tell you where he is; however, before that, I would first like to let you know that he is not my god or the god of my race."

Although Orion knew that he couldn't explain the specifics of how White Flame had become a god to Aerialia, as he was sure that she would be unable to understand how such a thing was possible given who she was and where she had come from, he knew that he had to make it clear that White Flame wasn't their god.

He was human, just like him, who had attained godhood.

"He is not thy god," Aerialia repeated with furrowed brows.

She had first thought that Orion was one of the children of the god, given the way he somehow resembled him. Also, since the god had stopped her and her children from making their way through the stellar gate, she had thought that he was merely doing his job as a god to protect his world and his children from theirs.

However, it seemed that wasn't the case.

"Yes, he is not my god; he is only a human like me who had attained the powers of a god."

Aerialia was dumbfounded.

"Dost... Dost thou mean that he was not originally a god?" Aerialia said, and the moment she uttered that sentence, she understood how utterly absurd it sounded.

"Yes, he wasn't," Orion responded, nodding his head.

"Impossible," Aerialia muttered, her eyes widening in disbelief.

The god that had fought against her and killed her children, despite possessing an unusual divine energy, she could still naturally tell that he was a god.

He had fought her with his own strength, without any external aid. As such, how could she not be in disbelief after finding out that he wasn't originally a god?

Even during the 'Great War', although they had beings capable of standing up to a god, they could only do so through external means, such as divine artefacts. However, even then, it was impossible for them to kill a god.

As only a god could kill another god.

As such, Aerialia was shaken to the core that the god who had not only blocked their passage into the stellar gate but had fought and killed her, despite the fact that she was already weakened from a previous battle, and also her children, was a former mortal. It was —

Inconceivable!

Aerialia wanted to open her mouth and speak; however, her words were immediately stuck in her throat.

She swallowed them back down and dismissed such an absurd idea from her mind. After all, it wasn't possible that just like the god who had attacked them, the mortal in front of her could also become a god, right?

Aerialia shook her head soon after. Of course, there's no way such a thing could be possible.

It might just be that Orion was hiding something from her because he was still wary of her, which was nothing that she found unusual, considering that he was currently talking to a goddess.

#### Chapter 504 Agreement With A Goddess

Instead, Aerialia fixed her attention on Orion and asked, "If he be not the god whom thou servest, then reveal unto me the name of the god whom thou dost serve."

"His name is Naka," Orion replied without hesitation. He wasn't telling Aerialia this only because it was the truth, but also because this might as well be his best chance to learn about Naka.

To know if Aerialia recognized Naka, or not...

To know if Naka was a god who had come from the other world, or ...

"Naka? I haven't heard of that name before. Who is Naka? Is he also a god of this world?" Aerialia responded, breaking Orion out of his thoughts.

A deep, tired exhale escaped Orion's lips.

'I shouldn't have expected much,' he thought.

"He's the god that everyone in and outside of this village serves," Orion said.

However, seeing Aerialia's confused expression, he proceeded to explain everything to her, including the village and the Vylkr vines, before she could ask another question. He also used the opportunity to explain the current situation of White Flame and the Prismerion race.

The more Orion spoke, the more Aerialia's expression changed, becoming difficult for Orion to keep track of.

In fact, the colour on Aerialia's face had almost disappeared, making her look almost as white as a sheet.

For a long time, Aerialia couldn't say anything at all. Understandably, even a goddess of her calibre who had fought and killed other gods like herself needed a significant amount of time to accept and digest everything up to this point.

Her body and mind were currently in a state of shock.

Meanwhile, Orion shook his head at her sudden composure, unable to help but wonder how strong Naka was for him to create such a trial and imprison a god in a mountain while also having another guard it.

Whoever he was, one thing was certain—Naka was a formidable being, even among gods.

Gradually, after several minutes had passed, Aerialia finally regained her composure and locked her gaze with Orion once more.

"Though there be a chance that all thou hast spoken is falsehood, for such a thing doth sound improbable, yet..." Aerialia began her sentence with doubt and uncertainty in her eyes.

However, as she continued to speak, a sudden determination burned within her gaze, and she weighed it against Orion's, "I am willing to grant thee the benefit of the doubt. Until I witness it for myself, I shall naturally believe thou art telling the truth," she added.

Orion nodded in understanding. It was reasonable that Aerialia remained cautious and found it hard to believe his words fully; he would have done the same in her place.

Regardless, eyeing the four-meter-long greatsword beside him, he asked, "Can you make this greatsword less heavy now that you understand everything?" Orion refocused his gaze back at Aerialia.

Aerialia shook her head in response. "That won't be possible until I have seen and confirmed that everything thou hast told me is the truth," she then narrowed her gaze at the crimson greatsword mark on Orion's arms.

"Besides, I still understand not how thou wert able to perfectly bond with the divine artefact that I forged from mine essence, blood, and soul. Until I learn the truth myself, the restriction on the blade stays."

Seeing that Aerialia was firm about maintaining the weight, Orion made another attempt to lift it.

It took him several trials and exerting his full strength before he could successfully pick it up.

"I can increase the weight of the sword several times beyond what it should be. This means that, no matter how strong thou becomest, thou wilt need to exert thy full strength to wield it," Aerialia explained.

Orion understood. At least now he knew why the mark had itched intensely and shone brightly in the first place. As he was about to find a place to put the greatsword, the four-meter-long crimson greatsword in his hand suddenly flashed, dispersing into the air.

As for where it had gone, Orion didn't need to ask, as he instantly noticed that the crimson greatsword tattoo had regained its bright lustre.

Furrowing his brows a bit, Orion tried to summon it once more, and it worked. Seeing the crimson greatsword between his hands, Orion quickly put it away.

He focused his attention on Aerialia, who frowned at him.

"I need to go sleep and rest for tomorrow so that you can see everything with your own eyes and understand that I am not lying," Orion said.

Perhaps they might have a proper conversation where he could learn more about Aerialia and the Great War and see if she possessed any knowledge as a god that would be useful in their current world.

Silently, Aerialia nodded and slowly became transparent until she disappeared, transforming into thick whitish dust that slowly vanished into the air.

"I will be awaiting until then," a feminine voice suddenly sounded within his ears, as the crimson tattoo on his arm itched for a moment before it abruptly disappeared.

Although he figured that she might have done it on purpose, Orion didn't bother about what the goddess was thinking and merely went to sleep.

As he walked back into the hut, not forgetting to close the wooden door behind him, Orion immediately returned to his wooden mat to lie down and rest.

Suddenly, a quiet voice sounded beside him, saying, "Is everything alright, Orion?"

Orion felt a hand on his shoulders and immediately turned his head to the side to see Sura's deep brown eyes staring at him with a concerned expression.

"Didn't I tell you to go to sleep?" Orion said as he furrowed his brows.

From what Fifi and Lyra had told him, Orion knew that apart from pushing herself during her training as a warrior, Sura had also joined Fifi and the others in taking care of the women.

So, he also wanted her to get some rest naturally.

Sura shook her head in response, "You didn't look well when you woke up, so how can I go to sleep like that?" she replied.

Orion let out a tired sigh from his lips.

He wrapped his arms around Sura before dragging her closer to him.

After ensuring she was properly lying on his chest, he leaned forward and kissed her forehead.

"Well, I'm okay now, so you can go to sleep," he said, staring at her as he brushed her hair with a warm smile on his lips.

Sura nodded in understanding, casting one last glance at Orion before closing her eyes and drifting into sleep.

## Chapter 505 Departure

Orion stood outside the large wooden hut with his sister Gina, and all his wives, his mother Celeste, elder sister Reena, Sura, Grandma Celia, Ursa, Grandma Ingrid, Grandma Vivian, Grandma Derry, Aunt Greta, Lyra, Ayla, Fiona, standing in front of him, reluctantly seeing him off.

Suddenly, Aunt Greta raced forward and immediately grabbed his arm.

"Are you sure that you have to do this? Can't you stay for a little while longer?" she asked, looking at him with a frantic, worried gaze.

Feeling the grip on his arm growing tighter by the second, Orion looked at his other partners behind him, who had shaken their heads helplessly, showing that there was nothing they could do to help.

'She's the one who's taking care of us and the children, so what do you want us to do?' They all thought helplessly.

Regardless, Orion didn't need their help; as such, he immediately wrapped his arm around Aunt Greta's waist and pressed her body against his.

Staring at the worried expression of the gorgeous woman in front of him, the one who had nursed him back to health after he had first woken up in this world, Orion smiled and used his other hand to tuck her hair behind her ears.

"Do you know how deeply asleep you were yesterday?"

Aunt Greta stared at him momentarily before slowly shaking her head in response.

Orion smiled, "Well, you fell so deeply asleep that when I tried to wake you up, you didn't even budge," he said, "I know my Aunt Greta, and I also know that she doesn't sleep that way unless she is exhausted. So, once I'm gone, I want you to promise me that you will sleep when needed and properly take care of yourself from now on."

"Okay, I'll properly take care of myself from now on," Aunt Greta replied immediately, "But you have to promise that you will come back as soon as possible."

"Alright, then I promise to be back as soon as I'm done," Orion said, watching as she suddenly laid her head on his chest. "Faster than you can say, Orion, I miss you."

Aunt Greta looked at him with a naughty smile, "Orion, I miss you."

Orion snorted at her remark. Aunt Greta chuckled at his response and gave him a warm kiss on his lips before she pulled her head back and licked up their saliva before she gulped it down seductively.

"Be safe, okay," she said, staring at him dearly.

"I will," Orion responded before he walked over to the rest of his women. After giving each of them a kiss on the lips, and also not forgetting to give Gina a tight hug and a kiss on both of her cheeks, telling them goodbye personally. Fifi walked out of the hut's door just in time with one big sack behind her.

"Are you done?" She asked.

Orion nodded in response, "Yes, we can leave right away," he replied immediately.

"Okay," Fifi nodded, "Let's go then," she added before she turned around and gave a nod to her sisters before she turned around and left with Orion.

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"...Alright, just remember, your foremost priority is Saria's safety; after that, you may help Orion save the Prismeron race. That is all. I wish you all a safe journey, and may Naka be with you," The Village Chief said as he looked at the thirteen warriors before him, including Fifi, his son, and Orion.

He focused his gaze on Fifi first. He sighed before he spoke, "Although we have been managing without your gift at the well for some time now, it hasn't been easy. So I hope that you can return to

the village quickly after you are done so that the village's activities will not be disrupted and will go smoothly."

Fifi nodded firmly, "I understand, Chief. I promise to return to the village as soon as we are done saving Saria and helping the Prismarion race," she said.

"That is what I like to hear," the Village Chief responded.

He then shifted his attention towards his son. "I will be waiting for the good news."

Seth nodded in response, "I will make this mission a success, Father, and will return to the village as quickly as I can to help you handle the village so that you can rest, Father," he said.

"Thank you, Seth. I am sure that you will also make this mission a success," the Village Chief said with a warm smile as he nodded once more before he shifted his attention towards Orion.

He spoke, "Although I would have wanted you to rest for a little bit before you set off again, it seems like fate has other plans," he paused and deeply exhaled before he continued, "However, I am also sure that you will be able to return safely with Saria. May Naka be with you," nodding his head at Orion.

"Don't worry, Chief. I swear on Naka to make this mission a success and do whatever I can to make sure that I bring Saria back to the village," Orion responded, nodding his head seriously at the Village Chief.

The Village Chief nodded once more before he shifted his attention towards the rest of the warriors again, "MAY NAKA BE WITH ALL OF YOU!" he spoke loudly.

The rest of the ten warriors all responded all at once.

"THANK YOU CHIEF!!"

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Thirty minutes after they left the village, in the hot air balloon that he had reinvented, now surprisingly called Orion's Sky, Orion decided to take a good look around.

All he could see below were the dead trees and ashen soil scattered around the ground, along with the Vylkr vines mostly swarming aimlessly. However, their destination remained focused on one spot – the village.

"It's beautiful, right?" Fifi asked with a broad, warm smile as she stood beside him, looking below.

"Although I'm still not aware of what kind of contribution you made to the village for the Chief to name the flying contraption that we received as a gift from Naka after you, I am sure that it is something that you more than deserve," she added.

#### Chapter 506 Fifi's Richly Deserved Reward

Orion turned his head to the side and met Fifi's radiant smile, taking in the sight of her broad, muscular shoulders.

As she redirected her attention back to the view below, Fifi continued to gaze at the landscape.

"You know, the last time I came out here to look for you, I never imagined I would find you, let alone fly up this high in the sky without a shape-shifting gift. I sometimes feel like I've gone through one of the most eventful periods of my life ever since I spoke to you. Now, whenever I go to sleep, there's always something that makes me never want to wake up," she said, turning her head to look at Orion.

"Do you want to know what it is?"

Orion silently nodded.

"It's the day you proposed to me. That's the only dream I can never get tired of," Fifi said softly before leaning in and giving Orion a peck on his lips. "I think I want a reward after all the stress that I and the baby have gone through just to save you."

"What do you want as a reward?" Orion responded seriously.

This was the first time Fifi had asked for something; as such, no matter what, he had to make sure that he gave it to her, as she, without a doubt, deserved it.

Fifi smiled warmly and responded, "I want you to propose to me again. I want it to be the most pleasing proposal you've ever done in your life."

Seeing Orion furrowing his brows as he stared at her in deep thought, Fifi let out a small chuckle that rang out in the air, bringing Orion back out of his thoughts.

She stretched her right hand forward and held his chin with it, "Although you might be several times younger than me, it shouldn't be anything too difficult for you given the number of sisters I have."

Letting out a deep exhale, Orion nodded, "Okay, I'll try my best and figure something out."

Just as Fifi withdrew her hand, a loud booming sound echoed in the distance below them.

Fifi frowned and immediately looked into the distance. Within her eyesight, she saw a four-legged, towering mass of Vylkr vines coming their way, for better clarification, heading towards the Village.

"EVERYONE, LOWER THE ORION'S SKIES, AND GET READY TO LAY DOWN THE ROPES AND JUMP DOWN WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL!" A deep voice resounded loudly in the air near them, and Orion could see that it had come from Seth, the Village Chief's son.

He and three other warriors were in another Orion's Sky, which was attached to theirs, and a third one, containing about five warriors, was connected by a thick, long rope.

The Orion's skies had enough room to accommodate about four or five more individuals in each, but that wasn't needed since they were not carrying many people and didn't need to waste an Orion's Sky storing all their fruits.

Also, the last thing Orion would want was to be trapped in a basket with some hefty-built men surrounding him for an extended period.

Orion turned his head to the side and caught the gaze of a toned female warrior, her attention shifting from him and Fifi to some burner system that looked far more impressive than the one he had initially envisioned.

At least he knew there was someone in the Village who could help him bring some of his ideas to life in the future.

In their Orion Sky, there were only four individuals: him, Fifi, and two other female warriors.

Although they didn't possess as much muscle as Fifi, they were just as toned and muscular as the other female warriors he had seen previously.

Nevertheless, at that moment, as one of the female warriors lowered the Orion Sky, the other unfolded a thick piece of cloth tied around a long, curve-bladed spear, preparing for the upcoming battle.

Bending down to pick up the cutlass that had been prepared for him by Fifi, folded within a piece of cloth and stored with the sack she had brought, Orion immediately straightened up as a hand quickly tightened around his.

"Stay here and reserve your energy for when we get to the mountain; we will handle this for now," Fifi said, staring at Orion with a firm resolve.

Orion furrowed his brows.

Even if he couldn't fight a three-star Vylkr vine yet, he still had enough power to prevent the surrounding one-star or two-star Vylkr vines from taking advantage of their battle or distracting them.

He knew they wouldn't go all out, so killing the three-star Vylkr vines would take longer.

"But I can h..."

"No buts, Orion. I promised my sisters that I would keep you safe, so for now, stay here until we arrive at the mountains," Fifi said, staring at Orion seriously, remembering the promises she made to her fellow sisters during the meeting called by Greta.

The meeting occurred after Greta discovered Orion's intentions when he left to meet the Village Chief and the other key figures.

Despite sensing that Greta was hiding something, they also learned that Orion had become a warrior. However, he was still too weak to defend himself in the dead forest.

Meanwhile, witnessing Fifi's determined expression and the plea in her eyes, Orion nodded in understanding. "Alright, I'll stay here for now, at least," he said, releasing a sigh.

Despite realizing his current strength, he didn't feel the need to be stubborn when Fifi was trying to keep him out of harm's way.

"Thank you," Fifi exhaled with relief, letting go of Orion.

A familiar loud voice echoed in the air once more.

"EVERYONE, LOWER YOUR ROPES AND DESCEND," Seth yelled again.

Shortly after, a rope was thrown out from each basket, and all the warriors, leaving only one warrior in each Orion's sky to keep an eye on it, started to descend.

They let go once they had reached a certain distance, free-falling towards the direction of the three-star Vylkr vine.

## Chapter 507 Becoming the Leader

"I'll make sure to end this quickly," Fifi declared as she descended down the ropes before letting go, free-falling towards the ground.

Orion observed her descent and watched as she joined the others in battling the Vylkr vines.

With their combined efforts, the battle lasted for about two minutes before coming to an end.

Contrary to Orion's expectations, every time they spotted a three-star Vylkr vine or a group of them, Seth would order the Orion's skies to descend, and the warriors would climb down from the ropes to engage them.

Initially, Orion understood the strategic reasons behind Seth's decisions, relieving the burden on the warriors protecting the Village and the forest. However, as it continued, Orion couldn't help but feel a twitch in his brows when he heard Seth's loud voice again.

"If things continue like this, it might take days before we even arrive at the mountains," Orion muttered under his breath as he observed Fifi and the other warriors descending the ropes again.

Before he knew it, the sun had already begun to set.

"Boom!" Another sound resonated in the distance below them.

"EVERYONE, LOWER YOUR ORION'S SKIE...."

Orion didn't need to look down to guess who was speaking or what the voice wanted to convey before he immediately grasped onto Fifi's arm to stop her from lowering the ropes.

"Orion, what is it?" Fifi asked with a raised brow, wondering why Orion had stopped her.

Instead of answering immediately, Orion however, turned to look at the other two warriors, "You two should stay behind this time around," he then focused his attention back on Fifi, "That includes you too."

Fifi and the rest of the warriors beside her couldn't help but frown at Orion's words.

Nonetheless, Fifi recognized that Orion would not say such a thing without reason, so she stared at him with a serious expression and said with a raised brow, "Orion, if you are thinking about my health, then I understand your concerns. However, I don't think that the others would understand..."

"Although I am concerned about your health, that wasn't what I meant," Orion interjected, shaking his head as he looked at the warriors in the other Orion's sky climbing down the ropes.

He refocused his gaze back at Fifi and continued, "We are running on a limited amount of time that we can't afford to waste, so if we want to reach the mountains as soon as possible, then we can't afford to continue like this."

"What do you suggest we do?" Fifi asked, curiously. She understood Orion's concerns, having experienced similar frustration when they first set out to find him.

Despite her initial inclination to leave the group and search on her own, she suppressed her anger. Nevertheless, having ultimately found Orion, she harboured no lasting resentment.

"I'll talk to him once he's finished, let him know we can't afford to waste time like this if we want to save Saria," Orion said, refocusing his attention on Seth and the other warriors dealing with the three-star Vylkr vine below.

Fifi's eyes widened at Orion's words, but she quickly composed herself, shaking her head vehemently.

"No. If you want to talk to him, tell me what you want to say, and I'll do it myself," Fifi insisted.

She had observed Seth's eyes at Orion and sensed that initiating their first proper conversation in this manner might not be the best idea.

Orion frowned at Fifi's words. While he appreciated her concern for his safety, he didn't want her to feel the need to shield him all the time outside the Village.

"Don't worry, I'll handle it myself," Orion reassured her, shaking his head firmly.

"But—"

"No buts. Or are you telling me that you don't believe I can handle this?" Orion asked, raising a brow as he looked at Fifi.

"I... I..." Fifi stammered, finding herself at a loss after hearing Orion's words.

She faced a dilemma. On one hand, she didn't want Orion to think she doubted his capabilities, but on the other hand, she didn't want him to get into trouble with Seth, especially considering this was their first mission together.

Seth, being one of the strongest warriors in the Village and the son of the Village Chief, possibly the next Rightward Stronghold Leader, validated her concerns.

Meanwhile, observing Fifi's conflicted expression, Orion sighed inwardly and shook his head. If only she knew the significant contributions he had made to the Village, she would understand that he wasn't afraid of getting on Seth's bad side or being intimidated by him.

While Seth might be physically stronger, Orion recognized his own value to the Village, making him less concerned about angering the Village Chief's son.

"They are almost done," Orion remarked, refocusing his attention on the defeated Vylkr vine.

He then turned to Fifi and said earnestly, "Fifi, if you trust me, I want you to stay out of this and allow me to handle it."

After deep contemplation, Fifi sighed heavily and nodded in relief.

If Seth became angry or refused to listen, she could leverage their connections to the Caretaker and the Village Chief as a means to resolve the issue and prevent any escalation.

Despite her strength, she knew that none of them were foolish enough to escalate to physical confrontation, especially given the nature of their mission.

The battle soon concluded, and the warriors promptly climbed back into the baskets of their respective Orion's sky.

Orion, however, kept his gaze fixed on Seth, who reciprocated the stare until he climbed back into the flying contraption.

Seth's gaze lingered on Orion for a few seconds before shifting his attention toward Fifi and the rest of the warriors standing behind him.

"What is the meaning?! Didn't you hear my orders?!" he bellowed loudly.

Fifi was about to respond when Orion immediately interrupted, "I told them not to go, so they can conserve their strength for when we reach the mountain!" he said, ensuring that his words reverberated through the air.

## Chapter 508 Becoming the Leader (2)

Seth's teeth clenched immediately upon hearing Orion's words.

"Are you questioning my orders?" he responded, struggling to contain his irritation, though it still seeped into his words.

"No!" Orion shook his head decisively.

"What I meant is that continuing this way would not only prolong our journey to the mountain but also hinder our ability to conserve strength for rescuing Saria and extracting her from the mountain," he added.

Orion had previously conveyed to the Village Chief and other key figures the vulnerability of the Prismerton race compared to the village warriors. This information had also been shared with the warriors to prepare them for what lay ahead.

Seth understood that Orion referred not to the Prismerton race but to the alleged god trapped in the mountain with them.

Regardless, Seth couldn't ignore the subtle challenge within Orion's words.

"So, you're truly questioning my orders?" Seth responded, his brows twitching in annoyance.

"I didn't say anything that would ques—"

"ENOUGH!" Seth bellowed, his voice cutting through the tension in the air. Witnessing the sudden shift in expressions among the warriors, he understood their thoughts and couldn't allow the conversation to take a detrimental turn.

"TCHH!" Seth clicked his tongue loudly in annoyance.

Despite his successful exploration, which might have seemed like a punishment initially, he was confident that he had solidified his standing not only among the warriors but also among the key figures in the village. This success should have earned him enough merit to become the next Stronghold Leader.

However, with both the Left and Right Stronghold Leaders still having several more years before retirement and showing no signs of weakening, Seth had redirected his ambitions toward becoming the next Village Chief.

Naturally, Seth had set his sights solely on the position of Village Chief, making it his ultimate goal to seize such an opportunity.

However, his carefully laid plans had been thrown into disarray by a single individual—an upstart young warrior who had barely joined their ranks a month ago.

Now, this same young man dared to challenge his authority in the presence of the warriors, the very individuals who would pave the way for Seth's ascension to the role of Village Chief.

It was no wonder that frustration and irritation bubbled within him.

"DO YOU BELIEVE YOU'RE MORE SKILLED AND CAPABLE OF LEADING THIS GROUP ON THE MISSION THAN I AM?!" Seth's words echoed with evident irritation.

Despite his attempt to conceal it, his frustration was palpable.

He swiftly devised a strategy to manage the situation and demonstrate to the young man that there were limits to the extent of his influence.

Orion prepared to reply when a sudden pinch at the side of his stomach caught him off guard.

Furrowing his brows, he turned to find Fifi wearing a solemn expression.

Ignoring her silent communication, he refocused on Seth. Fifi audibly sighed and let her shoulders slump as he asserted, "Though I didn't intend it that way, if you put it like that, then yes, I believe I can lead this group to successfully complete the mission and bring Saria to the village safely."

Seth could feel the veins on his head pulsating as his blood boiled intensely upon hearing Orion's bold words.

"Good... Good... It seems that in my absence, no one was around to properly instil the demeanour and attitude befitting a warrior in you. Very well, since it's come to this, I'll take the opportunity to teach you myself," Seth declared, his voice resonating for all to hear.

He then commanded loudly, "Lower the Orion's skies."

Fixing his gaze on Orion, he added, "Just to be clear, given your contributions to the village, I'm willing to overlook your statement. However, if you're determined to prove your capabilities in handling this mission better than me, I'll gladly give you the chance. Everyone, except those in charge of the flying contraptions, should assemble on the ground."

As the Orion's skies gradually descended, Seth stepped over the basket's edge and leapt to the ground.

"Boom!" echoed the sound of Seth's landing, resonating through the air before the sequence repeated as other warriors followed suit, descending from the ropes and leaping down to the earth below.

"Are you sure about this?" Fifi asked, observing Orion with concern.

Despite underestimating the severity of their first conversation, she remained confident that Seth wouldn't harm Orion.

However, witnessing Seth's actions and hearing his words made her contemplate stepping in to resolve the issue herself.

"If I don't do this, it will take days to reach the mountain, which we can't afford. I don't know what he is planning, but we'll find out when we go down," Orion said, moving over the basket and scaling the rope.

"Come on, let's go. We can't afford to waste any more time."

Observing Orion's determined expression, eager to resolve the situation, Fifi released a deep sigh for the umpteenth time and swiftly followed, determined not to be left behind.

Regardless of Seth's position, Orion's safety remained her top priority.

Seth observed as Orion and Fifi descended to the ground, gesturing for some warriors to surround and block the one and two-star Vylkr vines from advancing.

All the present individuals were three-star warriors, so they promptly cleared the area.

Meanwhile, the other warriors were directed to step aside, creating a path for Orion and Fifi to move forward.

"How do you suggest I prove myself? We don't have enough time to waste here," Orion asked as he stared at Seth.

Seth felt a momentary twitch in his brows before swiftly regaining composure. "Strength is paramount for leading a group, surpassing even character. If a warrior cannot defend himself, he cannot safeguard the group and is unfit to lead," he stated, studying Orion intensely.

He added, "Since I'm offering you the chance to prove your leadership, it's only fair that you demonstrate your strength first."

Orion's brows furrowed instantly.

"Seth, I don't think that..." Fifi interjected promptly, sensing that things were veering off course before she was swiftly interrupted.

## Chapter 509 Three Moves! Three Lines!

"Are you planning on deciding for him, Warrior Fifi?" Seth asked with a raised brow before redirecting his attention back to Orion. "How can one call himself a leader if he allows others to make his decisions?"

Fifi frowned deeply and was about to interject again; however, Orion instantly interrupted her.

"Don't worry, I can handle it," Orion said as he looked at Fifi from the corner of his eyes.

Though curious about what Seth had in mind, Orion wasn't foolish enough to comply with anything that might put him at a disadvantage.

If the situation became unbearable, he could always return to the Village and file a complaint about Seth's leadership skills, potentially leading to his removal from the mission and placing Fifi in charge, making the mission smoother once they reached the Prismerian kingdom.

Thinking about it this way, Orion's mind slowly became calm. He didn't regret working extremely hard to spread his influence within the Village.

"Although I admit that I am not yet up to the capabilities of the strength of everyone here, I know that Warrior Seth wouldn't give me a test to prove my strength if it is beyond what I am capable of doing," Orion said seriously, focusing his gaze on Seth.

"Warrior Seth, how do you suggest I prove my strength?"

Seth, however, felt his brows tremble intensely at Orion's words. This young man!

Seeing that Orion was capable of playing with his words, Seth nodded with a smile on his face.

"Alright. Listen closely then, since we are all three-star warriors here, and you have only become a one-star warrior, one of us will have to suppress our strength to that of a one-star warrior, and you will have to fight with three moves," he slowly walked forward, passing Fifi and Orion, and drew three straight lines at a certain distance from one another.

Then, he drew another line facing each other.

"To make this a fair test, if you manage to force your opponent out of these three lines or are forced back fewer times than your opponent within those three moves, then you win and have earned the right to lead this group on this mission. It would be clear that your strength far surpasses that of an ordinary one-star warrior."

"However, if your opponent manages to do the same to you, then you lose, which means that you won't challenge my orders any longer. As punishment, you will have to participate in battle with the Vylkr vines until we reach the mountains."

"Of course, you will only have to clear away the one-star Vylkr vines and use the two-star Vylkr vines as a way to temper yourself and that attitude of yours," Seth added, looking at Orion and Fifi with a smile on his face. "I believe the test that I have made should be okay with you, right, Warrior Orion?"

"Yes," Orion responded, nodding his head. "I believe that the test that Warrior Seth has made is fair and gives me the chance to prove my strength. However, before we continue, I would first like to know who my opponent would be."

Fifi, who was at the side, felt her gaze becoming colder as she stared at Seth's smile.

Though Orion had already made it clear that he didn't want her to interfere in this, if things became more than he could handle, she would still do so, whether he liked it or not.

Seth nodded at Orion's question, "You are allowed to pick whichever warrior you want to face from the twelve of us," he responded, his eyes briefly focusing on Fifi, "Of course, everyone, except her."

Although Fifi's expression deepened into a frown, she remained silent, seeing as Orion was about to respond.

"Don't worry; I understand your concerns, so you can be rest assured that I won't be picking her as my opponent," Orion responded indifferently.

Even though he knew that Seth was planning something, the test was already fair enough for him to accept it.

As such, Orion naturally didn't care who his opponent was as long as they kept to the rules of the test. Since he was already aware of his own strength and could use this opportunity to gain control of the group, making rescuing Saria and helping the Prismarian Kingdom much easier, Orion understood that there was no meaning in holding back now that they had come this far.

"I have already chosen an opponent," Orion said.

"Oh, who is it?" Seth asked.

He could already guess that Orion wouldn't be stupid enough to pick him but would instead go for one of the other eight warriors, given that his father had praised his intelligence...

"Warrior Seth, please step into the line. I would like you to be my opponent," Orion said as he walked over to the side and stood on the space near the first line.

Seth, Fifi, and everyone else were dumbfounded by his words.

Just like Seth, Fifi thought Orion would pick anyone from the other warriors except Seth.

But surprisingly, he had chosen Seth as his opponent.

Even the remaining eight warriors waiting to be chosen so they could finish this test once and for all were astounded, and silent murmurs began to float around in their surroundings.

Seth, however, could feel his veins bulging as he stared at Orion with alarming irritation.

"Are you sure about this?" he asked, looking at Orion seriously.

He could feel his irritation becoming even more intense by the second.

"Yes, I'm sure," Orion nodded seriously in response.

Gritting his teeth angrily, Seth nodded and spat out, "Fine!"

He walked over to the opposing line and stood in front of Orion.

This young man...

Seth chuckled slightly and immediately suppressed his strength to that of a one-star Vylkr warrior. "Since you are the challenger, then you should be the one going first."

When he initially conceived this test, Seth's intent was merely to demonstrate the limits of Orion's influence. However, the more Orion spoke, the stronger Seth's desire grew to make him grasp the disparity in strength and authority at this moment, instilling a sense of shame and fear.

#### Chapter 510 Three Moves! Three Lines! (2)

If successful, this could become a tool for Seth to assert control in the future, preventing Orion from acting without consequence.

Orion nodded at Seth's words before asking, "Am I allowed to use my gift?"

"Of course, you can," Seth responded. "Your gift is part of your strength, so you are allowed to use it."

Orion nodded in understanding once more. He grasped that this implied Seth was also permitted to use his gift during the test. Whether Seth would resort to using his gift against a 'so-called one-star warrior' was a doubt in Orion's mind.

Nevertheless, Orion didn't care. Despite the apparent disadvantage in Seth's physical prowess, if Seth intended to hold back to that of a one-star warrior, he planned to go all out and conclude the match within the first move.

As Orion assumed his battle stance, preparing for the initial move, Fifi positioned herself nearby to intervene if necessary.

Meanwhile, the surrounding warriors observed, eager to witness the prowess of the first person in the village to have ever awakened an incredible six-star potential.

They all anticipated that the outcome of this test would inevitably lead to Orion's defeat, hoping that it would be enough to temper his attitude and behaviour as a warrior.

Eager to conclude the test swiftly, Orion immediately activated the two Vylkr containers within his body, allowing innumerable strands of Vylkr energy to seep slowly into his being.

While others remained oblivious to the changes occurring within Orion's body, his strength, already at the level of a one-star warrior, instantly surged to that of a two-star warrior, akin to a volcano erupting and spreading energy throughout his entire body.

He then promptly activated his gift.

"Boom!!"

His lightning struck the ground with a resounding force, scorching the ashen landscape and the dead trees surrounding them.

"CRACKLLEE!!" "CRRACCKLLEE!!"

As the bright bluish tendrils of lightning spread around Orion's body, the warriors in proximity couldn't help but take a step back.

Although they knew they could handle Orion's lightning without much trouble, it wasn't worth the hassle.

They continued to watch with wide eyes, pondering...

Is he truly a one-star warrior?

Isn't this combat power a bit too much for a one-star warrior?

Even Fifi's eyes underwent a drastic change in expression as she witnessed the intensity of Orion's lightning.

'He's become stronger?' Fifi thought, her brows furrowing in confusion.

She knew she was the only one among them who had witnessed Orion use his gift to the limit before he became a full-fledged warrior.

Now that he had attained that status, even Fifi couldn't help but admit that this attacking power for a one-star warrior was just —

A little too much!

Unlike the rest, she maintained her position, allowing the Vylkr energy within her to surge around her body to protect herself from the chaotic lightning.

Seth, who was at the receiving end of this lightning, held a solemn gaze as he regarded Orion with increased seriousness.

Regardless of whether he regretted allowing the use of their gifts in this test, he still believed that there was no way Orion could win this test in three moves or less.

His stupidity and arrogance had led him to this failure.

Under Seth's solemn gaze, Orion immediately transformed his lightning into a fist. Just as he had done within the Prismerian young heir's banquet, Orion took a step forward and threw the lightning-forged fist forward.

The lightning-forged fist scorched the earth, causing the ground to fly forward. Cracks spread like spider webs, stretching out to up to eight meters. With a bright bluish light emanating from the lightning-forged fist, Seth, who was at its receiving end, instantly squinted his eyes.

He immediately used an amount of Vylkr energy equivalent to that of a one-star warrior to protect his body, raising his hands to block the lightning-forged fist.

"BBOOOM!!!"

Upon collision, Seth felt as though tiny, innumerable needles had suddenly pricked every pore of his body as the lightning rippled across him before slowly disappearing.

"First mov—" Seth, who was about to speak, immediately felt his words stuck in his throat as he widened his eyes.

Above him, Orion descended from the sky with a gigantic lightning-forged hammer, straight towards his face.

Although he had reacted just in time to block the attack once more, for Seth, who had suppressed the use of his Vylkr energy to that of a one-star Vylkr warrior, it was not enough.

"CRAACCKLEE!!!"

"BOOOMM!!!"

Seth took a step backwards.

Seeing this, Orion whispered, "Second move," as he raised his hand before Seth could react. He immediately sent the second three-meter lightning-forged hammer that he had conjured along with the first, hurling towards Seth's upper body.

Seth, who had not yet recovered from the first and second strike, was taken by yet another surprise as Orion's gigantic bluish lightning-forged hammer, which seemed as though it had been naturally produced by a storm of clouds, clashed against his body once more.

"BOOOMM!!!"

"CRAACKKLL!! CRACCKLEE!!!"

"Ah!" A short gasp of pain escaped Seth's mouth as he stumbled backwards, quickly regaining his footing and recomposing himself. With a darkened chest scorched by Orion's lightning, along with

some parts of his arms and several other areas of his body, Seth took a breath as he looked at Orion, who was now standing close to him.

With an indifferent gaze, Seth opened his mouth to speak.

"Yo—"

"...ou lost!" Orion interjected, completing his words for him as he shifted his gaze below Seth's feet.

Seth naturally felt his eyes shrink to the size of a needle as he slowly took a deep gulp before shifting his attention downwards.

He had crossed the line!

The third line!

He lost!

He los...

"Since I have won, I hope that Warrior Seth keeps to the agreement and promise that we have made," Orion said as he deactivated his gift alongside both of the Vylkr containers within his body.

"Let's leave now that everything is settled; we have wasted enough time here," he added.

Every second wasted here would naturally put Merida, Princess Crystalia, and the others' lives in danger, assuming nothing terrible had happened to them yet. As such, Orion didn't want to waste another second here.