

Village Head 531

Chapter 531 Where The Animals Went!

Orion shook his head in response.

Expecting such a reply, Aegis of the Arctic Deity continued, "After their first battle, the 'Nine Greed Gods' lost two of their own due to the 'Seven Great Gods' planned attack to eliminate them one by one. To fill the remaining spots and properly contend with the 'Seven Great Gods,' they chose the most qualified god they could think of, which was Naka."

"Considering the alliances Naka had forged with several other gods and the mortals he had taken care of, all numbering into a considerable force, they saw this as a chance to bring over what they viewed as a threat to their side and strengthen themselves to the point that the 'Seven Great Gods' would no longer be a problem. Trying to swallow up such a force in one bite, you could say that the 'Nine Greed Gods' were living up to their name."

"Nevertheless, an invitation was sent out to Naka to inform him about the spot reserved among the 'Nine Greed Gods', but..." Aegis of the Arctic Deity paused before a loud sigh echoed through the space.

"But Naka rejected their offer without a second thought. The 'Nine Greed Gods,' now seven but remaining nine just in name, hadn't expected Naka's rejection. Although they were furious, as gods who had been alive since time immemorial, they knew better than to stir up a problem they would find difficult to handle. As such, they merely kept an eye on him, watching his every move."

"Meanwhile, as Naka's alliances grew bigger by the day, their territories grew smaller under the constant attacks of the 'Seven Great Gods,' all of whom were reclaiming their territories and giving them back to the humans. In response, the 'Nine Greed Gods' sent an invitation to Naka once more. However, it was immediately rejected again. But, as gods who had fought and survived the 'Great War,' even rising to the top, they were undeniably persistent. So, they sent out an invitation again, and it was at this time that they learned of Naka's alliance with the 'Seven Great Gods.'"

"After discovering this information, the 'Nine Greed Gods' decided to end Naka and the forces he had built over the years because he had become a threat they could no longer ignore. However, since Naka was a god whose strength and origin were relatively unknown, they saw no other means than to confront him head-on, and they did."

"However, contrary to their expectations, the battle of the remaining 'Nine Greed Gods' against Naka ended up in a stalemate. Fueled by the fury of the embarrassing defeat, the remaining 'Nine Greed Gods,' now numbering eight, decided to destroy his alliances. However, their efforts to draw Naka's alliances to their side ended in futility."

"Seeing no other way to deal with such an issue and with the 'Seven Great Gods' still swallowing up their territories little by little, the 'Nine Green Gods' decided to face him head-on once more and disintegrate the alliance directly. Since they were already aware of his strength, they devised a plan," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said. He paused again, sighing deeply before he continued speaking, "And one of them involved wiping out two-tenths of the several races that Naka had under his protection."

Upon hearing Aegis of the Arctic Deity's last words, Orion couldn't help but gulp down a huge amount of saliva.

"As you could already guess, after Naka learned about what had happened, he went all out, killing about three of the 'Nine Greed Gods' and reducing their numbers to five. Witnessing this, the 'Nine Greed Gods' retreated. Unfortunately, Naka didn't seem too keen on letting them go and decided to make an example out of them."

"He let the world know about his alliances with the 'Seven Great Gods,' before they pursued the remaining weakened 'Nine Greed Gods' to every corner of the earth and across the skies also," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, "Seeing that they were being pushed into a corner, the remaining 'Nine Greed Gods' decided to take matters into their own hands and retaliate. Do you want to know how they retaliated?"

Orion shook his head quietly in response to Aegis of the Arctic Deity's question.

"As retaliation, the remaining five of the 'Nine Greed Gods,' seeing there was nowhere they could hide, whether on earth or in the heavens, did everything in their power, using up their last remaining strength to create another world below the earth with the help of the Divine Mysteries that penetrated into this world. They then took away every animal from the earth below the earth with them. But it was already too late by the time they could find and stop them. They had sealed themselves up in a place that is now called 'The Lower Heavens,'" Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded.

"Of course, although humans were the only beings that previously inhabited the earth, the animals still made up a huge percentage of it. As such, Naka and the 'Seven Great Gods' decided to do everything to break into the Lower Heavens, and release the animals once more into the earth.

However, it was easier said than done. The 'Seven Great Gods,' who were all man-made gods, had difficulty efficiently using the Divine Mysteries. As such, Naka bore the main burden of the task. Unfortunately, even he was unable to break into the Lower Heavens."

Upon finally hearing an explanation for where the animals went and why he could not see even a bug, Orion couldn't help but be stunned, his eyes widening in disbelief as he stared dumbfoundedly at the large golden pair of eyes above him.

The fact that the animals disappeared this way made Orion contemplate the immense power required to accomplish such a feat.

He couldn't help but ponder the extraordinary strength of the 'Seven Great Gods' and Naka, considering their ability to go against the 'Nine Greed Gods' and even kill five of them.

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Regardless, Orion felt a heavy weight being lifted from his heart, a wave of relief washing through his body upon finally having answered one of his most troublesome questions.

"But that isn't all," Aegis of the Arctic Deity continued. "You see, after their futile attempts, the blame was placed on Naka. With the disappearance of the 'Nine Greed Gods', the 'Seven Great Gods' shifted their attention to the only remaining threat. With Naka present, humanity could not reclaim the earth and return to its former glory."

'Unable to sit back any longer, the 'Seven Great Gods' challenged Naka with a proposed deal: if they lost, they would pick a territory and allow the human race to prosper there, leaving the rest for the other races. However, if they won, they would return, along with the gods, to the world they had come from, allowing humans to reclaim all their territories."

"However, as though history was trying to repeat itself, the 'Seven Great Gods' launched a covert attack on Naka with the single aim of eliminating him," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, sighing deeply for the umpteenth time.

He could remember the event as though it was yesterday, and considering the stakes of that battle, it might as well be one of the memories he would never forget.

"So, who won?" Orion asked, now understanding why neither side of the 'Nine Greed Gods' and the 'Seven Great Gods' had emerged victorious in their battle against each other. He was very curious to know who emerged victorious in the battle of Naka against all the 'Seven Great Gods.'

Although he had his doubts, Orion patiently awaited Aegis of the Arctic Deity's response.

"Unfortunately, I am afraid that I do not yet know the answer to that," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded, his ancient voice resonating across the space.

Hearing Aegis of the Arctic Deity's response, Orion's expression instantly morphed into a deep frown.

"I don't know who won because, unfortunately, I cannot remember anything that happened during that battle," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded, exhaling deeply. "The one thing I do know is that something or someone during that battle caused the emergence of the Vylkr vines, plunging the world into the mess it is today."

Every hair on Orion's body stood on end. He couldn't even correctly gulp down as he absorbed Aegis of the Arctic Deity's last sentence.

So that was how the Vylkr vines had appeared?

Although Orion didn't know what had caused the emergence of the Vylkr vines, he had always viewed them as something strange yet special. But, hearing that they were most likely the aftereffects of a battle between seven manmade gods and a god of unknown origins made him understand that it was much more special and stranger than he had expected.

"That is all I can remember about Naka and the events that led up until now," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said.

Orion exhaled deeply, nodding in understanding at Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words.

Although he could sense that there were still missing pieces of information, he also felt that Aegis of the Arctic Deity was deliberately hiding something.

Despite this, he decided to make do with what he had received and continue asking the rest of the troublesome questions on his mind.

"Do you have anything else that you want to a--" Aegis of the Arctic Deity began, but just as he was about to complete his sentence, a voice suddenly resonated in the air, interrupting him.

Aerialia, who had been waiting silently all this time, suddenly opened her mouth and spoke. "Is everything thou hast just spoken true?"

She suppressed the rising and falling emotions within her chest, narrowing her eyes at the giant golden pair, trying to grasp the reality of the events she had just heard.

Even though she found it hard to believe, the fact that she was here now proved that the god in front of her might be telling the truth, as all these things had happened when they had settled down within this world.

"Goddess Aerialia, former goddess of the shining light. A goddess who went to extremes to save her children, consuming the Divine Mysteries of the goddess of the forge and the god of hunt and slaughter, dimming her once-shining light to become the goddess of the hunting moon. It's a pleasure to finally see you after such a long time," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, his eyes focused on Aerialia.

"Do I know you?" Aerialia asked, furrowing her brows in deep thought as she pondered whether she had met the god in front of her before.

"No, you don't know me. However, I have made it my business to know about the gods who went against all the odds and managed to secure one of the stellar gates for themselves and their children. Congratulations on making it into this new world, goddess Aerialia, the goddess of the hunting moon," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said.

Aerialia didn't receive Aegis of the Arctic Deity's congratulations with open arms; instead, she narrowed her eyes at him.

"Who art thou, and how didst thou end up in this manner?" she asked.

Orion kept his ears perked, eager to hear Aegis of the Arctic Deity's response, especially considering he had left that part out during his explanation.

"I am sorry, goddess Aerialia, but that is information I am not ready to share right now," Aegis of the Arctic Deity replied, exhaling deeply.

Aerialia frowned.

Orion exhaled in disappointment. Somehow, he had a feeling that Aegis of the Arctic Deity wouldn't answer that question, or else he would have explained who he was when he narrated the previous events.

"As long as there hath been no enmity between us in the past, I honestly care not whether thou chooseth to reveal thy identity or not. But regardless, I would very much like to know if everything thou hast just spoken is the truth," Aerialia said as she stared fiercely at the large pair of golden eyes.

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"I can assure you beyond all reasonable doubts that every word I've just uttered is the truth," Aegis of the Arctic Deity replied, "Besides, I have no reason to lie, so there's no reason for me to hide the truth."

Aerialia, however, continued to look at the large pair of golden eyes with varying emotions etched on her face.

"What do you think of your new apostles, goddess Aerialia?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity said immediately after noticing that Aerialia was about to ask another question.

Aerialia furrowed her brows with a frown as she turned her gaze to look at the unconscious Crystalforge Clan's warriors behind. She withdrew her gaze back forward and shook her head at Aegis of the Arctic Deity, "I never sought this. Besides, dost thou not know that 'tis against the rules to employ another god's blood to create an illegitimate apostle?"

"Oh, but the thought that the rule was no longer in place considering the number of illegitimate apostles used during the 'Great War'," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded.

"That was during the 'Great War,' so it was normal that a few rules were broken," Aerialia replied, her lips twitching in irritation as she thought about the countless rules that had been broken during the 'Great War.'

But she had also broken a few rules herself to secure a stellar gate for her and her children, so who was she to argue?

Meanwhile, Orion's ears couldn't help but twitch uncontrollably.

Apostles?

What were they? When did Aerialia get an apostle?

Orion's mind raced with many questions as he pondered how Aerialia could have acquired an apostle when she was with them throughout this time and what it entailed.

Seeing Orion's thoughtful expression, Aegis of the Arctic Deity focused his attention on him.

"Do you remember the 'Divine blood' you collected during the trial?" he asked.

"Yes," Orion responded.

He hadn't forgotten about it and was only waiting for Aegis of the Arctic Deity to finish explaining what he knew about Naka so that he could explain why he was sent off the mountain and what had happened to the 'Divine blood'.

"Alright. Since you might not be able to understand, I should explain it first. You see, a god rarely grants a mortal their 'Divine blood' as it contains their 'Divine essence', and in such cases that they do, such a mortal will be granted the privilege of becoming their apostle. As for what they do, they are given a small set of their god's abilities to use. However, in return, they would provide eternal servitude and loyalty to their god and are a god's hands and limbs willing to carry out whichever task that is given to them by their god."

"Of course, there is still a choice to break free; however, as a mortal, breaking a promise made with a god is the worst thing one could do, and extracting the 'Divine blood' from the individual is something that even I, in my current form, would find difficult to do. So, I wanted to wait and hear your decision on whether you want to merge with the 'Divine blood' or not," Aegis of the Arctic Deity replied.

Orion's face suddenly folded up into a frown. "So you mean..."

"Yes, once you become a divine apostle, there is no going back. And although there are some limitations, considering that you will be granted access to the divine abilities of a god, I think the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages."

Orion thought deeply at Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words before redirecting his attention back to the large pair of golden eyes. "Are there any other reasons why you waited for my decision regarding the 'Divine blood'?" he asked.

Although he was relieved after hearing Aegis of the Arctic Deity's explanation of why he hadn't merged the 'Divine blood' with his body after the trial was over, he wanted to know if there were any other reasons that made Aegis of the Arctic Deity consciously hesitate about doing such a thing.

"There is another reason," Aegis of the Arctic Deity admitted. "It's related to the Vylkr energy currently stored in you," he said, briefly focusing his attention on the rest of the warriors that had followed from the village. "Or should I say all of you? There are different kinds of energy in this world, and each represents a race's strength, so listen carefully as I explain them all," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, focusing his gaze back on Orion.

Orion nodded and listened as Aegis of the Arctic Deity explained.

The more he explained, the more Orion couldn't help but be stunned and suddenly realized why the Prismers seemed strong but actually appeared weak.

According to Aegis of the Arctic Deity, there are several types of energy, with the most paramount being the 'Primordial energy' and 'Divine energy' exclusively wielded by the True gods, gods, or any entities associated with the divine. Then there was 'Magical energy', from which other energies were derived, like 'Celestial energy'—a strength drawn from the stars and other celestial bodies. There was 'Dragononic energy', which he had already guessed which kind of race harnessed it before Aegis of the Arctic Deity had even mentioned dragon kins.

Another type was 'Elemental energy', drawn from classical elements like water, fire, earth, and air. Some beings, like golems and other races, were purely elemental. Additionally, there was 'Nature energy', drawn from the natural world, which was what Anara and the tree nymphs used.

The higher the rank of energy of a race, the stronger they are, and the less effort they would have to put in to become stronger than others at a lower rank.

In other words, it was simply a case of quality over quantity.

According to what Aegis of the Arctic Deity had also said, it wasn't that the energies were less flexible than others, but instead, the potency of their uses was much more powerful.

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For example, if a dragon were to face a pure elemental being, the dragon would come out victorious if its quantity of elemental energy didn't surpass that of the dragon since it could not surpass the 'Dragononic energy' in quality.

As for whether the two could come together, Orion pondered the possibilities. Wouldn't various races choose to crossbreed with those possessing higher-ranked energy to bear powerful offspring for future generations?

Aegis of the Arctic Deity had emphasized that the higher the rank of energy, the easier it was to use and manipulate those below it. Even without crossbreeding, controlling lower energies was still possible, while it was the opposite for lesser-ranked energies.

Considering these thoughts, Orion decided to seek clarification from Aegis of the Arctic Deity. He also wanted to understand where the Prismerions race fell in this hierarchy, as he was still a bit confused about the kind of energy they utilized.

"Yes, you are correct. Although the higher the rank of energy, the harder it is for one to procreate, it doesn't mean that some races, like the dragons, were unwilling to try it. That's why there are various dragon kins, some of which have elemental traits while still retaining their dragononic essence."

"We gods were also curious to see the results of these experiments, as some of the other gods had gone to great lengths to ensure their children were more unique. However, certain limitations were imposed to prevent things from going too far," explained Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

"As for the Prismerions, all I can say is that each energy comes with its own characteristics. Even though some gods hesitated to take the risk and preferred utilizing magical energy, the source from which other energies are derived, they could still tap into the unique forms of energy associated with different races."

"The higher the rank of energy, the more challenging it is for such beings not naturally attuned to sense and utilize it. This is why races harnessing magical energy, like the Prismerions, are among the most diverse, capable of competing with others using higher-ranked energies if they can sense them. Because of this, races like this emphasize the importance of both the quality and quantity of their energy over that of other races," elaborated Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

Orion nodded in comprehension. It became clear why the Prismerions possessed diverse abilities and techniques—they could sense other forms of energy used by unique races.

Having absorbed Aegis of the Arctic Deity's explanations, Orion fixed his gaze on him.

"What about Vylkr energy? You've covered the most paramount kinds of energy and their ranks, but you haven't mentioned Vylkr energy," he inquired, posing one of the most troublesome questions lingering in his mind.

"Vylkr energy?" Aerialia muttered, turning her head sharply to fix her gaze on Orion. With a furrowed brow, she scrutinized him. Although she could tell that something had happened to the Crimson Great Sword which she had left behind, which in turn affected the Crimson Great Sword mark, she could also sense that the energy he utilized was somehow also connected to the changes in the Crimson Great Sword and its mark.

"Is that the manner of energy thou art using?" she questioned.

"Yes," Orion affirmed, nodding.

Aerialia continued to study him intently.

Meanwhile, the large pair of golden eyes remained silent for a full minute, a deep exhale breaking the serenity of the space.

"The Vylkr energy is the most dangerous and volatile kind of energy I have ever encountered in all my life. It's more ferocious than the dragonic energy and carries even more might than the Celestial energy. The only thing that I can compare it to is the divine energy..." Aegis of the Arctic began, only to be abruptly interrupted.

"Divine energy! Dost thou mean the energy within him is comparable to that of divine energy? Impossible!" Aerialia exclaimed in disbelief, her gaze fixed sceptically on the large pair of golden

eyes. Doubt clouded her mind as she pondered whether this being was truly a god or merely a clever impostor.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity shifted his attention towards Aerialia.

Detecting scepticism in her eyes, he addressed her concerns, saying, "I can understand your doubts. It's not easy to believe that there is an energy that's comparable to the divine energy, especially when it's not the Primordial energy. However, considering that each kind of energy possesses unique characteristics, goddess Aerialia, would you like to know one of the defining traits of Vylkr energy?" His gaze remained fixed on her figure.

Aerialia nodded quietly in response.

"It's consumption," he said.

Aegis of the Arctic refocused his gaze on Orion. "It doesn't matter what it is—be it energy, being, or anything in particular—it will be completely consumed by the Vylkr energy as long as it is placed in its midst," he explained.

"Now, goddess Aerialia, where would you rank an energy that is capable of contending with 'Divine energy' and even consuming it whole?" he asked.

"Impossible!" Aerialia muttered loudly. Slowly, she shifted her gaze towards Orion, focusing on him.

"The only reason I haven't compared it to the Primordial energy is because, as a god who has witnessed the might of Primordial energy, even though it was challenging for me to accept that fact when I encountered such a revelation, it is already reasonable enough for me to place it on par with Divine energy."

"That's why I was astonished when I met you and wondered how a human could possess and control such an extremely volatile energy, ranked as powerful as Divine energy," Aegis of the Arctic Deity explained.

He withdrew his gaze from Orion and Aerialia and focused on the warriors behind him.

"Although I had my doubts before, since this matter also concerns the Vylkr vines, seeing as there are several others who are also capable of utilizing the Vylkr energy, please tell me how you were able to harness the Vylkr energy?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked.

Chapter 535 Confirmation

Orion turned his head to look at Aerialia, who was also waiting for his response with a curious and sceptical gaze, before refocusing his attention back at Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

Staring at the large pair of golden eyes, Orion opened his mouth, "I eat it," he responded.

Silence enveloped them for a few moments.

"Do you mean you harness the Vylkr energy by eating the Vylkr vines?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked after a few seconds of deeply pondering over Orion's words.

Orion nodded in response.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity hummed as if pondering deeply about Orion's words.

Meanwhile, Aerialia, who had also heard Orion's answer, couldn't help but widen her eyes in disbelief once she heard Orion's response and Aegis of the Arctic Deity's explanation.

She scrutinized Orion from head to toe again, as though she couldn't believe anything he had just uttered.

At that moment, Aegis of the Arctic Deity's voice sounded out once more in the air.

"Very well, if what you have said is true, then I hope you don't mind showing us a demonstration."

Orion shook his head in response.

"No, I don't mind, but I think it would be hard to get a Vylkr vine since we are too deep within the mountains," Orion said.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity snorted in response, "I have my ways, so don't worry about that," he said before using the same method that brought Orion outside the mountain, to create a small passage connecting the outside to the centre where they were now.

Orion noticed the tiny passage, enough for one or two Vylkr vines to pass through, and remembered that Aegis of the Arctic Deity could control the mountain, as he had mentioned earlier.

He had been so immersed in the explanation that he almost forgot.

Nevertheless, within three breaths, two one-star Vylkr vines slithered their way through the entrance, heading straight toward him.

Before the Vylkr vines could reach his legs, Orion bent down and grabbed onto one with his left hand. He twisted it before activating his gift, charring them to bits before successfully cutting them off.

At that moment, Aegis of the Arctic Deity closed back the entrance.

He naturally wanted to see how Orion would deal with the Vylkr vines and couldn't help but be surprised when he saw him grabbing hold of the Vylkr vines and charring them off with lightning using his bare hands, as though they were mere sticks.

Nonetheless, under the gazes of Aegis of the Arctic Deity and Aerialia, Orion brought the Vylkr vine to his mouth and immediately bit down on it before swallowing it and digesting the Vylkr energy.

He allowed it to flow around his body, gradually merging with the remaining Vylkr energy within his containers.

"It's true; you can really harness the Vylkr energy by eating the Vylkr vines," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said.

He exhaled deeply and added, "I'm sorry, but this is something that I'll need some time to digest."

Aerialia, however, continued to scrutinize his every being.

"Is there anything else you would like to ask?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked once more.

Orion nodded in response.

"Back when I defeated White Flame, a small white flame entered into my chest, so I was hoping you could give me an explanation of what it was," he asked, wanting to solve this problem since Aerialia had refused to give him any explanation before asking about anything else.

"The white flame that entered your chest is probably a residue from White Flame's failure to transform into a true god," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded.

"What kind of residue is it?" Orion asked curiously, hoping for a more straightforward explanation.

"I cannot reveal the secrets of transforming into a true god, as it is forbidden for a human to possess such knowledge. However, I can tell you that the residue is related to the 'Divine Mysteries.'"

"What are the 'Divine Mysteries'?"

"The 'Divine Mysteries' is an unconscious and conscious plane of existence and nonexistence. Think of it as the home of the gods, where we draw our strength. I've shared the same information with the Prismerion warriors, and unfortunately, that's all I can disclose," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded. "Nevertheless, it's impossible for me to extract the residue from you right now. You don't need to worry, as it's harmless to mortals and might even offer some benefits in the future."

Although Orion had some doubts about what Aegis of the Arctic Deity had said, he had no choice but to nod in understanding. He focused on seeking more information about the residue and knowledge of the 'Divine Mysteries' from Aerialia.

Since she already knew what it was and was one of the gods he knew, he had no choice but to find a way to lessen her grudge and make her speak. Even if he could trust that Aegis of the Arctic Deity was telling the truth, he still didn't fully trust everything that he had said and would only do so once he confirmed it from various other sources.

But considering the amount of time that would take, and since he didn't know how yet, he could only wish that a certain princess had the information he needed and was no longer required to hide true herself from him.

Just as Orion opened his mouth to ask another question about why Aegis of the Arctic Deity had left him out of the mountain immediately after the trial, he paused, watching as the large pair of golden eyes narrowed and focused his attention upwards.

After a few seconds, Aegis of the Arctic Deity withdrew his gaze and refocused it on Orion.

"Although I would like to keep answering your questions, it seems like something is happening above concerning you, which you would have to deal with first before we continue this conversation," he said.

"The tree nymph you brought previously has fully recovered and is currently searching for you within the garden. So, the Guardians of the Garden are in a dire situation that requires your help to prevent the garden from being destroyed," Aegis of the Arctic Deity added.

Chapter 536 Saria has recovered!

He had received complaints from the Pixies about the current situation in the garden. He understood that a particular tree nymph had come with Orion previously, and was now threatening them all to burn down the garden if they didn't provide a way for her to get down here or find Orion and bring him to her.

Hearing Aegis of the Arctic's words, Orion's eyes couldn't help but light up with excitement.

Saria had fully recovered!

Now that she had fully recovered, wouldn't transporting her back to the village be even easier? He would only need to focus on taking care of the problem within the Prismarian kingdom without worrying about her health.

Thinking about this, Orion exhaled inwardly in relief before he nodded his head in response to Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

"Okay, I can tell that you have a lot of things to deal with, so I'll be waiting for you here until you are done," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said.

He immediately took back the divine energy that he poured upon the warriors to render them unconscious, causing them to wake up one by one before he opened a passage into the garden for them to pass through.

However, a voice immediately rang out in the air.

"Leave the crimson blade here. I would like to converse with him and also pose some questions personally," Aerialia said seriously as she looked at Orion.

Seeing that Fifi and the others were slowly stirring back awake, Orion shook his head in response. "No, you are coming with me," he replied. He understood that there were a lot of things that Aerialia wanted to ask about and gain information due to her current situation.

However, considering that he also needed some of the information that Aerialia wanted to ask about, there was no way he would leave her alone to learn about that information herself, especially since she purposefully didn't want to share some of the information he wanted with him.

Hearing Orion's response, Aerialia felt her brows twitch and instantly wanted to retort; however, the moment she remembered her current strengths and weaknesses, she refrained from saying anything that would escalate the issue and recomposed herself immediately before opening her mouth to speak.

"With thy strength and that of everyone else, I don't think there is aught else that would require thee to wield the crimson blade for a while," Aerialia said.

"Of course, I don't think so, too, but I think I'll feel safer if I have the crimson greatsword by my side," Orion responded.

She still hadn't released the restriction on the greatsword, and it also didn't matter what she said, as he wouldn't be leaving the greatsword here.

Regardless, even though Aerialia had already guessed the real reason why Orion didn't want to leave the sword here, she still felt irritated that she was arguing with a mortal this way.

"There are other reasons why thou dost not wish to leave the sword here, right?" Aerialia asked, furrowing her brows with a frown. When she had sealed a huge portion of her soul with the crimson greatsword, she hadn't expected to encounter this situation.

Instead, she had anticipated guiding the last of her children who would listen to her instructions without hesitation, watching over him as he took care of himself, and somehow rekindling the last of the winged race bloodline, even if it wouldn't be pure any longer.

Just as Orion was about to respond, a hand tightened around his grip, causing him to seal his lips quickly as he shifted his gaze back below.

He witnessed Fifi with her eyes wide awake.

"Orion, who are you talking to?" Fifi asked as she stared at Orion nervously.

Firstly, Orion helped her back up to her feet before he responded, "It's nothing. I was just rearranging my thoughts."

Fifi looked around for a moment before nodding her head in response, "What happened?" she asked, focusing her attention on the large pair of golden eyes staring at them from up above, whom she believed was responsible for making them unconscious.

"He wanted to talk privately with me. We will be leaving here soon, so don't worry," Orion responded.

Although Fifi could tell Orion was hiding something from her, since Orion had already said he would explain everything to them, she didn't see the need to press him about it now.

She would wait until they were done taking care of everything before deciding to ask him about it if he still seemed hesitant.

"Alright," Fifi replied, nodding in response.

A loud ancient sound suddenly boomed in the space around them and rang within their ears.

"Since everyone has woken up, I will open a passage into the garden, so be prepared!" Aegis of the Arctic Deity declared.

The Crystalforge clan's warriors immediately bowed their heads and thanked Aegis of the Arctic once more for his help, for allowing them to secure the means with which they had saved the Prismerion race from the curse.

Suddenly, a large gaping hole slowly spread out from the centre of where they stood, swallowing all of them in, as there was no longer a solid place under their feet for them to stand.

As he hadn't expected Aegis of the Arctic Deity to transport them to the garden like this, Orion immediately resummoned the crimson greatsword back into his crimson great word mark to avoid any accidents.

He tightened his grip on Fifi.

They were instantly poured back out from the ground in less than three breaths. The ground quickly sealed back up, and they landed on a field of fresh grass filled with multicoloured gemstones embedded within the ground. Several large, bright, dazzling arrays of crystals seemed to make up the sky, shining as brightly as the sun.

Some of them quickly snapped their gaze away as they got back up to their feet.

"Where are we now?" Seth asked, taking in their current location.

The surroundings bore an uncanny resemblance to the farm, except for the various gemstones of different colours sticking out of the ground and adorning the trees. Everywhere looked familiar yet strangely different as he turned his attention to Orion with a frown on his face.

Chapter 537 Saria has recovered! (2)

Before Orion could say a word, Iris immediately responded, "We are in the garden, which is a place where we Prismerions get our food, and anything that we need to sustain our lives."

Seth shifted his attention to Iris and nodded in understanding. Still, the frown on his face did not loosen up.

"That should mean that she is here, right?" Seth asked as he turned to take a good look around the garden once more.

Already knowing who Seth was talking about since the warriors had asked them some questions, which they had used to learn about each other little by little while Orion was away, Iris nodded in response.

"Yes, if she's anywhere in the Prismerian kingdom, then I can assure you that she is here," she responded.

After receiving confirmation from Iris, Seth's gaze met Orion's. It was as though they had a tacit understanding of what they wanted to say without uttering a word to each other.

It was easy for Orion to discern that Seth also wanted to know what had happened when they had gone unconscious, but he had already promised to explain everything to them properly later. As such, he quickly shifted his attention towards the several tiny incoming humanoid beings in the distance, whom he recognized as the Pixies, approaching them rapidly.

Initially, Orion was relieved, thinking the Pixies knew their current location and had come to help. However, as he squinted his eyes and observed them heading in their direction armed with pointing sticks and small metal spears, Orion realized that they might have perceived them as intruders, considering how they had just materialized out of thin air.

He wasn't the only one who noticed; everyone else could see the multitude of armed pixies approaching.

"STOP!" Iris screamed at the top of her lungs, immediately racing forward and standing protectively before Orion.

The other Crystalforge clan's warriors followed suit, positioning themselves defensively in front of the remaining warriors.

Observing the Pixies persisting in their advance, Iris and the other members of the Crystalforge Clan promptly activated their clan abilities. Almost immediately, a thick crystal wall materialized in the air before them, some sections smooth while others were rough, and it quickly extended to the ground.

The Pixies came to a sudden stop in mid-flight, their realization evident as they recognized the identity of the intruders.

Taking note of this, Iris and the other Crystalforge warriors swiftly dissipated the crystal wall they had conjured, choosing not to escalate the tension with the Guardians of the Garden any further.

The Pixies diverted their attention from the peculiar newcomers, briefly examining them before their gaze shifted to Orion.

Instantly, their eyes widened in surprise upon spotting him. Some hurriedly went to alert the tree nymph of Orion's return, while others charged toward him, aiming to corner him.

"Don't worry, I don't think they want to harm me," Orion reassured Fifi, his words directed at her as she seemed ready to take action when she noticed the Pixies approaching.

Reluctantly, she halted her steps, observing the relaxed expression on Orion's face. She watched as the Pixies circled around him, forming a small hurricane of small humanoid-winged figures buzzing around him.

...

After a few minutes of anticipation, Orion spotted a familiar tree nymph with a deep blue upper body and a light crimson lower body. She was clad in a tight vine, short dress, swiftly heading in his direction.

It was Saria!

With teary eyes filled with emotions, she raced towards him, not slowing down until she arrived before him.

Before the eyes of everyone, the hurricane of pixies immediately dispersed into the air.

Some sighed in relief as they returned to their previous activities, while others lingered to watch and keep an eye on the unknown figures following Orion.

"...Orion.. Hicc... Hiccc... I thought something bad had happened to you! Why didn't you come back and tell me you're okay? Why.. Hicc... Hiccc~" Saria cried out emotionally, wrapping all four limbs around Orion as if afraid to let him go.

"Hicc... I was so worried that you had died, and I wouldn't be able to see you again," she added.

Orion embraced her, preventing her from falling, and gently comforted her. Using his right hand, he calmly brushed her hair, gazed into her teary eyes, and said, "I'm sorry for making you worry."

"Alright. But don't do it again," Saria responded, staring at Orion with swollen, teary eyes and a firm expression that was almost too cute for him to resist.

Upon hearing Saria's words, Orion responded firmly, "Okay, I won't do it again," tightening his grip gently around Saria before jokingly adding, "Although I don't mind this, however, what do you think would happen if rumours about us spread around the Village because of our closeness?"

Saria buried her head on Orion's shoulders, "I don't mind," she said, her voice almost as small as a mosquito.

"Hahaahaa... If that's the case, then I think you should tell it to their faces so they can hear you clearly," Orion said.

Even if he wasn't consciously trying to get another tree nymph partner like Anara and was just trying to help her recover, it seems that his charm was too strong for her to resist. Well, not that he was complaining since he planned to have a big family after all.

However, just in case, he would have to find out the reason why Anara had given birth prematurely and the solution for Grace's current condition so that the same thing doesn't happen again.

Saria, however, withdrew her head from Orion's shoulder and stared at him curiously before she shifted to the side. Her eyes first landed on the Crystalforge clan's warriors before they landed on Fifi and the rest of the other warriors.

Both her eyes immediately widened in disbelief. She examined them briefly, looking at their familiar tulga, the weapons in their hands, and the bags hanging behind their backs just to make sure that she wasn't just seeing things before she came to the conclusion that they were really here.

"The warriors from the village! How did they get here?" Her eyes instantly snapped back to Orion, who was staring at her with a playful gaze.

"You!" Saria wanted to speak, but the moment she remembered her previous words, her cheeks burned, and she immediately buried her head back into Orion's shoulder.

Meanwhile, the warriors, especially Fifi, couldn't help but raise a brow as they stared at the shy Saria and Orion, pondering deeply about how close they had gotten.

It seems she also needs to keep an eye on Saria just in case, as she could guess that she might also become her new sister in the future.

But just thinking about a tree nymph and a human coming together to become partners, Fifi couldn't help but frown, as she had never heard about a situation like that happening in the village before, not even in a story.

Also, even if they became partners, from what she knew, tree nymphs couldn't get pregnant, which was the truth, as she had also never seen or heard about one before. And even though Orion's incredibly fertile semen could impregnate a woman like herself, Grandma Celia, and the others, she still had her doubts that it couldn't be that fertile enough to impregnate a tree nymph.

'It seems that I will really need to talk with him about this,' Fifi thought as she focused her attention back on Saria and Orion, who were muttering something into each other's ears.

She wondered what they were talking about.

After finishing his discussion with Saria, Orion nodded with a serious expression. Since he disappeared, Saria had just told him how the Princess of the Garden seemed unwell.

Of course, she wouldn't have noticed if the Pixies hadn't told her about it and asked her if she had anything they could use to help her since this sort of thing had never happened before.

As for how Saria had managed to hear the Pixies' words, even though their voices were too small for even him as a warrior with acute ears to understand correctly, Saria had mentioned how she didn't have to strain her ears for her to understand them properly and could also communicate with them.

Regardless, after hearing about the Princess of the Garden's current condition, Orion understood that he had to get to her as quickly as he could, as this also concerned the safety of his unborn child. Allowing Saria to get down from his body, Orion quickly turned to Fifi.

"I need to check on something urgently before we continue with the next mission, so for now, you can check if Saria has properly healed and then prepare to take her out of here and back to the village as quickly as possible," Orion said to her and the rest of the warriors, who all nodded their heads firmly.

Their primary mission was to rescue Saria, so seeing that Saria was okay, they were all relieved and were already mentally preparing to send her back to the village as quickly as possible and finally calm down the other tree nymphs who were surely going to become more agitated if they didn't make it back on time.

"Alright, we will wait here. Come back as soon as you can, okay?" Fifi responded, nodding her head in understanding.

Though she didn't know where Orion was going, looking at the worried expression, she understood that it was something extremely important that he had to take care of.

The other warriors also nodded in response.

"Alright, I'll be back soon," Orion replied.

He turned to the side and told Iris and the rest of the Crystalforge warriors to remain with the warriors until he returned before he speedily headed towards the direction where Saria had pointed out that the Princess of the Garden was.

However, in order not to get lost, considering how vast the Garden was, he quickly sought some help from the Guardians of the Garden, who only decided to show him the way after he revealed that he had the cure for the Princess of the Garden that could restore her to health.

After ten minutes of chasing the two Pixies that led him forward, flying quickly through the air, Orion finally reached his destination.

In front of him was the Princess of the Garden, seated on a large rock alone, with none of the Pixies around him. She stared out dazedly into the distance. The huge rock was familiar, as he had seen it the last time he visited her.

However, Orion could tell that the atmosphere before and now was different.

He took a step forward and called out to her, "Princess..." Just as he was about to complete his sentence, the crimson greatsword mark on his right arm burned more than ever before, causing Orion to halt in his steps and immediately summon the crimson greatsword.

The four-meter-long crimson greatsword, whose restriction hadn't been lifted yet, immediately entered Orion's grip while the other end collided with the ground.

The grassy soil around it collapsed with a slight "Bang," forming a spiderweb about fifty centimetres around it.

Nonetheless, even though Orion had tightly held the blade in time to prevent it from causing any more damage with his full strength, the collision and his voice were still enough to snap the Princess of the Garden out of her daze.

She slowly turned her head toward his direction.

"Orion..."

Orion observed as the Princess of the Garden called out to him in disbelief.

He watched as her slightly weak expression brightened, and her white irises, which could convince anyone that she was blind, widened in surprise.

"...Orion.." The Princess of the Garden's lips quivered, uttering his name once more as she gradually got back up from her seat on the large rock.

Nonetheless, just as she was about to take a step forward...

She froze. Halting her steps, she stared at the figure hovering beside Orion.

Her face was filled with fright, her eyes widening even further. Her legs grew weak and faltered, causing her to collapse to her knees.

However, before she reached the ground, she felt a strong, warm pair of arms wrapping around her body, stopping her fall.

Chapter 539 You Will Always Be My Beloved Princess (2)

Feeling the strong, warm arms wrapped around her body, the Princess of the Garden clutched Orion tightly.

Without hesitation, she hid her head on Orion's chest. Her body trembled as she opened her mouth and spoke, "Orion, please get me out of here."

Orion noticed the sudden shift in the Princess of the Garden's composure and couldn't help but frown. He released one of his arms from her waist and used it to grab her chin so that he could look into her eyes directly.

However, the Princess of the Garden immediately detached herself from his grip. Orion's frown deepened.

Before he could say a word, Aerialia's voice sounded behind him.

"Release her and step aside."

The Princess of the Garden trembled upon hearing that voice.

Unable to understand what was happening, Orion turned his head to the side and looked at Aerialia. She was staring at the Princess of the Garden, whose body was trembling fiercely in his arms, with a deep frown.

"I don't see any reason why I should..." Orion said.

Before he could complete his sentence, the Princess of the Garden's voice sounded out again. "Orion... Please..." Her voice sounded like a whimper, making Orion furrow his brows in confusion.

Just by observing Aerialia and the Princess of the Garden, he was aware that something was unfolding, a narrative he wasn't privy to. No matter how hard he tried to solve the puzzle, they eluded his understanding.

With a contemplative expression, Orion turned his gaze toward Aerialia, narrowing his eyes, "Can you tell me what's going on right now, and how the two of you seem to know each other somehow?" he asked.

He was no fool; though he couldn't grasp the current events, the scene suggested a connection between Aerialia and the Princess of the Garden.

What puzzled him even more was that such a connection shouldn't exist. As far as he knew, Aerialia and the Princess of the Garden had never met before today.

Unless...

Orion's eyes widened in realization.

He had long wondered about the identity of the Princess of the Garden, and if she was familiar with Aerialia, who had only recently arrived in this world, then didn't that mean...

Orion snapped his head downward to gaze at the trembling figure of the Princess of the Garden before swiftly turning to Aerialia.

He narrowed his eyes at the winged goddess and asked, "Do you know her? Have you two met before?"

Aerialia shook her head in response. "No, we haven't," she replied, "But... Her scent feels so familiar."

Orion furrowed his brow in confusion. Aerialia's words only added to the enigma of the situation. "What do you mean?" Orion asked, studying the Princess of the Garden, whose trembling intensified after overhearing their conversation.

"... Please, Orion... get me out of here," The Princess of the Garden pleaded, her quivering voice resonating through the air as her trembling hands tightly grasped Orion's bare arms.

Her reaction only deepened Orion's confusion and concern about what was happening.

At this point, he needed an explanation.

"What I mean to say is that her scent is akin to mine," Aerialia responded, narrowing her eyes at the unknown woman's trembling figure hiding herself on Orion's chest.

How could she miss it?

Certainly, if it were the signature of any other god, she would have taken some time to confirm if the energy signature she had sensed was correct. However, how could she not recognize her own scent?

How could she miss that the woman in front of her had an almost identical scent, if not exactly similar to hers?

"Similar to yours?" Orion repeated, still staring in confusion as he waited for an explanation.

"Yes, when an individual useth their magical energy, they release a unique signature that only those with heightened supernatural senses can detect. Of course, it might be difficult if I am not familiar with the races and the kind of energy they use. However, in this case, the signature around her is the same as mine."

"There is no way such a thing can be possible since I am standing right here, unless the woman thou art currently holding within thine arms is... me," Aerialia said, her gaze piercing daggers at the frozen unknown woman whose trembling figure seemed to have become stiff. "However, as I have said, such a thing should be impossible. So free her, and move out of the way. I need an explanation from her about what is going on here."

Upon hearing Aerialia's explanation, Orion's eyes widened in disbelief.

He withdrew his gaze and shifted it towards the Princess of the Garden, whose trembling body seemed to have stopped, but the grip on his arms didn't seem to loosen up.

What does she mean by saying that her signature and that of the Princess of the Garden are the same?

Taking a deep breath, Orion calmed his thoughts and stretched his hand towards her chin. He cupped his fingers under it and lifted her head upwards until her trembling, wide eyes stared into his.

Orion was about to call her name, but he immediately remembered that he still didn't know her real name yet, only her title. So, he went straight to the point, "... What does she mean that you possess the same signature as her? Tell me what is going on," Orion asked gently.

"I... I..." The Princess of the Garden's lips croaked as she struggled to speak.

Her eyes narrowed with drops of tears leaking down from her cheeks as she gulped down a mouthful of air before she paused, and then opened her mouth to speak again, "I'm sorry for not telling you about who I was earlier. But... But... I couldn't bring myself to tell you anything because I was so ashamed of who I was," she said.

She pulled herself out of Orion's arms reluctantly.

She moved towards the hovering Aerialia, who folded her wings behind her back, her foot pressing on the grassy soil before she instantly collapsed on all four limbs and weeping.

"... Please, goddess of the hunting moon, don't kill me," the Princess of the Garden said.

Tears rolled down her eyes as she grasped the grass tightly, waiting for Aerialia's reply.

Chapter 540 You Will Always Be My Beloved Princess (3)

"So thou knowest who I am," Aerialia asked, narrowing her eyes at the bowing woman before her.

"Yes," the Princess of the Garden replied.

"Since thou already knowest who I am, introduce thyself... who art thou?"

The Princess of the Garden took a deep gulp.

She responded, "I am the Princess of the Garden, born from your blood, essence, and soul. Aerialia, goddess of the hunting moon..." The Princess of the Garden paused as though trying to rearrange her thoughts before continuing, "...I am you."

At that moment, an unnatural silence enveloped their surroundings.

Upon listening to the Princess of the Garden's words, Orion immediately stood rooted on his spot; his eyes fixated on the Princess of the Garden's stiff figure.

Meanwhile, Aerialia's expression instantly became cold as she stared at the Princess of the Garden. Her words were as icy as her expression as she parted her lips and spoke, "Tell me, who is responsible for this?"

"Naka."

"Naka?"

"Yes, Naka. He was trying to recreate the goddess of the hunting moon from the crimson sword she had left behind. Still, unfortunately, he failed after I was made—a failed recreation of a goddess," The Princess of the Garden responded with quivering lips as she nodded.

She looked at the goddess before her, whose expression seemed to have morphed into an indescribable anger.

Aerialia clenched her fists tightly as she shivered in anger, "Naka! How dare thee? How dare thee attempt to recreate this goddess?" Aerialia said, her cold, piercing eyes filled with hate shooting towards the Princess of the Garden.

Although she had several other things that she wanted to say at this moment, she understood that she had to save them all until she met that god, Naka. Whether he is alive or not, she will make him pay for making such an abomination of her.

No, the woman before her was even worse than an abomination. A failed recreation of herself... what manner of audacity to try to recreate her?

With eyes burning with anger and hate, Aerialia could only think of one thing that could rid her of the extreme emotions currently raging within her.

So, she opened her mouth and said, "Kill yourself."

The Princess of the Garden's expression fell.

"There can only be one goddess in this life or the next. An abomination like thee has no place in this world, but because thou art me, I am willing to give thee a chance, Princess of the Garden... Kill yourself," Aerialia added.

"Enough!" Orion said. At that moment, he appeared before her, standing between her and the Princess of the Garden.

"Let us talk about this matter calmly," Orion said, with various emotions coursing through his heart. If he had known that things would become like this, he would have gone straight to the Prismerian kingdom before searching for the Princess of the Garden. But still, he knew that he couldn't blame himself for not knowing after all...

Who could have guessed that the real reason the Princess of the Garden had been hiding her true identity from him was not because she couldn't reveal it to him, but because she didn't possess an identity?

She was a living, breathing replica of Aerialia, without a name of her own. So, when she had introduced herself to him as the Princess of the Garden—

That was her one and only identity.

Orion clenched his teeth in anger.

Naka! Why does it have to be him?

At this point, Orion couldn't help but wonder why Naka seemed entangled in every crucial detail he had encountered. From the god his village served to the Prismerion race inside the mountain waiting for the day of their salvation, to White Flame's words about his betrayer, and now to Aegis of the Arctic Deity's explanations about the past—everything always involved...

Naka!

"Mortal, this is none of your concern. Move out of the way and let me purge that abomination from the surface of this world," Aerialia said, gritting those words through clenched teeth as she glared furiously at Orion, who was blocking her way.

Orion stared at Aerialia's hateful gaze, about to respond, when he felt a tight grip around his left leg. Turning his head backwards, he saw the Princess of the Garden gripping his ankle tightly, her blend of golden and green hair almost covering her pitiful expression.

She uttered, "It's okay, I can handle this myself," then shifted her gaze towards Aerialia, "Goddess of the hunting moon, please, I don't want to die... yet."

"Hey, no one is dying here," Orion said, his voice sounding out as he looked at the Princess of the Garden. He then shifted his attention towards Aerialia, unflinchingly staring at her raging gaze.

Aerialia, however, could only stare at Orion for a moment before she shifted her attention toward the kneeling Princess of the Garden.

"Tell me why I should spare your life, even if just for a moment, and permit such an abomination to continue living?" Aerialia demanded.

"You are going to spare her life because she is my partner," Orion declared, gritting his anger as he stared at Aerialia.

He had maintained a clear mind throughout the whole conversation, so he knew what Aerialia was currently feeling, and he understood that anyone else would find it distasteful and bitter to discover that someone had made an exact clone of them after their supposed death, especially for a goddess.

However, even though he might have understood her feelings, that didn't mean he would remain quiet and watch such a scene unfold.

"Even if she is a failed replica, there can only be one of us, one Aerialia. So, mortal, since thou dost not wish to step out of the way, as this matter doth not concern thee in any way, I will also give thee a choice," Aerialia said, shifting her attention back to Orion.

"What are they?" Orion responded with a deep frown, already disliking what Aerialia was about to say.