

Village Head 571

Chapter 571 In Search of Divine Aid

"You don't mean?" Selene said, recalling that the Crystalforge Elite warriors and Orion had confirmed the existence of another god right below the garden.

Although she wasn't sure if the god would be willing to help them, she understood the weight of the name 'god.'

Regardless of Orion's relationship with a god, she wasn't optimistic that the god would willingly assist them in resolving their predicament.

"Yes," Orion interrupted. He continued, "He's the only one who can help us with this predicament now."

Selene quickly shook her head, "No. I don't think it's proper for us to directly ask a god we've just learned about to solve a problem for us," Selene said.

Orion looked at Selene's hesitant expression and immediately understood she was just a little fearful about asking a god for help.

"How about this? I go and speak to him first to find out if he can help us, and then I'll let you all know if he's willing," Orion suggested, shaking his head as a sigh escaped his lips.

Hearing Orion's words, Selene bit the side of her lip nervously.

"Mom, please, let's give it a try," Crystalia said, turning her head to the side and staring at her mother with a pleading gaze.

Selene gazed at Crystalia's pleading expression and sighed internally before shifting her attention toward her husband.

Noticing his wife's gaze, King Brylon exhaled deeply and nodded weakly.

Seeing this, Selene sighed once more. She refocused her attention back on Orion and nodded in response.

"Alright, if that's the case, we will count on you. I will have someone help the King to the garden; you can go ahead," she responded.

Orion nodded in response. He nodded at Crystalia, Madam Seraphina, and the rest again before turning around and silently signalling Fifi as he walked towards the door.

Once they arrived outside with the door closed behind them, Fifi couldn't help but ask curiously, "Is she really your partner?" Although she had just witnessed an engagement, which appeared slightly similar to their village proposal, she still didn't want to believe any of it until she received confirmation from Orion himself.

Orion turned his head to the side to look at Fifi. He nodded his head with a smile on his lips. "Yes, she's my partner," he responded.

He suddenly furrowed his brows and asked, "What's the matter?" wanting to know what was on Fifi's mind.

"Nothing. I was just glad Celeste wouldn't complain if she found out, considering how beautiful she looks," Fifi responded with a cheeky smile.

"I thought that you would be worried about the fact that she's from a completely different race," Orion responded, looking at Fifi with a raised brow.

Fifi snorted at him in response. "Considering that it's you, I'm even surprised that you haven't made a tree nymph yet, considering that they are the only other race closer to us," Fifi said.

Orion couldn't help but harden his smile.

"What? Don't tell me that you've already had a tree nymph partner," Fifi asked, narrowing her gaze at Orion. However, before Orion could respond, her lips suddenly broke into a frown as she chuckled deeply, "Don't worry, I was only joking. You should look at your face," Fifi added.

Besides the fact that tree nymphs couldn't get pregnant, a tree nymph and a human becoming partners was something that the rest of the villagers, and even the tree nymphs, would laugh at once they heard of it because not only would such a thing never happen, as the men would instead focus on using their semen to help with the village's population and accumulate enough wealth for their old age, or find another woman to become partners with and have children, but even the tree nymphs themselves would never consider the possibility because it provided no value to them.

As such, it was just as ridiculous as it sounded.

Orion's smile tightened even more as he didn't know how to respond. Regardless, he shook his head internally and decided to postpone this matter for another time, seeing as this wasn't the best time to discuss it.

"Humph, it seems that you are teasing me," Orion said jokingly before he suddenly stretched his arms upwards and wrapped his arm around Fifi's shoulders, dragging her downwards while ruffling up her forehead amusingly.

Fortunately, Fifi lowered her large body frame and went along with the behaviour while joyfully laughing loudly, "Hehehe... Stop it," she said jokingly.

Meanwhile, the Prismerian Healers' Sanctuary healers looked at the two strange figures, a young man and woman playing cheerfully with each other and disregarding the world outside them. However, they quickly recognized who they were from the commotion and rumours already spreading throughout the kingdom.

They decided to disregard the scene and only steal a few glances to get a glimpse of the foreigners from outside the mountain, the strongest warriors that had ever graced the Prismerian kingdom, as they walked past them.

Within a few minutes, Orion and Fifi quickly halted their steps in front of another door. Orion decided to check if Elysia was doing well before heading to the garden.

As Orion opened the door and was about to enter, he stopped and looked at Fifi, who was positioning herself to stand guard outside the door.

"Don't you want to come in and see one of your sisters?" Orion asked with a raised brow.

"I thought you said that you both needed some privacy," Fifi responded, mirroring his expression.

"Don't worry; I was just concerned that she might feel intimidated and distressed about her injuries in her state of recovery," Orion responded.

"But since, she could be better by now. Wouldn't it be better for me to introduce her to one of her beautiful elder sisters?" Orion suggested.

Although the hierarchy for his women was based on when he had become partners with each of them, and not by their age, they never strictly adhered to such a hierarchy unless in special situations.

They had all expressed their love for him, making the hierarchy less significant. Now that he thought about it, he realized he never asked Crystalia and the others for their ages. Nonetheless, he would be able to do so once all this was over.

Chapter 572 Elysia's Health

Fifi couldn't help but smile when she heard Orion call her beautiful again.

No matter how often he had already told her, she still couldn't get used to hearing it directly from his lips. She nodded in response and followed Orion through the door, closing it behind them. Once inside, they saw a beautiful woman with white hair locs lying calmly on a bed, her injured leg comfortably elevated on a platform.

Her head snapped towards their direction, and her eyes flickered to Fifi, lingering on her for a few seconds before shifting back to Orion.

Her lips immediately arched into a smile.

"You are here," Elysia said.

"Why wouldn't I be here?" Orion responded. "Especially since you are pregnant with our child."

Elysia smiled sweetly. "Don't worry about the pregnancy. I'm afraid that if you keep coming here, you won't have the chance to complete everything you want to do in the kingdom any longer."

Deciding to divert the conversation, she rubbed her stomach and said, "Well, as you can see, I and our baby are okay," Elysia continued, adding quickly, "So come on, tell me, who is she?" Although she already had an idea since Orion had informed her previously about the fact that one of his partners was present.

As she took a good look at Fifi, she couldn't help but nod her head internally; sure enough, her husband had a variety of tastes in women.

Elysia couldn't help but think about what the rest of Orion's partners look like.

Orion nodded and introduced, "This is Fifi, your elder sister. Fifi, meet Elysia, your younger sister. I hope you two can get along well before we head back to the village," Orion said.

He knew that if Elysia and Fifi could bond well in a limited time, there was likely a chance that she would perfectly fit in with the others without any problems.

Before Elysia could respond, Orion turned to Fifi and added, "How about you stay here with her until I return?" Orion suggested.

Not only would he have peace of mind knowing that Elysia and his child were safe before he headed back to the Garden, but they could also get used to each other's presence this way.

Seeing through his intentions, Fifi sighed internally before nodding in response.

She knew that the other warriors were in the Garden, helping Saria prepare so they could leave the mountain, so she wasn't worried about his safety. She immediately focused her attention on her pregnant sister.

Seeing this, Orion smiled and immediately gave each of them a kiss on the cheeks, causing them to giggle before he quickly left the Prismarian Healers' Sanctuary, his voice echoing behind him.

"I'll be back soon."

Meanwhile, the women only nodded in response, smiling, before they turned their attention to each other and began to discuss.

"Was he always like this?" Elysia asked Fifi curiously.

Fifi grinned, "You have no idea how overprotective he can be when it comes to his partners and his children," she responded, with a slight chuckle.

Elysia kept asking questions about Orion and his other partners back in the village. Meanwhile, Fifi patiently responded to all of them, even going as far as asking questions about the Prismerian Kingdom.

Elysia reciprocated, answering all of Fifi's questions patiently and no longer doubting whether or not she could fit in with Orion's family.

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Garden

As Orion descended into the depths of the Divine Lake, he quickened his pace upon spotting the familiar, massive hole at its bottom. Sensing the potent and familiar pulling force emanating from it, he willingly surrendered to the irresistible pull, allowing himself to be drawn into the depths of the massive hole.

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In the midst of an inky black void, a swirling mass of water suddenly erupted, releasing Orion. Swiftly regaining control of his breath, he composed himself, lifting his gaze to meet a pair of large, golden, slitted eyes fixated on him.

"Have you completed your affairs within the mountain?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked, awaiting Orion's reply.

Orion nodded in response. Before his descent, he had pondered ways to seek the Aegis of the Arctic Deity's assistance in dealing with the artefacts bound to King Brylon and Queen Selene.

However, unable to devise a plan, he opted for honesty. So, despite his lingering doubts about Aegis of the Arctic Deity, Orion began explaining the dire situation of the King and Queen, hoping for a solution.

Listening to Orion's words, the Aegis of the Arctic Deity maintained a contemplative silence for a moment.

"You are aware that I am not supposed to interfere in their lives, no matter what directly," Aegis of the Arctic Deity's voice echoed throughout the inky black void.

Orion shook his head in response. "I am. However, shouldn't your purpose here be on the verge of completion, with White Flame dead?" he replied, his gaze unwavering on the Arctic Deity.

"So, I don't think whether you are allowed to participate any more should even matter," Orion added.

He knew that Aegis of the Arctic Deity's disdain and hatred for the Prismerton race might be the only hindrance to helping rid the artefact. Thus, he had already devised a plan to address this, contingent upon Aegis of the Arctic Deity's response.

"Oh, you raise a valid point; now that White Flame is dead, my purpose is indeed on the verge of completion. However, what convinces you that I would willingly assist such a treacherous race that values nothing beyond themselves?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked, narrowing his large, slitted golden eyes at Orion.

Orion maintained his gaze on the Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

"Don't misunderstand me. In the past, I wouldn't have sought your assistance for them, as they didn't deserve it. However, now I am convinced that you can help us solve this problem because they've earned it," Orion responded with a confident smile.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity narrowed his large, slitted golden eyes on Orion.

Chapter 573 [Bonus Chapter] Confrontation With Aegis Of The Arctic Deity

"They have earned it?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked, his voice filled with confusion.

"Yes, they've earned it," Orion affirmed.

"Before they became a treacherous race worthy of scorn, remember, they were once under Naka's wing. In essence, they were Naka's children. Regardless of their past actions, consider that they were sealed within this mountain as a curse. The only way to break free and redeem themselves was to survive and complete the trial designed for them, all under your supervision," Orion explained.

The Aegis of the Arctic Deity questioned, "What are you trying to say?"

"Shouldn't it be obvious by now that the Prismeron race no longer deserves to be called a treacherous race because they have been redeemed? They can no longer be looked at with scorn or hatred for whatever they had done in the past, as they have completed the trial and have become Naka's children once more," Orion asserted, his gaze piercing straight towards Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

"And as the only being tasked with supervising such a trial, Aegis of the Arctic Deity, are you trying to say that they are not free from their punishment, or perhaps you are trying to say that Naka had no idea know what he was doing, or his words or rules didn't matter?" he added.

As Orion finished speaking, he felt the space around him briefly shake before quickly stabilizing.

Orion witnessed this scene and inwardly sighed in relief. This was what he had expected.

He had been attempting to uncover the identity of Aegis of the Arctic Deity or gather some snippets of information about him, intending to figure out more later.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity's reaction confirmed that he was some kind of helper to Naka, not just a friend overseeing his friend's children and the outcome of their punishment, whether they would succeed or not.

"You truly have a way with words, human," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, narrowing his eyes at Orion.

"It's been ages since someone questioned my words. Besides..." Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words paused, and suddenly, a divine pressure rolled down from the heavens like an enormous flood, pressing heavily against Orion's shoulders and almost causing him to collapse on his knees, as his legs were already bent toward the ground.

Orion felt this pressure was even greater than anything the Crystalforge Elite warriors had experienced the last time they were here.

"What gives you the right to believe you can challenge my words or talk to me like that?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words thundered through the inky black void, causing visible ripples to appear on the large mass of water above them.

Orion gritted his teeth as the pressure descended several times more, forcing his right knee to collapse on the ground.

"Bang!"

His left knee soon followed suit with a resounding "Bang!" that echoed through the inky black void, cracking the rocky plain below him and causing several inches of web cracks to spread around him.

Feeling the pressure forcefully rolling against his back, Orion understood that he couldn't continue to resist it any longer. Without hesitation, he immediately summoned the four-meter-long crimson great sword.

"Bang!"

The sword landed on the ground, collapsing and causing numerous web cracks to form around it before it suddenly began to glow with a soft, pulsing, milky light.

Instantly, as though it was never there, the pressure that had descended from the heavens immediately vanished into thin air as though it had never existed.

"Haaa... Haa.... Haaa...." Orion took several deep breaths in and out as he gradually regained his composure.

He stretched his hand to his forehead, wiping off the sweat beads that had formed before shifting his attention to the four-meter-long crimson greatsword within his grasp. He then looked at Aerialia, who was staring at the large pair of slitted golden eyes in the sky with a serious expression on her face.

Orion had chosen to address Aegis of the Arctic Deity in the way he did because he had a 'goddess' behind him who surely did not want him to die at this moment. He might have considered a different approach if it were a god like White Flame.

However, considering that Aegis of the Arctic Deity didn't seem to have a body, with only his powers extending to control the mountain, and Aerialia, a divine soul whose abilities were linked to the Crimson greatsword—a divine artefact—he couldn't help but admit that they were genuinely perfect opponents for each other.

Aerialia noticed his gaze and turned her head in his direction, scrutinizing his figure from head to toe before asking, "Are you alright?"

Orion nodded in response, exhaling as he returned to his feet.

"I'm fine now," he responded. Sure enough, only a god could go against a god.

Before Aerialia could say another word or figure out what was happening, Aegis of the Arctic Deity's voice resounded through the air.

"I don't think it would be wise for you to get involved in this matter, goddess of the hunting moon," Aegis of the Arctic Deity stated, his eyes narrowed towards Aerialia. He then shifted his gaze towards Orion.

"Since he dares to challenge a god with his words, he should naturally possess the strength to back it up or bear the consequences for doing so," he added with a firm tone that echoed through the inky black void.

Aerialia furrowed her brows upon hearing Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words before shifting her gaze towards Orion. "Is he speaking the truth?" Aerialia asked with a serious expression on her face.

While she didn't particularly care about what happened to Orion, considering their current deal, he needed to stay alive and healthy for the agreement to be successful. Therefore, she couldn't just stand by and watch him be threatened to the point of severe injury.

However, that didn't mean she could overlook it if Orion had blatantly disrespected or challenged a god. After all, she was a god, too, and within the natural hierarchy, a mortal challenging a god was akin to challenging all the other gods.

Chapter 574 Confrontation With Aegis Of The Arctic Deity (2)

Since they had already challenged one god, it raised the question of whether they could do the same to another.

Contrary to her expectations, Orion immediately shook his head.

"He's lying; I didn't say anything like that," Orion responded before explaining what led to this event.

Orion's words initially dumbfounded Aerialia.

Nonetheless, as she listened, she couldn't help but be surprised, as Aegis of the Arctic Deity had not been precisely wrong, and Orion had indirectly challenged him with his words. However, that didn't mean Aegis was entirely wrong; Orion was also in the right.

Contemplating this matter, Aerialia couldn't help but feel a headache emerging. Nonetheless, she didn't regret not ignoring the issue and coming out, as she didn't yet know the god's identity to determine if he would severely punish Orion or merely intimidate him a little.

Meanwhile, Aegis of the Arctic Deity had witnessed everything and came to a pause. Immediately, he felt a tinge of annoyance within him, holding back a twitch as he stared at Orion.

Unknowingly, he knew he had fallen into the young man's tricks.

Regardless, he decided to calm himself down and reflect upon Orion's words because his words still held some sense, even if he knew that he had been tricked.

Contemplating this, Aegis of the Arctic Deity couldn't help but release an audible sigh.

"Although I understand what you are trying to say, it's not proper to claim he was challenging you when he simply asked a question. Regardless of what happened, I also believe the Prismarion race has earned the right to shed the treacherous label."

"Moreover, as a god, it would be shameful to lash out at a mortal over such an argument unless he is telling the truth. However, I believe that is not the case, as you might have your reasons," Aerialia said, recognizing that, for the moment, she could only play the role of a mediator.

After learning that the Aegis of the Arctic Deity had control over the mountain, she didn't want to risk unnecessary conflict despite having some life-saving abilities that she had prepared for her children before she realized that she had been duped, and also mainly since she had finally found a chance to reunite with her children.

Having regained his composure, the Aegis of the Arctic Deity closed his eyes before reopening them, fixing his gaze on Aerialia.

"You are right, 'goddess of the hunting moon.' Despite my current situation, I let my temper get the best of me. I wasn't planning on harming him; I only wanted to intimidate him and make him understand his place. So, you can rest easy about his safety," Aegis of the Arctic Deity assured, bringing a wave of relief to Aerialia.

Aerialia then turned her attention to Orion.

"And you, be careful with your words, especially when speaking with a god, to avoid such a situation next time," she said sternly.

Though she was aware of Orion's attitude towards gods, especially when she witnessed his reaction after he killed a god, unlike other mortals, it didn't mean that other gods would take kindly to his uniqueness.

So, she made sure to convey her words seriously.

Hearing Aerialia's words, Orion cleared his throat momentarily before nodding in response. "I will try my best," he replied.

"Humph!" Aerialia snorted in response before retreating into the small crimson greatsword mark, not wanting to continue the conversation.

A serene silence enveloped the area.

Orion coughed lightly to dispel the lingering tension in the air, then refocused on the large golden pair of eyes above him.

"I hope you can forgive me for my choice of words, Aegis of the Arctic Deity. I understand that I was a little too foolish with my selection," Orion said, exhaling loudly as his head was slightly lowered towards the ground in deep apology.

A loud sigh echoed through the space as Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded, "No, you are right. Since the Prismeron race has completed the trial and gained their freedom, it is right to ask that they should no longer be scorned or tagged as a treacherous race. However, considering what they have done, do not expect an immediate change from me, as it would take some time for me to suddenly view them in a positive light."

Orion nodded in response.

Although he sensed an underlying intent in Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words and was curious about what he was talking about, since it couldn't just be about what the Prismeron race had done to the nymphs, Orion decided not to pry too much and risk ruining the atmosphere that he had painstakingly tried so hard to create.

"Alright, I understand..." Orion said, nodding in response before he pretended to hesitate about the following words he wanted to utter.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity noticed his hesitation and immediately understood what Orion wanted to say next. "Hahaahaha," he roared out in laughter, thinking that his intimidation had been a little too much for the young man to handle despite the brave front he was currently putting on.

Indeed, no matter the time or age, humanity's relentless desire to challenge those beyond their reach remains unchallenged!

"You do not need to ask for the same thing again. Just bring them here so I can see if I can help find any solution for their predicament," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, his voice suddenly sounding out, causing Orion to release an audible sigh of relief.

As Orion thanked Aegis of the Arctic Deity once more, he immediately opened up a passageway close to Orion.

"This will take you to the Garden and will be open long enough for you to bring them to my presence," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, "You can go."

Orion nodded in response and swiftly traversed the passageway. Moments later, he emerged from another passageway that had materialized on the ground, landing on the grassy plain adorned with many vibrant flowers.

After Aegis of the Arctic Deity deposited him in a familiar location, Orion quickly rose to his feet and made his way toward the cave's entrance to meet up with Crystalia and the others.

Chapter 575 An Audience With Aegis Of The Arctic Deity

At the entrance of the garden, four guards held the two wooden sticks connected to the King's bed, supporting it upright. Selene, Crystalia, Iris, and four Crystalforge elite warriors stood nearby.

Meanwhile, Madam Seraphina remained in the Prismarian Healers' sanctuary, diligently checking on Flintor and Elysia's health and ensuring their well-being.

"Mom, do you think he will succeed?" Crystalia asked, her eyes filled with anxiety as she looked at Selene.

Selene sighed, meeting her daughter's gaze, unsure of what to say. Even if the god couldn't immediately rid them of the artefact on them, she acknowledged that Orion had already done more than enough. As long as they were granted an audience with a god who wasn't actively seeking their death, Selene didn't mind if they found a solution or not.

Just having the opportunity to seek aid from a god was an honour she would gladly be satisfied with.

"Don't worry, Princess. Since Mr. Orion confidently claimed he could do it, I'm sure he'll succeed. He's a man of his word," Iris reassured with unwavering confidence.

She held absolute faith in Orion's abilities, eagerly awaiting his return.

Selene chose to withhold her words, nodding in agreement with Iris.

"Yes, I'm sure he will succeed. He said it himself, didn't he? Besides, it's not wise to doubt your partner's capabilities so soon," she responded, offering words of encouragement.

Upon hearing her mother's and Iris's reassurances, Crystalia lowered her head in shame, realizing she was the only one harbouring doubts about Orion's capabilities. As his partner, it felt disloyal to entertain thoughts of failure instead of success.

She sighed inwardly, berating herself for such doubtful thinking.

How shameful!

"Also, I believe that even if he doesn't succeed, the fact that he helped us speak to a god is already enough," Selene quickly added, wanting her daughter to understand the difficulty of Orion's task.

Crystalia nodded in response.

However, something caught her eye just as she was about to speak. Turning around, she immediately saw Orion.

"Orion!" Crystalia shouted at the top of her lungs before racing forward and embracing him.

Orion caught her, wrapping his arms around her.

"Are you okay? How did it go?" Crystalia asked, looking at Orion with hope in her eyes.

Orion smiled in response, nodding. "He accepted," he said, brushing his hand through Crystalia's hair. Her eyes widened in joy as she tightened her embrace, tears of joy welling up.

Orion walked back toward the rest of the group, releasing her and addressing them.

"Good news, he said he will meet you guys," Orion said with a beaming smile directed at King Brylon and Queen Selene.

King Brylon's eyes widened in surprise, but then he closed them, reopening with a peaceful expression.

Meanwhile, Selene's eyes immediately widened in astonishment, then narrowed down. She slowly closed her eyes, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Slowly, she leaned back in Orion's direction.

"Mo..." Crystalia began to say but sealed her lips upon seeing her mother's emotional reaction.

With an overwhelming surge of happiness in her heart, Selene parted her lips and said, "Mr. Orion, thank you for everything you've done for us."

Orion witnessed this and shook his head, responding, "If I'm being truthful, I did this because you are Crystalia's parents. It would be a shame if she gets to make it out of this mountain with only one of you or without you both, so the two of you should try your best to live a little longer, okay?" Orion said with a smile, sighing deeply within his heart.

Listening to Orion's words, not only did Selene's body tremble as several more tears dropped from her cheeks, but even King Brylon felt his eyes become moist and the side of his cheeks slightly wet.

"If this is what it feels like to gain redemption finally, then I'll try my best to live longer," King Brylon said, staring at Orion with a warm smile.

"Alright," Orion responded, "Let's go before he changes his mind."

They all nodded in unison before following closely behind Orion. They finally arrived at the entrance of the passageway.

"We'll go first," Orion said, taking the lead as he walked forward, signalling for Crystalia to follow.

The rest followed suit, entering the passageway one by one.

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As they emerged from the passageway one by one, they were met with the awe-inspiring sight of a pair of large, golden, slitted eyes staring down at them, scrutinizing each individual.

For those unfamiliar with this space, an involuntary tension crept through their bodies as a gentle wave of divine pressure brushed against their skin. It became clear to them that they stood in the presence of a god.

Meanwhile, those who had been here before, such as Crystalia and the Crystalforge elite warriors, immediately knelt, pressing their foreheads against the rocky ground.

"WE GREET THE AEGIS OF THE ARCTIC DEITY!"

They erupted in greetings at the top of their lungs with vigour.

The Aegis of the Arctic Deity hummed appreciatively, seemingly acknowledging their vigour and spirited attitude.

"Hmmm... Are they the ones?" The Aegis of the Arctic Deity asked, his gaze fixed on King Brylon lying on the bed and Queen Selene standing beside him.

They both immediately felt a stiffness settle over their bodies, sensing the intense scrutiny of the large pair of golden eyes fixed upon them.

"Yes," Orion responded, signalling for them to step forward.

They walked forward and stood before Aegis of the Arctic Deity. Selene stood with her head raised, absorbing the glimpse of the god before her, while King Brylon, still lying on his bed, gazed wide-eyed, savouring the breathtaking sight.

"Humph! Close your eyes," the Aegis of the Arctic Deity commanded with a snort.

Instantly, they all snapped their eyes shut as a wave of divine pressure crashed upon them. Suddenly, they felt as though they had been submerged in water, their bodies gradually becoming lighter, forcing them to hold their breath.

Meanwhile, Orion and the others observed with bated breath as the King and queen were enveloped within a vast mass of water, interwoven with several strands of golden threads.

Chapter 576 Aegis Of The Deity's Solution

They observed as the golden threads slowly curled around their forms, briefly emitting a soft golden glow. Gradually, the threads began to unweave themselves from their bodies, and the water released them, slowly retreating to its original position above them.

"I can easily release the artefact that is bound to the two of you," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said.

His words immediately sparked joy on the faces of Crystalia and everyone else.

Meanwhile, Orion couldn't help but feel a sense of relief spreading through his heart, calming him as he absorbed the Aegis of the Arctic Deity's assurance.

Of course, as a god, managing something so simple was well within his capabilities, Orion thought, a smile spreading across his lips.

"However, you must understand that I am no longer the god I was before, and exerting my divine energy to do such a thing will lead to unfavourable consequences," Aegis of the Arctic Deity said, his voice tinged with a tone of seriousness.

A heavy silence settled over the room as no one had expected the god to say such a thing.

However, feeling an uncomfortable sensation within his chest, Orion asked, "What kind of consequences?"

Aegis of the Arctic Deity stared at everyone present before responding, "Everyone except him should leave."

Understanding who Aegis of the Arctic Deity was referring to, they all nodded and left one by one.

Crystalia took one last worried glance at Orion before she exited through the passageway, leaving only Orion within the black inky void once more.

"What are the consequences that you are talking about?" Orion asked again, curiosity etched in his voice as he wanted to understand the consequences that Aegis of the Arctic Deity was talking about.

"First of all, you must be aware that the garden above us is dying, right?" Aegis of the Arctic Deity replied.

Orion nodded in response.

"Very well, are you aware of why it's dying?"

Orion shook his head.

Aegis of the Arctic Deity sighed before he began to speak. "As you know, my authority extends throughout this mountain, meaning I can control every part of it. However, considering that I am not my former self but only a wisp of a soul, despite possessing enough divine energy to last me for thousands of years, my energy is not unlimited. In order to keep myself from disappearing, I need something to replenish my lost divine energy. Do you know what that thing is?"

Orion pondered thoughtfully, "Is it the divine essence lake?" he responded.

"Correct. Naka left The divine essence lake behind when I left a wisp of my soul here. It not only helps the Garden survive underground and provides the necessary sustainability of livelihood for

the Prismerion race, but it also aids me in replenishing some of the divine energy I've lost. Even though it's akin to a drop of water relentlessly trying to fill up a well, I can still store a considerable amount of divine energy, some of which I've already used up," Aegis of the Arctic Deity explained.

"Unfortunately, that is also what I use to control the mountain and keep the Vylkr vines from penetrating it. Otherwise, they would have already filled every inch of it due to the abundance of life present within. Fortunately, White Flame was already warding off the Vylkr vines when he was alive. However, now that he's dead, it's all left to me to do it alone. With the countless number of Vylkr vines outside this mountain, you should know that with them tirelessly trying to barge in, that itself is not a good situation."

Orion felt a lump in his throat as he absorbed Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words.

When he first entered the mountain with Saria, he had noticed White Flame's abnormal influence on the Vylkr vines, causing them to retract into their holes. His mind hadn't dwelled on the reason behind this phenomenon, and he might not have given it further thought if Aegis of the Arctic hadn't brought it up now.

Nevertheless, as he considered it, the image of White Flame aimlessly roaming the upper region of the mountain seemed less of a random occurrence and more of a deliberate move when he viewed it from this perspective.

"So, what are you trying to say?" Orion asked.

He hesitated to draw any conclusions, preferring to hear the details directly from Aegis of the Arctic Deity himself.

"What I'm trying to say is that if I use the divine energy I've stored up to help them get rid of that artefact, more and more Vylkr vines will break through into the mountain, harming every life within, including the Garden. Then again, I could try my best to save up more divine energy, hastening the destruction of the Garden by two or three times more. In that case, everything and everyone within it would have to find another place to live or seek alternative sustenance."

"So, although I could easily get rid of the artefact, it only means that I would need to expend more divine energy, which is not worth it," Aegis of the Arctic Deity explained.

"However, considering that White Flame is dead and the Prismerion race has already gained their redemption, it only means that my days are already numbered. As such, I will leave this decision up

to you since you are the reason they succeeded in clearing the trail and the person who killed White Flame," Aegis of the Arctic Deity added.

"Firstly, I will get rid of the artefacts that are bound to them. However, in doing so, you and everyone else must prepare to leave this mountain within a given time limit unless you risk becoming trapped and surrounded by the Vylkr vines. Alternatively, you can forget about getting rid of the artefacts or saving their lives and dedicate your attention for the next few years to helping the Prismerton race prepare a place where they can restart their lives once more," he added.

Seeing Orion's expression, he sighed, "I wanted to tell you about this later, thinking I could easily take care of the situation. However, now that it has come to this, I see no use hiding it for a few more years. I've decided to tell you about it now."

Chapter 577 The Challenging Decision

Orion immediately frowned as Aegis of the Arctic Deity's words ended.

"So you're saying there's no other way to save their lives without making a choice?" Orion asked, his voice rigid.

"Yes," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded.

Silence enveloped the inky black void for a minute before Orion proceeded to ask, "Can you tell me what kind of artefact it is?"

"It's a pseudo-divine artefact," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded.

Orion's brows furrowed in confusion, prompting Aegis of the Arctic Deity to clarify, "There are eight artefact ranks: Common, Uncommon, Rare, Epic, Unique, Legendary, Mythical, and lastly, Divine. I believe that's how the mortals classified them. Nonetheless, the higher the rank of the artefact, the more powerful it is and the more difficult it is to be found or created. Take your 'Crimson Blade,' for example; I doubt any god would willingly undergo the risk of refining their divine blood, essence, and soul unless pushed into such a situation or driven by desperation."

Orion nodded in response to Aegis of the Arctic Deity's explanation. With this new information, several gaps about artefacts have been filled.

"How about a pseudo-divine artefact?" Orion asked.

"It's an artefact that failed to attain its divine status or has been damaged severely enough to lose its divinity," Aegis of the Arctic Deity responded.

Orion nodded again, understanding, as he breathed out in relief. Armed with this newfound knowledge, he could accompany the Crystalforge Clan to the location where Garnet had found the two artefacts used on the king and queen. Perhaps he could uncover something worthwhile.

After experiencing the power of the divine artefact in his hand, Orion wanted to obtain more artefacts. He believed it would not only be beneficial to him but would also elevate the abilities of the other warriors in the village to a whole new level.

"Since this decision will determine the fate of the Prismarion, I don't think I'm capable of making such a choice," Orion said, his gaze fixated on the large slitted golden pair of eyes. "I will need to discuss it with them first so we can come up with a decision."

"That won't be a problem. Since I said I would help solve this problem, I would naturally do my best. You can come find me whenever you are ready," Aegis of the Arctic Deity replied.

Orion nodded, breathing out deeply for the umpteenth time. He turned around and walked through the passageway. Emerging from it as his world flipped upside down, Orion landed stably on his two feet at the edge of the passageway.

"Orion, what did he say? Is he going to save my parents? What are the consequences he was talking about?" Crystalia asked, immediately jumping towards Orion and holding him tightly within her arms.

Her eyes and body trembled as she awaited his response.

Orion sighed, glancing at the hopeful expression on Crystalia's face.

He wrapped his arms around her, holding her close as he proceeded to explain everything Aegis of the Arctic Deity had said to everyone.

As Orion spoke, the expressions of Selene and King Brylon fell, while the Crystalforge Elite Warriors and the others couldn't help but frown, understanding the graveness of the situation.

Crystalia, however, felt the hope slowly drain away from her face, plunging into despair. "Then... isn't there anything else he could do?" Crystalia hurriedly asked.

"I'm sorry, but I asked the same question. Unfortunately, he didn't provide any other solution than this," Orion replied.

Crystalia wanted to say a word but hesitated.

She quickly turned her head towards her mother and noticed the painful, sad smile on her lips. "Mom, we can..."

"Crystalia, don't worry about us. With Madam Seraphina and the rest of the Prismarian Healers' Council, I believe we will find a way to heal your father, even without getting rid of the artefact. While I trust that, with the current strength of the Crystalforge clan, I can still maintain proper control even without my full strength," Selene said, persistently holding onto her forced smile that was already threatening to collapse at any moment.

"Mom..."

"Crystalia, this is a very delicate situation, so it will be difficult for us to make a rash decision like saving ourselves from this bound artefact and putting the whole Prismarian Kingdom at risk of destruction. Don't worry, just like your mother said, I believe we can handle this situation without the help of a god," King Brylon responded.

He coughed a few times, remained calm, and then closed his eyes to rest and conserve his energy, seeing as his only hope for being restored to good health was no longer available.

"Take him back to the sanctuary. Ensure that the Council prioritizes preventing his condition from worsening until we find a way to get rid of the artefact," Selene commanded, her tone serious.

The four guards nodded in understanding and immediately walked back to the Prismarian Kingdom, making their way out through the garden's entrance.

Meanwhile, the others waited for Orion to convey their response to Aegis of the Arctic Deity before he emerged from the passageway again, the entrance closing right below him.

Just as they were about to return to the garden's entrance to return to the Prismarian Kingdom, Orion walked towards Selene to speak with her. In the past, he might have waited until the atmosphere was less tense. Still, given the current situation and the urgency of the conversation he wanted to have, Orion understood that he couldn't postpone it for later.

"What is it that you want to talk about?" Selene asked as she stared at Orion curiously.

It seemed as though she had already accepted her fate, as the defeated expression on her face was no longer present.

"I wonder if you can help me arrange a group of individuals that can lead me to the location where Garnet said he found the two artefacts," Orion responded seriously. "I would like to check it out and see if there is anything else I can find there."

Chapter 578 Mountain Treasure Hunt

Selene thought for a moment before nodding her head at Orion without hesitation. "I will arrange for some warriors so they can take you to the location Garnet talked about immediately," Selene responded.

If it were previously, she would have thought seriously about such a decision, weighing whether to take Orion to a location where he could find more artefacts they had yet to search through properly.

However, considering her current situation, she abandoned such thoughts without hesitation.

After all, even with the fact that the Crystalforge Clan now had about thirty-six Crystalforger Clan's Elite warriors, all of whom were in the late-tier Crystal Emperor rank and could become mid-tier Crystal Overlord Warriors with the help of a special technique that increased their powers by over a realm, which was the highest tier that anyone, even she, had failed to reach in the past despite her strength. Selene couldn't refuse his request for control of the Crystalforge Clan and the Prismarian Kingdom if he had asked for it right now, as she was sure they still wouldn't be able to compete with the warriors that had come from Orion's village.

Besides, she had eavesdropped on the Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors, discussing how they stood no chance against the warriors from Orion's village in an all-out war.

They would instead surrender and save more of the Prismerion race in a war that was already futile to fight from the beginning.

Also, she already had an idea about where Garnet might have discovered the artefact and was waiting to confirm it.

Despite not expecting the Queen's immediate response, Orion could understand her current train of thought, so he immediately smiled and nodded in understanding.

"Alright," he responded.

Selene then called Iris and the two other Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors to guide him to the location as they left the garden.

....

Thirty minutes later

"Is this the place?" Orion asked curiously.

He and Iris, along with the two other Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors, stood in front of a narrow passage, similar to the one they had used to go to the upper regions of the mountain several times.

"Yes," Iris responded. "So that individuals who go up the upper regions of the mountain don't get lost or do not get cornered in case they encounter White Flame, several passages connecting the upper regions of the mountain to the Prismerian Kingdom were made. Although some of them have been lost due to the changing terrain of the upper region of the mountain that occurs consecutively, some of them can still manage to resurface like this one," she pointed at another entrance close to it, indicating that the other one must have opened after the one before them was lost.

"Alright, let's go then, lead the way," Orion said.

With the Prismerian Kingdom behind them, Iris lowered herself and crawled into the hole, while Orion crawled in second, and the two other Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors followed suit.

As they entered through the third entrance, it took them only about eight minutes to arrive at the first level, which was by another narrow entrance to their left.

This prompted them to cut their journey forward and crawl through it until the passage slowly widened, allowing them to walk on their feet with their backs hunched forward.

"I can see something," Iris said, capturing their attention and directing their gaze in the direction her eyes were focused on.

Orion's eyes narrowed as he saw the figure of a skeleton.

As they walked closer to inspect it, he noticed that everything on the skeleton had already dissolved, and even part of its lower body had turned to dust.

To confirm his thought, Orion stretched his fingers to touch the bony shoulder blades, and immediately, he watched as the rest of its upper body turned to dust and collapsed on the rocky ground.

"It's just as we thought," Iris responded.

Seeing Orion's questioning expression, she explained, "After seizing the Gemheart Clan's possessions, we noticed some uncommon and rare artefacts that were not recorded within the 'Ancient Codex' and should not be in their possession. This made us believe that the Gemheart Clan Leader, Clan Head Garnet, must have found some of the lost artefacts during the 'Three Great Slaughter'."

"Because it was after we had won the 'Great War,' it was common for a single individual to have several high-level artefacts for protection. So, the fact that many individuals had died during that time meant that many artefacts had gone missing, and it shouldn't be surprising that the Gemheart Clan had managed to find an artefact that could suppress both the Queen and the King."

Orion understood her words.

"So you are saying that there could be more?" Orion asked.

Iris nodded, "Maybe," she responded, "It could be that the Gemheart Clan had already raided this place and taken all the artefacts they could find, which were the unknown artefacts we had collected from them. However, I suggest we keep going deeper and see if we are lucky to find something else."

Orion nodded and followed Iris's advice, as it was also something that he was thinking about. After a few minutes of thoroughly checking their surroundings, they ventured deeper into the cave.

Within the next hour, they found about ten skeletons at intervals of five to ten minutes, each looking to be in the same condition, with some parts of their bodies having turned to dust, while the rest awaited the same fate.

Orion decided not to give up and instructed them to walk deeper into the cave. After two hours, they stopped encountering skeletons, and the narrow passageway was now wide enough for all four of them to turn around and look around if they wished.

Regardless, they hadn't encountered anything yet.

'If the Gemheart Clan hadn't encountered anything else in the next two hours, then considering the previous Clan Head's mission at hand, it's not a bad idea that they would have returned to the Prismarian Kingdom and be satisfied with what they had obtained, as the harvest was already enough. So if we keep walking, we might encounter a dead end or several more untouched corpses of dead Prismarian Warriors,' Orion thought.

Chapter 579 A Fruitful Harvest

Four hours after they entered the cave, Orion finally spotted something from his gaze even before Iris, who was at the forefront, could.

As they closed in on it, he could see it was another skeleton; however, this one's body appeared untouched, unlike the rest they had encountered.

Bending down to take a closer look, Orion could see that the only thing that hadn't yet turned to dust was a 60cm (24 inches) adult-sized bronze shield with various unknown carvings on its cover. Also, a metal armguard with dust accumulated all around it lay beside the skeleton. Lying next to the skeleton was a 31cm (12 inches) curved blade, whose blade appeared to be already chipped.

Seeing the sight before him, Orion understood he had been correct in his assumption, as the area still looked untouched.

Iris bent down and held the shield. She channelled her magical energy into it before withdrawing it and turning her head to look at Orion, nodding at him, "It's an artefact," she said.

Having already guessed what it was, Orion nodded and bent down to touch the metal armguard, watching as the skeleton turned to dust without him even needing to unstrap it.

After he was done, he ordered the two Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors behind him to collect them before they continued their way forward. Within a few minutes, they encountered various skeletons armed with numerous artefacts.

Of course, there were skeletons with ordinary scraps of metal on them; however, the ones filled with artefacts were still numerous enough that it wasn't worth mentioning.

So within the next hour, they found about sixteen artefacts, some of which— their ranks were still unchecked.

Unexpectedly, they soon arrived at a dead end, with about eight skeletons all scattered about and lying in an inhumane manner.

"It seems like this is the end," Iris said.

"It is, but it's nothing to be unhappy about since we have already gotten enough harvest," Orion responded.

He could tell that despite Iris understanding that his village would be the one keeping all the artefacts they had discovered, she didn't seem to be relieved like the two behind him, who appeared to be happy that he wouldn't be able to accumulate more artefacts.

Instead, she seemed disappointed, which was precisely the opposite. Despite just noticing Iris's behaviour toward him, once he remembered their meetings and discussions up until now, Orion decided to wait until they were alone so that he could confirm a few things.

After all, Iris held the most influence among those who had managed to become Aerialia's apostles, so having her on his side wasn't a bad idea.

"Yes, considering that we have been here for about five hours, I think it's best if we return with our harvest, or else the others might think that something had happened to us," Iris said, agreeing with Orion's words.

"Yes, Warrior Iris is right. Besides, even if we found any other artefacts, I don't think we might be able to carry all of them out without taking them outside first," one of the Crystalforge Elite warriors said with a pleading look in his eyes.

Orion cleared his throat, embarrassed. "Alright, let's clear this one and leave immediately," Orion responded.

He understood that it wasn't the weight of the artefacts that bothered them but the fact that they were currently carrying too many of them, which would make it extremely difficult for them to move due to the narrow cave walls.

Within a few minutes, the entire skeletons were ransacked, with Orion and the others accumulating about six artefacts from five of the eight skeletons, including a sword, spear, shield, armours, and a dagger. Although Orion still had no idea how a race that had fought in the 'Great War' and made it out alive, despite not being at their strongest, even with the help of another god, could be foolish enough to go against a god like Naka, there was one thing that he still understood after gathering so many artefacts today—that they were rich, extremely rich.

He even wondered if it had something to do with their goddess, goddess Ilse, especially considering she was the goddess of treasures.

It made sense when he thought about it that way.

Nonetheless, due to the number of artefacts they each had to carry within the narrow cave, they were even slower, taking about five and a half hours to make their way out of the entrance compared to how they entered.

Once they returned, Orion noticed Selene, Crystalia, and some familiar figures of the Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors and Fifi and Seth, who were present. Selene, Crystalia, and Fifi breathed out in relief once they noticed their figures.

Meanwhile, the Crystalforge Clan's Elite warriors made their way forward and helped them with the artefacts they had collected.

Fifi came forward and hugged him before reluctantly releasing him.

"I thought that something had happened to you since you disappeared for so long, but it seems that you made me worried for nothing," she said before turning her head to the side, towards the direction of the artefacts.

"Are these what you went to search for?" She asked with raised brows as she bent down to pick up one of the rusted spears.

"Yes. It's an artefact," Orion said as he watched Fifi skillfully twirl the spear in her hand.

Knowing that Fifi had trained to be the best warrior in her generation, seeing that she could also use a spear skillfully, didn't surprise him much.

"Try using your gift with it," Orion suggested.

Just like when he covered the Crimson greatsword with his lightning, he wanted to see if the artefact in Fifi's hands could do the same.

Of course, ordinary weapons could accomplish the same feat. However, one thing he had found out was that they usually get chipped or worn out fairly quickly.

Fifi nodded in response and immediately activated her gift.

Suddenly, a stream of water emerged from the ground and slowly wrapped around her hand and the spear, coating it with its wet sensation.

She twirled the spear a few more times before turning her head back towards Orion.

"I can feel that my attacks would become more powerful if I use my gift and this spear together," Fifi said with amazement.

The weapon in front of her felt so strange that she could feel it, accepting the strange energy from her, which was outright impossible with their standard weapons.

Nevertheless, since they had been waiting here for about two hours, Queen Selene had already explained what Orion had gone to search for and what they were, so she wasn't worried about his safety within the mountain unless he encountered another god like White Flame or came in contact with two-star or three-star Vylkr vines, which was the least likely to happen.

Meanwhile, Selene couldn't help but raise her brows in surprise. 'Such terrifying elemental control,' she thought.

Just like Orion, Fifi had a frightening level of control over water, which would have overwhelmingly surprised her if it weren't for the fact that she had previously witnessed Orion's frightening level of control over his lightning during the Prismerian Young Heirs' banquet.

'They are all abnormal,' Selene thought.

If only eleven of them could completely dominate the Prismerian Kingdom, then Selene couldn't help but imagine what would happen if there were suddenly about fifty, a hundred within their presence.

Wouldn't that be the same as a heavy dark cloud hanging over their heads?

Understanding her kingdom and its citizens, Selene understood that she had to do her best to make sure that none of them made any mistakes; otherwise, they might all be the ones to suffer the consequences.

"Okay, if that's the case, then you can keep it," Orion said without hesitation.

However, Fifi shook her head and threw the spear among the rest of the artefacts.

"Although it's a good weapon, I don't think that it would be helpful to me that much against the Vylkr vines," Fifi explained as she looked at the swords, curved blades, and gauntlets. Then, she added, "I'll wait until you are done with whatever you are doing before I choose which weapon suits my taste."

As Fifi spoke, Orion watched as Seth also walked forward and grabbed one of the curved blades.

He activated his gift, and thick molten lava instantly emerged from his hand, covering the curved black blade, making it look like it had been forged and made for this purpose.

However, within several seconds, as though it could no longer withstand the molten lava on its body, the curved blade slowly began to melt away and fall to the ground until all of it hardened on the ground.

Witnessing this, Seth's lips twitched, thinking that he had just found a good weapon before he snorted and focused his attention on Orion, ignoring the stares around him.

"We have been waiting for almost a day for you to return so that we can quickly return to the village," Seth said.

"Is Saria ready to be moved?" Orion asked.

Since Saria was already bonded to a tree in the Garden, the only way to move her over such a long distance would be to move the tree, too, so he was curious about how they planned to move the tree.

Of course, since they had assured him that they would handle moving Saria by themselves, Orion trusted their competence, especially since they had been warriors before him and had been the ones protecting the Village.

Also, since they all wanted to get Saria back to the Village as quickly as possible to ease the tension, he understood that he had nothing to worry about.

Seth nodded in response.

"We have secured her tree and are prepared to take her up the mountain, moving her back to the Village with the help of Orion's skies. However, because of the weight limit, I don't think we all have the option to leave right now. Some would have to stay behind so that we can transport Saria and her tree back to the Village before we return to pick them up," Seth explained.

Orion quickly understood his words. "So, who have you chosen?" Orion asked.

"No one; we were all waiting for your arrival so you could decide who returns to the village and who stays in the meantime."

Orion nodded, "Since there are only three Orion's skies, we will need one more person who could steer it," Orion said, remembering that there were two warriors they had left outside to take care of the Orion's skies. "And one other person who would help us protect Saria's tree and the Orion's skies, in case we attract any attention from the Vylkr vines, since because of the tree and its weight, it's obvious that we will be flying closer to the ground than natural."

Fifi and Seth immediately nodded at his idea, as they had also been thinking about the same thing.

"Alright, that settles it then. Seth and I, along with the two others still outside, will be the ones to escort Saria back to the Village and inform the key figures about the current situation. At the same time, you and the rest of the warriors stay here and ensure that everything is safe and sound until we return," Orion said.

His voice made a tremble travel through Seth's spine, causing him to clench his hands as he knew there was no way he could avoid Orion reporting to the Village Chief and the rest of the other key figures about their fight.

Meanwhile, Fifi couldn't help but frown.

"Are you sure?" she asked.

Although she doubted that Seth would do anything stupid, since everyone in the group was already aware of the tension between him and Orion, she still didn't want to take any chances, especially since this concerned her partner.

Orion nodded his head resolutely, "With you here, I can have peace of mind that nothing bad is going to happen in the Prismerian Kingdom while we are away," he said, shifting his attention towards Seth.

"Also, since Saria would be with me, I doubt that any unfortunate situation would take place. Otherwise, we might just risk the Village becoming much tenser and more dangerous if anything were to happen to either of us," Orion added.