

Village Head 671

Chapter 671 The Devourer's Bracelet (2)

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"Meanwhile, the 'Devourer's bracelet' contains various small gears regulating the Vylkr energy flow. These gears allow for controlled access to the Vylkr energy and serve as a safety mechanism, preventing an overwhelming influx of Vylkr energy that could harm the wielder, such as devouring the wielder if not properly controlled or other uncontrollable consequences," Leif continued.

"Individuals who can utilize the Devourer's bracelet have all undergone a compatibility process to determine their affinity with Vylkr energy. An individual's compatibility with it heavily influences the effectiveness of Vylkr energy. Higher compatibility leads to better results. However, due to the vicious nature of Vylkr energy, finding those who are compatible with it and able to utilize it is extremely difficult. As such, any positive result is considered a remarkable achievement," Leif explained.

Leif fell silent when he finished explaining, allowing them time to digest the information he had just revealed.

Meanwhile, the Village Chief, Orion, and the others couldn't help but delve deep into their thoughts again, reflecting on everything they had just heard. Orion, in particular, found himself amazed. Although he knew of a vast world with various races, the revelation of the Devourer's bracelet and its ability to harness Vylkr energy, even in its diluted form, was beyond his expectations.

He recalled the disastrous results the last time he attempted to test the Crystalforge Elite warriors' capability to utilize Vylkr energy a few months ago since they had reached a point where they could rival some of the warriors from the Village.

However, the outcome was so catastrophic that he dared not repeat the experiment on anyone else, regardless of the chances of success. Fortunately, the affected warrior had eventually recovered, alleviating any lingering concerns.

Orion furrowed his brows in confusion as a sudden thought entered his mind. He cleared his throat, capturing the attention of everyone present, "Although I understand everything you've just explained, there's one thing that I still don't understand. How exactly do you store the Vylkr energy? Even though you use a medium to use the Vylkr energy in its diluted form, you must have another

approach to grow stronger, unlike how we create Vylkr containers to do so, right?" Orion questioned.

While the warriors had to create Vylkr containers within their bodies to enhance their strength and increase the amount of Vylkr energy they could use, Orion contemplated whether they could adopt a similar or use alternative methods to grow stronger.

Hearing Orion's question, the Village Chief, Stronghold Leader Zogar, and Stronghold Leader Seth's eyes widened in realization. They solemnly nodded in response, indicating their curiosity about whether the newcomers used the warriors' procedure to grow stronger or used alternative methods.

Leif nodded in acknowledgement upon hearing Orion's question. Although he was still astonished by the revelation that people here could use Vylkr energy without the need for the 'Devourer's bracelet' and unaware of how they stored their energy, given his recent arrival in the city, he proceeded to explain. Leif extended his right arm once more and uttered, "Boost."

Suddenly, a surge of inky black strands of Vylkr energy erupted from his right hand, gradually spreading to every part of his body. Within seconds, his entire form was enveloped in Vylkr energy.

"Vylkr warrior mode," Stronghold Leader Zogar muttered under his breath.

Having witnessed this form during his battle with Captain Seig and the Lieutenant, he was less shocked than the other key figures beside him, whose eyes widened in disbelief.

Still, even though he had witnessed someone who hadn't yet reached their full potential utilize the Vylkr warrior mode, he was still aware that something about it seemed off, something he couldn't quite figure out.

The Village Chief, however, narrowed his eyes at Leif, whose entire body was covered in countless strands of Vylkr energy. "What are you trying to show us?" he asked, scepticism in his voice.

"Shh!" Leif gestured for them to remain silent. "Although I cannot physically demonstrate it, you will understand how we grow stronger if you listen," he explained.

The Village Chief and the others frowned but chose to remain silent.

Initially, they couldn't discern anything, but after a few seconds, the faint sound of a heartbeat resonated in their ears.

BADDUUM!!

BADDUUM!!

The Village Chief, Orion, Stronghold Leader Zogar, and Stronghold Leader Seth were stunned by what they had just heard. Their keen ears had allowed them to quickly pick up the heartbeat, with the others following suit, displaying the same astonished expressions.

"That is my 'Devourer's heart,' to briefly explain it, the Devourer's heart serves as a miniature regulator, controlling the flow and distribution of the Vylkr energy within the bracelet. Within it are micro-sized gears and channels designed to handle the nuances of the Vylkr energy; these gears act as valves, adjusting the amount of energy released with each pulse, mimicking the natural pumping action of a heart."

"This ensures a rhythmic and controlled infusion into the wielder's body. Due to this, a seamless integration between my life force and the 'Devourer's heart' is formed," Leif said, taking a deep breath as he continued.

"So the more I utilize the Vylkr energy through the vials, the more my 'Devourer's heart' grows stronger as it learns to handle more of the Vylkr energy, which, in turn, strengthens me. Because my life force and it are connected, if anything happens to my 'Devourer's heart,' I will be as good as dead. That's why I cannot show it to you," Leif explained, a deep sigh escaping his lips as he deactivated his Devourer's bracelet, allowing the countless strands of Vylkr energy to retract back into the bracelet.

"Of course, I can also use it like this. That form is only to maximize the use of the Devourer's heart," Leif added, waiting for their response.

After witnessing Leif's demonstration and hearing his explanation, the key figures, including Orion, slumped back in their seats.

While listening to Leif's explanation, though they had all expected something entirely different from their existing knowledge, none of them had anticipated this.

How in Naka's name was such a thing possible?

Chapter 672 Gearweavers

No matter how they thought about it, there should be no way such a thing should be possible; however, according to Leif's explanation, it was!

The Village Chief shifted his attention towards Patriarch Rylan, who agreed with Leif's words.

Seeing this response, the Village Chief briefly closed his eyes and sighed deeply to ponder the situation before snapping them back open.

"And how about the weapons? What are their uses?" The Village Chief asked, his gaze shifting towards the large sword Leif had left behind as he walked forward, along with the ones safely secured by the others standing behind Patriarch Rylan.

Leif nodded, "Our weapons are called 'Gearweavers.' They are made from a special alloy that can withstand the intense forces generated by the Vylkr energy. They are designed to absorb the Vylkr energy directly from the Devourer's bracelet worn by the wielder. As the Vylkr energy flows from the Devourer's bracelet into the weapon, the gears act as conduits, channelling the energy through the weapon and amplifying the weapon's power."

"The gears can also dynamically shift and reconfigure themselves based on the intensity of the Vylkr energy. Of course, there are different kinds of Gearweavers, with various configurations, offering unique advantages such as enhanced attack speed, increased damage output, or improved defensive capabilities. As for mine, you can already see which one it is," Leif explained, gesturing towards his sword, which he had placed by the side of a pillar.

An unnatural silence occupied the four corners of the spacious hall when Leif finished his explanation again.

Nonetheless, this time, they all regained their composure within a minute while still digesting the information they had just received.

"Is that everything that we need to know?" The Village Chief asked, his tone filled with tiredness, as though he wanted to retire for the day and properly digest everything he had just heard.

Leif nodded in response, "Yes, that is everything that I can tell you about us, the god's chosen," Leif responded.

The Village Chief nodded in response, "Okay," he responded, gesturing for Leif to return to his position.

Leif returned from the hall's centre to his position behind Patriarch Rylan.

"Is there any other question anyone would like to ask?" the Village Chief asked, his attention shifting towards the key figures beside him.

Stronghold Leader Zogar nodded in response, "I would like to see their strengths and see how they compare to the two attackers that I captured," he said, his gaze fixed on Leif.

The Village Chief nodded and asked, "Is that okay with you, Patriarch Rylan?" shifting his position back towards Patriarch Rylan.

Patriarch Rylan nodded in response, "Yes, I am very much okay with it. I don't see anything bad in showing our strengths and weaknesses now that we'll be living with one another," Patriarch Rylan responded with a smile.

"Alright, let us head to the nearest training ground," the Village Chief replied."

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"It's truly breathtaking," Isadora exclaimed, wide-eyed, as she stared in awe at the wooden structures and buildings around her.

"Yes, it is. It's several times more breathtaking and neater than that metal scrap we called home. It's a good thing that we will be staying here from now on," Lyndon remarked, nodding in agreement with his sister's words.

Leif, Leona, and the others also agreed with the Princess and the Prince's sentiments. Their tasks usually revolved around wandering around the city before they could properly handle it, so unlike the royal siblings, they could vividly recall the scent of the rusted metal that filled the air, the fumes, and the local areas with heaps of dirt just waiting to be disposed of.

Nevertheless, as they looked at the beautiful wooden structures and environment and breathed in the fresh air, it was obvious that such a place was incomparable to their previous home.

Fortunately, this place was now their new home.

"It's too early for you to be looking down on our previous home. Please think about all the people who made our arrival here possible," Patriarch Rylan said, exhaling deeply as he shook his head at his children's words.

"The Patriarch is right. Instead of comparing our previous home and this city, we should focus on learning more about our new home and settling down properly," Leif responded.

His gaze scanned the individuals with crystal-like hair bangs walking about or tending to their stalls, going about their daily lives.

Though one thing that caught his curious eyes was the strange styles of the women's attire, Leif didn't pay much attention to it, having seen many odd cultures and traditions from various Runaway cities throughout his time as a god's chosen. Instead, he was more focused on figuring out which race they belonged to, but no matter how much he tried, he couldn't come up with anything.

However, he wasn't alone. Except for the Princess and the Prince, who were more fascinated to learn about the new individuals and their culture, Leona and the others couldn't discern which race the people around them belonged to.

"Patriarch, do you know which race these people belong to?" Leif asked curiously.

Patriarch Rylan shook his head in response, "No, I don't," he replied.

He had visited the Village several times in the past. During his visits, all he encountered was a Village thriving on its own with various powerful individuals who provided a certain level of safety.

He had never seen these large wooden structures or encountered an unknown race until today. Just like the others beside him, he was surprised and confused about which race they belonged to and how they had managed to arrive here.

"We are here," one of the warriors leading them towards the training ground said.

They were led to the training ground's open area and patiently waited about twenty-five minutes before the Village Chief and the others arrived.

"I apologize for the delay, Patriarch Rylan. We had a discussion that we needed to take care of first before coming over," the Village Chief said, expressing his respect towards Patriarch Rylan for the delayed arrival.

Chapter 673 Assessing Their Strengths

Patriarch Rylan shook his head, "Don't worry about it; I understand the situation as a leader myself," he replied.

After hearing Patriarch Rylan's response, the Village Chief didn't dwell on the matter any further, "So who will you be sending first?" he asked.

"Leif will be going first," Patriarch Rylan responded.

Without hesitation, Leif stepped forward, his sword tightly clenched.

The Village Chief nodded, "We will arrange for one of our most suitable warriors to face you," he said, gesturing for Leif to position himself at the centre nearby platform.

As Leif took his place on the platform, he couldn't help but glance at all the people present. Besides the Village Chief and other key figures of the Village, he saw numerous unfamiliar faces; presumably warriors of the Village judging from their physique. Also, there were individuals from the unknown race he hadn't recognized yet, all adorned in beautifully crafted armour.

Their eyes scrutinized him from head to toe as though attempting to gather every bit of information about him.

Nonetheless, after confirming that the Village's warriors were the only ones capable of utilizing Vylkr's energy, Leif didn't pay too much heed to the unfamiliar faces from the unknown race, as his primary attention was focused on the Village's warriors.

A man with a toned, muscular build, dressed in the Village's attire, stepped onto the platform, gripping a cutlass in his hands.

Leif's eyes lingered on the man's cutlass with a frown.

Although he understood that he had a higher chance of losing this battle, after briefing them about the capabilities of his weapons, he had expected to face a more formidable opponent with a fine weapon. Therefore, he was confused when the warrior approached him with a cutlass.

"What is it?" the warrior asked with a raised brow, noticing Leif's frown.

"Shouldn't you be facing me with a better weapon?" Leif asked.

The warrior's face lit up with realization as he glanced at his cutlass before shifting his gaze toward Leif's uniquely-sized and unfamiliar weapon.

"Oh, though I admit your weapon looks more impressive than mine, there's nothing to worry about. A warrior's power relies not only on his weapon but also on his strength and gift," the warrior responded confidently.

"Besides, I've wielded a cutlass all my life, so I don't think I should be choosing another weapon at a time like this," he added.

Hearing his response, Leif sighed deeply before nodding in acknowledgement.

However, Leif didn't let his guard down; instead, he tightened his grip on his weapon and activated his Devourer's bracelet.

Instantly, the Devourer's bracelet came to life, gears moving steadily to regulate the flow of Vylkr energy emerging from the vial. Soon after, the Devourer's heart throbbed, mimicking the rhythmic sound of a beating heart, before gradually infusing Leif's body with the Vylkr energy. He felt the Vylkr energy fill every cell, giving him a familiar feeling of immense power.

"Can I make the first move?" Leif asked.

The warrior nodded in response, assuming his fighting stance. As he awaited his opponent's attack

Leif disappeared from his position, reappearing before the warrior in the blink of an eye, swinging his sword vertically from the top. Rather than sidestepping to evade the attack, the warrior raised his hand upward and countered with his blade.

CLANKK!!

KA--CHAA!!

The warrior's cutlass vibrated fiercely upon impact before splitting into two parts. Swiftly, he sidestepped to avoid Leif's weapon as it swung downward.

BANNGG!!

The sword collided heavily with the ground, and contrary to Leif's expectations, the wooden floor remained unbroken, making him question the material it was made from.

Suddenly, Leif's senses screamed, prompting him to shift his body to the side and easily swing his sword, which should have required considerable effort due to its sheer size, toward the direction of the attack. However...

BAANGG!!

A foot suddenly slammed into the side of his gut, sending him flying backwards and almost causing him to lose his grip on his sword.

Leif crashed on the ground and instantly used his back to flip over backwards, landing on his feet in a crouched position.

He took several deep breaths, filling his lungs as he stared at the warrior before him.

Witnessing this scene, Leona and the others sighed deeply in defeat.

Although they had expected such a result, having seen the battle between Stronghold Leader Zogar and Captain Seig with his lieutenant, they had still held onto a glimmer of hope that as the god's chosen—individuals who were compatible with Vylkr energy and chosen to use the Devourer's bracelet—they might stand a chance.

However, their hopes were dashed as they stood alongside a group of humans who could use the Vylkr energy with only their bodies, without relying on any external means.

Nevertheless, they couldn't help but sigh again for the umpteenth time, recalling the stunned and shocked faces of the key figures of this territory as Leif explained the functions of the Devourer's bracelet and the Gearweavers to them.

In reality, it should have been them who should have worn expressions of disbelief, as nobody would even believe them if they decided to share the information in a city filled with several powerful individuals capable of using Vylkr energy with their bodies alone, without the need for a Devourer's bracelet or a Devourer's heart—essentially, for free.

They hadn't even believed this information despite Patriarch Rylan informing them until they had witnessed and confirmed it.

"This is going to be an embarrassing loss," Ronan said, exhaling deeply, fully aware that the next battle would also result in defeat.

"Yeah, compared to us who call ourselves the god's chosen, they are the real monsters," Lirien, his wife, added, shaking her head in defeat.

"Please remember, this is not a battle against an enemy but only a test for us to assess how our strength compares against each other, so there is no need to take the results to heart," Isadora responded.

Though she understood how they felt, she had to tell them they couldn't take such things to heart, especially since they would be in their care now.

"I guess you are right, Princess," Ronan responded.

Chapter 674 Assessing Their Strengths (2)

Meanwhile, Patriarch Rylan kept silent during their conversation, aware of the ingrained pride of the gods' chosen. To him, this was a good opportunity to humble them and make them understand that there are many more things far beyond what they can grasp in this world.

Back on the platform,

The warrior observed Leif as he recovered his composure and returned to his feet.

"I think I have gauged your level of strength accurately," the warrior said.

"Oh, and what do you think it is?" Leif responded with a raised brow, his tone filled with doubt.

"I'll give it a rating of a two-star Vylkr vine," the warrior replied. "You can't handle a three-star Vylkr vine, can you?" he asked, noting Leif's surprised expression.

Leif quickly recomposed himself and shook his head in response. "You're right; my strength is sufficient for two-star Vylkr vines but insufficient for a three-star Vylkr vine," he admitted.

He realised it was reasonable for the warrior to accurately gauge his level of strength despite only clashing a few times.

The warrior nodded. "So, do you want to give up?" he asked.

Leif took a deep breath and exhaled before shaking his head.

"While my strength may be within a rating of two-star Vylkr vines and can't handle a three-star Vylkr vine, it doesn't mean I can't go higher than this," Leif replied with a fierce expression.

The warrior looked at Leif with a surprised expression. Given their vast difference in strength, he had expected Leif to give up, but Leif showed determination to continue.

"What's your name?" The warrior asked.

"It's Leif," Leif responded. "And you?" he asked.

"It's Ryker," Ryker replied.

Curiosity filled Leif's eyes as he asked, "What's your strength rating?" He stared at Ryker, awaiting his response, having already made a guess but wanting to confirm before reaching a conclusion.

"I'm a three-star warrior. In other words, I can handle a three-star Vylkr vine alone and a few more with some help," Ryker responded with a confident smile.

When hearing Ryker's claim, Leif was momentarily surprised again but quickly nodded in understanding once he realised its reasonableness.

'Why wouldn't they be able to handle a three-star Vylkr vine alone when their bodies can utilise the Vylkr vine?' Leif thought to himself.

However, it took a unit with a strength rating comparable to that of a three-star Vylkr for them to handle it without any unnecessary circumstances. Only those with immense talent could handle a three-star Vylkr vine alone, along with those at the Ascendant level who could do the same and handle multiple three-star Vylkr vines simultaneously.

"Alright, get ready then," Leif said as he gripped his sword handle with both hands.

Then, he muttered, "Boost."

Instantly, a powerful wave of Vylkr energy emanated from Leif's bracelet and surged from his right hand, spreading rapidly throughout his entire body. Within seconds, Leif's eyes took on an inky black tint, and his body became enveloped in numerous strands of Vylkr energy.

Ryker stared at Leif with furrowed brows, sensing that something was off as he observed the countless inky black strands of Vylkr energy swirling around Leif. It seemed strangely similar to the Vylkr warrior mode, but still, something about it appeared off.

Nevertheless, having been briefed about Leif's transformation, he wasn't entirely surprised by the scene unfolding before him.

Ryker was initially tempted to use his gift and gauge Leif's current level of strength, as he had never faced a two-star warrior who could utilise the Vylkr warrior mode.

However, he quickly recalled that no other techniques or gifts were allowed in this battle, except for the Vylkr energy, to assess how they fared against each other using only that. Instead of testing the waters, Ryker immediately channelled his Vylkr energy out of all three Vylkr containers, allowing it to flow through his veins and every cell in his body before erupting outward.

His eyes took on an inky blackish tint as his entire being became enshrouded in countless strands of Vylkr vines that ascended upward while his hair stood on end and blew fiercely, pointing toward the sky.

Witnessing this scene, Leona and the others were once again shocked.

"They can also use this form too?" The group couldn't help but ask themselves.

It was obvious that Leif and Ryker were currently employing the same form, yet no matter how they observed the two, it seemed there was something distinct about each.

However, they couldn't pinpoint exactly what it was for some reason.

"No matter how much I look at that form, I still can't discern the difference between it and yours. And judging from your expressions, it seems that you all don't exactly know what it is either," Patriarch Rylan responded with a deep exhale.

Nonetheless, it wasn't them alone; even the Village Chief, Orion, Stronghold Leader Zogar, Stronghold Leader Seth, and the others couldn't help but narrow their eyes at the unfolding scene before them as they tried to ponder why something seemed off between the two energies, despite their similarities.

Stronghold Leader Zogar pondered deeply until he finally thought of a reason that seemed to make sense.

"Stronghold Leader Zogar, you seem to have a bit of understanding about why something seems off just by looking at both. Can you perhaps share it with us?" The Village Chief asked, gazing at Stronghold Leader Zogar's pondering expression.

Everyone focused on Stronghold Leader Zogar and waited for him to speak.

Stronghold Leader Zogar nodded, "I think it may have to do with the fact that they use a diluted form of the Vylkr energy. I'm not sure what other reasons there are," Stronghold Leader Zogar responded.

"Hmm, that seems reasonable," the Village Chief replied contemplatively.

Orion, Stronghold Leader Seth, the Village Chieftess, the Caretakers, Queen Selene, and the others all nodded in understanding, finding Stronghold Leader Zogar's words quite reasonable.

Orion inwardly nodded as he focused on the battle unfolding on the platform.

On the platform, Leif said, "I'm coming," taking a confident step forward and vanishing from his original position, leaving a heavy gust of wind.

Chapter 675 The gods' chosen pride

Surprisingly, instead of reappearing in front of Ryker, he appeared to his left, swiftly swinging his sword horizontally towards Ryker's body.

Leif had already acknowledged that facing Ryker solely with the Vylkr energy wouldn't be enough, prompting him to give it his all.

However, within Ryker's sharp eyes, Leif's every move seemed visible and incredibly sluggish. As soon as Leif appeared beside him, without turning his head, Ryker swiftly vanished from his spot, reappearing behind Leif solely through his incredible speed.

In the blink of an eye, Ryker delivered a powerful elbow strike behind his back before Leif's blade could make contact with the ground.

BANNG!!

A gasp escaped Leif's lips as the force of the blow expelled the air from his lungs, sending him hurtling off the platform to land beside Isadora and the others.

"Captain!"

"Captain!"

"Captain!"

They rushed forward immediately to check his condition and ensure he was alright.

"Haaa..." Leif breathed deeply, wincing in pain from the attack.

"Captain, are you okay?" Leona asked, checking for any signs of injuries with genuine worry.

"Yes. Haa... I am okay, don't worry," Leif assured them.

Relieved to find no severe injuries, Leona sighed, "That's good; we thought you had broken a few bones from that attack, at least."

Ronan nodded in agreement, and the others joined him in helping Leif sit back upright.

Leif scanned the area for his sword, locating it a few meters away, embedded into a nearby pillar. His gaze shifted back to the platform, meeting Ryker's watchful eyes.

"I lost," Leif admitted, exhaling in defeat.

Ryker nodded and then turned, leaving the platform.

Leif dropped his head low, sighing in acknowledgement of his defeat.

"You tried your best, Captain. It's just that compared to us, they are the real monsters," Ronan said, offering comfort with a tap on Leif's shoulder.

Lyndon nodded in agreement, "Yes, it's already outstanding that you were able to hold your own against him for a while," Lyndon added.

Though the battle seemed one-sided, the Village Chief had clearly stated that Ryker was one of the Village's best warriors, so lasting less than five minutes was an accomplishment.

Despite knowing that their words were only meant to soothe his loss, Leif nodded in understanding before he stood back up again, his body still wincing from the blow he had received at the back.

"Don't worry; there will be qualified healers waiting to attend to you after this," the Village Chief's voice sounded from the other side.

Leif nodded and bowed towards the direction of the Village Chief, "Thank you, Cheif," he responded.

The Village Chief nodded, "Let the next person climb the platform," he said.

They hadn't chosen someone of equal strength with Leif and the others because they needed to be accurately sure about their level of strength.

Now that they had confirmed that they stood on the same level of strength as a two-star warrior, the next warrior to climb the stage was a two-star warrior.

Since there were no additional uses of gifts or techniques, the Village Chief, Orion, and the others were curious to see how their strength compared to a two-star warrior.

"I'll go next," Leona said, grasping her sword's handle with a firm expression.

"Are you sure?" Isadora asked, worried that Leona was about to do something foolish after witnessing her teammate's terrible defeat.

"There's nothing to worry about, Princess Isadora. I understand that we shouldn't take the results of this battle to heart; however, this is about our pride as the gods chosen. I just want to show them that, though we are weaker than them, we are still not an easy opponent they could easily deal with, eyes closed," Leona responded.

"And, most especially, Princess, first impressions count. So unless we do something about this, we risk being looked down upon as the weaker race present," Leona added as she looked at the unfamiliar race with crystal-like hair locs staring in their direction with disappointed expressions.

For them to be present and have someone among the key figures, she determined they also possessed a certain level of strength.

Hearing Leona's words, Isadora was about to speak before she held back and looked at everyone's faces. She could tell they were pondering the same despite not voicing it out.

Isadora sighed in defeat, "Okay, just remember that you are not to use any other energy except the Vylkr energy; you can head over to the platform," she cautioned.

"Thank you, Princess," Leona responded seriously, nodding in understanding.

Leona shifted her attention forward and walked towards the stage.

Witnessing the scene, Patriarch Rylan exhaled deeply as he had already predicted that something like this would happen. To him, it was best if they were seen as the weakest race present, as he knew that it would divert much attention from his race and allow them to steadily rebuild themselves.

Though he trusted the Village Chief, he couldn't say the same about the others.

Nevertheless, he was aware that it would be unnatural for the gods' chosen to take these losses and not do anything about it, so he continued to observe the test despite already knowing how everything would turn out.

As Leona stepped onto the platform, she looked at the man who seemed to be in his mid-twenties.

"My name is Leona, and my strength rating is equal to two-star Vylkr vines," Leona greeted. "You?" she asked.

"I am Gian; mine is also comparable to two-star Vylkr vines," Gian said as he tightly grasped his cutlass.

Though he knew it would be a disadvantage against their weapons, it was still better than stepping onto the platform empty-handed.

Leona's brows shot up in surprise, "So you're weaker than the previous opponent we just faced?" Leona asked curiously, his voice still filled with doubt.

Gian nodded, "Yes. Though I'm sure I'll catch up very soon with him," he responded.

Hearing his response, Leona smiled. She thought they would face another opponent comparable in strength to the last one they had fought. However, it seemed that this wasn't the case.

Chapter 676 The gods' chosen pride (2)

Leona couldn't help but wonder if they had made this decision because they realized their previous opponent was too overwhelming or if they simply wanted to see how the results would differ when facing someone with the same level of strength.

Nonetheless, she didn't care which it was, as this was the perfect situation for her.

Leona gripped her sword tightly, planning to go all out from the start. Without hesitation, she muttered, "Boost."

In an instant, a surge of Vylkr energy erupted from her Devourer's bracelet, coursing up her right arm and swiftly spreading throughout her entire body. Her eyes took on an inky blackish tint as countless strands of Vylkr energy enveloped her form.

"I hope you're prepared," Leona asked, broadly smiling as she focused on Gian.

Gian nodded confidently. "Absolutely," he replied.

Leona's smile faded into a frown as she noticed Gian adopting a serious posture, tightly gripping his cutlass.

"Are you planning to activate that form, too?" Leona asked with a hint of doubt in her voice.

Gian furrowed his brows before understanding her concern.

"I'm sorry, but I can't utilize the Vylkr warrior mode. That form is reserved for three-star warriors, so I can't access it as a two-star warrior. But don't worry, I'll be fine without it," Gian reassured.

While he couldn't unleash a form like the Vylkr warrior mode at will, needing to achieve his full potential first, Gian was confident in his ability to defeat his opponent without relying on it.

Hearing his response, Leona's frown deepened.

"Are you sure? Because, as you can see, I'm not planning on holding back," Leona replied with a fierce gaze.

Gian smiled broadly. "As I said, I can handle myself without it, so you have nothing to worry about," he responded.

Leona kept her lips shut. She had already done her best by warning him of the impending battle, so whatever happened next was none of her business.

Leona nodded in response and immediately positioned her body to attack. She disappeared from her position, leaving a lingering trail of wind behind, and within an instant, appeared behind Gian.

"I'm going to end this quickly," Leona muttered fiercely under her breath as she swung her considerable-sized sword downward upon his body with all of her strength.

Meanwhile, Gian observed her every movement with a smile. When Leona appeared behind him with her sword swinging above his head, he immediately side-stepped, effortlessly dodging her attack.

BANNGG!!

Her considerable-sized sword crashed against the wooden floor.

Leona clicked her tongue in annoyance as she pulled back her sword and noticed Gian had distanced himself a few meters away after narrowly dodging her attack by a few inches.

Even with this, Leona had little hope about landing her attack on the first try, as she hadn't underestimated the strength of her opponent. Without hesitation, her body surged forward again. She reappeared beside Gian, her hands tightly gripping the handle of her sword as she swung it against his body.

Leona watched as he calmly repositioned himself to narrowly dodge her attack, prompting her to abruptly halt her movements and reposition her body, sending a kick towards his head with the back of her left leg.

Gian was surprised as he observed Leona effortlessly reposition her body mid-attack. Such a skill was ordinary among the village warriors, especially those like himself. However, it was because Leona had done so with such an enormous weapon that impressed him.

Regardless, in his eyes, every one of her actions was like that of a crawling stick, so he had already dodged her attacks before she could even complete her movements.

BANG!!

Leona's sword again collided against the wooden floor as she missed her fifth attack. She didn't rush to attack this time but observed the man before her with a deep frown. From her several failed attempts to land her attack, she had already grasped his capabilities.

Though there was a slight difference in their agility, it wasn't something she found challenging to make up for. However, no matter how hard she tried or whichever method she used, he seemed he could predict her actions before she made them.

"It's getting annoying. Why don't you stand in one place and show me your strength?" Leona asked, her voice filled with a hint of coldness.

Obviously, she grew frustrated with her constant failed attempts to attack him.

"Though I'd love to indulge you, unfortunately, raw strength isn't my forte. I won't be taking that risk," Gian responded, shaking his head with a tired sigh escaping his lips.

As a warrior who had created two Vylkr containers in his brain, Gian's mind and perception were several times faster and more precise than those on the same level, but his strength had not reached the level of those who had created one or two containers in their hearts.

Gian was satisfied with effortlessly weaving through Leona's attacks and opted not to face her head-on. His task was to allow her to showcase her full capabilities with the Vylkr energy, and he was more than willing to see it through to the end.

Outside the platform,

Witnessing this scene, Isadora and the others all shook their heads in disappointment.

Despite their hopes for Leona, they still anticipated losing the battle. However, unlike Leif, who managed to land at least one attack on his opponent, Leona hadn't landed a single blow, leading them all to sigh in defeat.

On the platform,

Suddenly, the countless strands of Vylkr energy on Leona's body vanished, retracting back into her Devourer's bracelet on her right arm.

"Haa..." Leona took a deep breath, attempting to regain her composure after deactivating her previous form.

Gian raised a brow in response, "It seems that you have exhausted yourself," Gian said.

"No, not really. Though it only requires a bit of effort, I can go as far as I want as long as I possess enough Vylkr energy to do so," Leona responded, shaking her head. "But I don't think it's worth wasting the precious Vylkr energy anymore, considering I won't be able to touch you."

"You're giving up?" Gian asked.

"No, I might not be able to touch you. However, if you want to win, you should attack me first, right?" Leona said as she stared at Gian fiercely, tightly grip

Chapter 677 Consistent Defeat

Gian nodded and instantly disappeared from his position, his body surging towards Leona with a punch aimed at her gut.

The moment he arrived before her, her sword blocked his attack, absorbing the impact.

However, that wasn't enough to stop him. Gian immediately repositioned his body and turned around, crashing his elbow toward Leona's face.

Just as it was about to hit, Leona quickly pulled back, distancing herself from Gian.

Leona smiled broadly as she looked at him.

"Since you can't touch me, and I can't touch you, I think it's best we call this a draw," Leona said, narrowing her eyes at Gian.

She observed him for any sudden movements.

"Besides, it's not as though we are using our full abilities," Leona added.

Nevertheless, instead of responding, Gian's body surged towards her again. "Let's see how much you can dodge then," he said, appearing before her and swinging his cutlass towards her neck.

Leona immediately raised her sword and blocked the attack, prompting the cutlass to break into two due to the force of the impact.

Gian sent a kick towards her gut, causing her to use her hands to block the attack, the clothes crafted from leaves falling apart from the impact. However, just when she thought she could recover, Gian's body twisted unnaturally in the air, showcasing one of the skills he had honed over many years fighting the vicious Vylkr vines.

His feet immediately crashed into her face.

BANGG!!

Leona hurtled off the platform like a projectile before crashing onto the ground. Her senses were momentarily disoriented from the attack before she swiftly recovered them, attempting to sit upright as Isadora and the others arrived to check on her condition.

"Are you alright, Leona?" Isadora asked worriedly.

They had all witnessed Leona being sent flying off the platform with a kick to her face.

"I'm fine, Princess. The side of my face just hurts a little, that's all," Leona replied, sighing in defeat as she realized she had also lost.

"You tried your best, so there's no reason for you to feel bad," Leif said, noticing her defeated expression.

Ronan nodded in response, "At first, we thought you would lose without landing any attack. Though you still didn't land any, you proved us wrong by evading a few of his. Good job," Ronan responded with a reassuring smile.

Lyndon and the rest of the group all nodded in agreement.

Leona nodded, accepting their words of encouragement, but she still couldn't help but feel a little disappointed at her defeat.

"The next should climb the platform," the Village Chief's resounding voice sounded in the air once more.

"I guess it's my turn," Ronan said, his shoulders slumping downwards as he picked up his sword and walked towards the platform before suddenly regaining confidence.

Even though he knew he would lose, like Leif and Leona before him, Ronan decided to put in his best effort.

Ronan confidently stepped onto the platform.

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"I lost," Ronan admitted, sprawling on the ground with his hands splayed sideways and his sword landing a few meters away from him.

Though his opponent wasn't as agile or overwhelming as Leona's and Leif's opponents, there was something about his opponent's strength that sent a tremor through his body after each attack.

He was overpowered!

The Village Chief's voice resounded in the air again.

Carl smirked wryly as he tightened his grip on his weapon and walked toward the platform.

Within the next five minutes, he, too, experienced defeat.

After that, the losses continued until all four of the remaining gods' chosen had entered the platform and showcased their capabilities with the Vylkr energy. While a few were flung off the platform like

Leif and the others, the rest willingly accepted their defeat and walked off the stage with little to no injuries on their bodies.

After an hour, the Village Chief, Orion, and the others wore contemplative expressions as they processed how the gods' chosen utilized the Vylkr energy.

Unlike the gods' chosen, who depended on their Devourer's heart and other components of the Devourer's bracelets to become stronger, it was obvious that the warriors had an overwhelming edge not only in overall strength but also in the Vylkr containers, enhancing specific aspects of their strength considerably.

The Village Chief immediately summoned the healers to tend to injured people.

The Village Chief, Orion, Stronghold Leader Seth, Stronghold Leader Zogar, and Queen Selene approached Patriarch Rylan.

At this moment, they took notice of the downcast expressions of the four-eared elves as some received treatment from the healers.

"I hope this test didn't cause you any issues, Patriarch Rylan," the Village Chief asked, furrowing his brows as he focused on Patriarch Rylan.

Patriarch Rylan tiredly shook his head in response, "Don't worry about it, Chief Brane. As their Patriarch, I can say that this is something they all needed to experience before settling down," Patriarch Rylan responded.

He was sure that now that the gods' chosen had been humbled and realized they were nothing special compared to the warriors of the Village, they would avoid stirring up any kind of trouble.

Instead, he hoped they would focus on helping the four-eared elves recover slowly and steadily. He simply hoped they were not too foolish not to pick up any lessons from the experience.

The Village Chief had a look of realization as he nodded in understanding.

"Okay then. I just want to inform you that all four-eared elves are currently settling in the Second Border City, each given their own homes. The Village and the Prismers will provide the food and

daily provisions for a month until they all find something to do, so you don't have to worry; everything has been taken care of," the Village Chief said, gesturing towards Queen Selene, who nodded in response.

Along with Isadora and Lyndon, who were behind their father, Leona and the other four-eared elves receiving treatment nearby, along with others who were keeping watch over them, had heard the Village Chief's words. This caused their hearts to throb with immense gratitude.

Chapter 678 Sororal Alchemy

'Maybe it's not so bad to lose in a place like this,' Leona thought as the healer finally finished her treatment and healed the throbbing sensation by the side of her face.

The others also shared the same sentiment as they realized that they would be sleeping comfortably tonight.

Who cared if they lost, especially when the battle had been fair? They would even want to lose again if it meant coming to a place like this.

Isadora suddenly bowed down towards the Village Chief. "Thank you for your hospitality," Isadora said, her tone filled with intense emotions.

The others, even those who had been lying down, immediately stood up and did the same, following suit.

"Thank you for your hospitality."

The Village Chief nodded in response.

"A warrior will lead you to your new homes when you are all done. If you encounter any problems, don't hesitate to inform the warriors, and they will immediately inform me," the Village Chief said. "For now, I must urgently attend to something, so I will see you later, Patriarch Rylan."

Patriarch Rylan nodded gratefully, "Thank you, Chief Brane. If there is anything I need to inform you about, I'll let you know immediately," he responded.

The Village Chief nodded again, turned around, and left the training ground with Orion and the others.

Once they were gone, they all slumped on the ground again, tiredly continuing their treatment. They couldn't wait to see what their new homes looked like.

Isadora suddenly felt movement within her leaf-crafted attire and smiled tiredly.

"It seems like someone was also tired and hungry. Don't worry, we'll be at our new home soon," Isadora muttered as she quietly parted the side of her attire.

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As Orion processed everything that had just occurred, leading the way toward where the dead Vylkr vine he had captured yesterday was secured, he couldn't help but ponder deeply about the Devourer's bracelet and its other functions. Since the Village's warriors could use the Vylkr energy, doesn't that also mean they were compatible with the Devourer's bracelet?

Though it was already clear to everyone that the Village's warriors had a prominent edge over the gods' chosen, Orion couldn't help but be curious about what would happen if the Village's warriors, especially those who had reached their potential, possessed their own Devourer's bracelet.

Would they be able to consistently grow stronger like the gods' chosen, or would such an attempt result in unforeseeable and undesirable consequences?

Orion couldn't help but ponder deeply about the results; however, he couldn't come up with anything, no matter how much he tried. The actual outcome was something he could only determine after testing it first.

Keeping the thought at the back of his mind, they finally arrived at their destination.

The Third Border City Headquarters Branch Of The Healers' Association!

Each Border City had its Headquarters Branch that took care of the various other Healers Association branches within it.

After several failed attempts to establish a suitable name for all the health structures in Orion's cities, the Healers' Association was the name they finally agreed upon.

Orion confidently led the way into the Headquarters Branch of The Healers' Association, with the Village Chief, Stronghold Leader Zogar, Stronghold Leader Seth, and Queen Selene all trailing behind him, their expressions solemn.

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Within The Third Border City Headquarters Branch Of The Healers' Association

A small furnace roared with fierce flames in a secluded corner of the building, and a slender tube connected it to a crystalline retort.

As the fire danced beneath the transparent crystalline retort, the remnants of the Vylkr vines burned vigorously, creating a small, inky black blaze that swirled above.

The inky black smoke passed through the retort tube and encountered a pile of various greenish leaves, which promptly withered and perished upon contact with the dark smoke.

"Have you discovered anything about it yet?" Greta asked, her voice filled with a hint of weariness.

Seraphina shook her head, sighing, "Not yet," she replied.

She adjusted the furnace's heat, carefully containing the inky blackish smoke and setting it aside for disposal. Afterwards, she substituted the wilted leaves for several vibrant ones and repeated the process, placing the remnants of an ordinary dead three-star Vylkr vine the warriors had brought over.

"I've already tried examining the remains of the Vylkr vine, comparing it with other ordinary three-star Vylkr vines to check for contamination, evaluating its potency, and even diluting it. Yet, every

attempt yielded the same result," Seraphina explained, clenching her hands into fists as the frustrating scene replayed in her mind despite replacing it with an ordinary Vylkr vine.

"Yeah, working with the Vylkr vines is difficult, or should I say, next to impossible. I wouldn't have spent my night here if it wasn't," Greta sympathetically remarked, appearing as though she was trying to comfort Seraphina with her words.

Compared to Greta, who relied more on her gift and was limited by the herbs on the farm, Seraphina excelled in mixing various herbs and conducting experiments. She brewed potions with incredible potency, healing various injuries and ailments. Having learned under her for three and a half months, Greta acknowledged that she had yet to match Seraphina's skills.

Still, she had come to understand one significant aspect of Seraphina: her aversion to anything that couldn't be explained through alchemy. While she demonstrated flexibility with matters related to her awakened gift and other magical capabilities, this preference made it challenging for Seraphina to connect with her other sisters at home.

She kept this aspect of herself well hidden, with only Orion, and then she became aware of it due to having to learn under her.

All their sisters had complained about her welcoming yet mysterious personality. This was one of the reasons why Greta had chosen to learn from her.

Greta was interested in creating potions apart from the herbal mixtures and wanted to help Seraphina open up more at home.

If not, she feared that Seraphina might be considered weird and left out by their sisters, who were all busy forming their own factions.

Chapter 679 The Unsettling Revelation

?Seraphina nodded in agreement with Greta's words.

"Yes, it's basically impossible to work with it to the extent that it makes no sense. And when you think that the Village warriors can control such energy, that only adds more ridiculousness to the

issue," Seraphina said solemnly. "Why don't you head back home and get some rest? I can tell that you are already worn out and need to rest."

"No, I can wait until you are done because I still have a few more methods I want to try and see if they work," Greta insisted.

She knew how determined Seraphina could be when faced with the unpredictable nature of certain magical occurrences that challenged her logical mindset.

Greta wasn't willing to give her the leeway to act as she pleased, especially when their experiment's main subject, this time, was the Vylkr vine.

Seraphina looked at Greta from the corners of her eyes and sighed tiredly. Just as she was about to respond, a knock sounded on the door, interrupting her words.

"I will get it," Seraphina said as she walked towards the door and pulled it open.

Upon seeing that it was Orion, Seraphina's demeanour immediately changed as she jumped on him, hugging him tightly, oblivious to the Village Chief's presence and the others' presence.

For the Village Chief and the others, such closeness was ordinary. However, for Queen Selene, who still found it challenging to adapt to the village's traditions, Seraphina's actions were an incredible show of affection.

Greta watched the scene from afar and couldn't help but shake her head in defeat, observing Seraphina's complete change in demeanour.

No wonder her other sisters found it difficult to be around her.

Nonetheless, Greta understood that she had a lot on her hands to do.

Meanwhile, as Orion felt Seraphina's fleshy thighs around his waist, along with the vulva area of her panties softly pressing against his clothed shaft, he immediately controlled himself, preventing his shaft from hardening more than it already had before she let go, and descended soon after.

Orion cleared his throat and quickly regained his composure, "Ahem! We just came to find out what you have discovered about the strange Vylkr vine," Orion asked seriously as he looked at Seraphina before shifting his attention towards Greta.

The demeanour around Seraphina shifted again, adopting a much more professional tone. She walked over to the furnace, grabbed the crystalline cylinder housing the burnt remains of the Vylkr vine that she had swapped, and placed it fiercely on the table in the centre of the room.

Fortunately, the crystalline glass had been reinforced with magic, so breaking it wasn't easy.

"Nothing. We have tried everything to find something wrong with the Vylkr vine or maybe explain why it had changed into how you found it. However, we couldn't find anything, no matter how hard we tried. All our efforts were useless," Seraphina said.

Hearing Seraphina's words, Orion and the Village Chief suddenly frowned in response.

"So you're saying we can't know why the Vylkr vine became like this?" Orion asked, with a contemplating expression.

Seraphina nodded in response.

"But there must be something you must have come up with, right?" The Village Chief asked, his tone filled with seriousness.

"Unfortunately, no," Greta responded, shaking her head with a tired sigh escaping her lips.

She had been here throughout the night trying to come up with an explanation for the Vylkr vine.

"Though, there is one explanation we have that might have some relevance," Greta added hesitatingly.

"Go on then, what is the explanation you have come up with," the Village Chief said.

Orion, Stronghold Leader Zogar, Stronghold Leader Seth, and Queen Selene also focused on Greta, waiting for her explanation.

Greta turned her head to look at Seraphina. Seeing Seraphina nod in response, Greta replied, "You know how the life cycle of Vylkr vine growth works, right?"

The Village Chief nodded, "For a one-star Vylkr vine, their primary goal is exploring their environment and identifying potential sources of life to consume. The two-star Vylkr vine develops spikes along its length, enhancing its predatory capabilities."

"They become more aggressive in seeking out and ensnaring their targets, using the spikes for offence and defence. They are also more efficient at capturing and subduing their targets. The three-star Vylkr vine undergoes a significant transformation. They amalgamate, forming a grotesque, headless entity with multiple limbs, sometimes three or four legs."

"At this stage, there is a higher level of coordination among the Vylkr vines, enabling them to collectively communicate with one another and coordinate their attacks," the Village Chief explained.

After decades of battling the Vylkr vines as warriors, it was safe to say that he knew them like the back of his hand.

Greta nodded in response, "Exactly. From what we know and the information that we currently possess, every stage of the Vylkr vine's growth is basically in a way to effectively fulfil its primary function, which is to seek out sources of life to consume," Greta explained, "So, our explanation is this - what if instead of something being wrong with the strange Vylkr vine that was captured yesterday, it was merely a natural occurrence, and what we have found is simply another life cycle in the growth of the Vylkr vines."

BOOOM!! BOOOM!! BOOOM!!

The moment Greta finished speaking, the Village Chief, Orion, and even Stronghold Leader Zogar, Stronghold Leader Seth, and Queen Selene's eyes widened in disbelief as they felt their minds tremble, as though Greta's words had penetrated and exploded inside their heads.

An almost unnatural silence settled within the enclosed room before it was immediately interrupted.

"...What did you say?" The Village Chief asked, his voice mixed with a hint of doubt. His eyes stared at Greta with a turbulent mix of emotions as he awaited her response.

Greta shook her head tiredly at their reactions after they had heard her words. She remembered how she had also reacted, Seraphina's stunned and dumbfounded expression when they came up with this explanation, and their failed attempts to ensure it wasn't the case.

So, she had expected their reaction to be like this, as it was completely natural.

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Author's Note: It should be clear how they developed a mixture to suppress Orion's incredible reproduction capabilities.

Also, what do you think is the strange Vylkr vine?

Chapter 680 The Unsettling Revelation (2)

"Yes, Chief..." Greta responded, "What I am trying to say is that the strange Vylkr vine that was killed yesterday might be, in other words, a four-star Vylkr vine, which is still developing."

Hearing Greta's response again, the Village Chief sealed his lips shut.

A four-star Vylkr vine! They were already having problems dealing with the one-star, two-star, and three-star Vylkr vines, which had mostly been solved by the presence of Aegis of the Arctic Deity.

But the sudden emergence of a four-star Vylkr vine... this was a sentence he thought he would never hear in his entire life!

"What do you think may have caused the emergence of the four-star Vylkr vine?" Stronghold Leader Zogar asked, his eyes staring at Greta intensely.

He had experienced many stranger things these past few years, which he was sure none of the previous Stronghold Leaders had encountered. So, though a four-star Vylkr vine was enough to astound him and leave him rooted in a spot for several minutes, he would instead get to the root of it and eliminate it with every method he could think of.

Seraphina sighed loudly, "You weren't listening to our explanation, Stronghold Leader Zogar. We have tried everything to see what could have caused such a development; however, all our trials have been fruitless, leaving us to conclude that it was only a natural occurrence," Seraphina explained.

"So what should we do now?" Queen Selene asked. The revelation she had just received was too much for her to remain quiet.

"Unfortunately, if this is a normal occurrence, then we wouldn't be able to do much because since there is already one, then that means that there are countless others that have already emerged the same way and are currently running around and hiding within the dead forest," Seraphina responded.

"Our only hope is that the explanation we have come up with is inaccurate, and this occurrence may have emerged from a reaction to something, which means that if we find what caused the development, we can stop such an occurrence from reemerging. However, until then, the problem remains the same, so we should start searching for more of these things within the dead forest before they become as dangerous as their counterparts," Seraphina added.

Greta nodded in agreement with Seraphina's words.

Hearing her words, Queen Selene and the others fell silent once again.

After a moment of contemplation, the Village Chief nodded in understanding and let out a heavy breath. "Very well, I will take your advice to heart and ensure that the warriors spread out and thoroughly search the sectors of the dead forest around us. We no longer need to worry about the intrusion of the Vylkr vines into our homes, so I'll make sure every warrior is on this task," the Village Chief said.

Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth solemnly nodded in agreement. Even if the Village Chief hadn't mentioned it, they were already considering the same course of action.

"I'll also ensure that the Crystalforge elite warriors are dispatched. While they may not directly engage the Vylkr vines, their diverse skills could prove invaluable in locating them," Queen Selene added.

"As for me, I'll maintain orderliness in the Cities and ensure uninterrupted operations," Orion asserted.

Despite having numerous subordinates, however, with his wives still waiting to establish their offices and assume control over the Cities, Orion acknowledged the need to heighten his vigilance in the Cities. With the focus shifted to the dead forest in search of the four-star Vylkr vine, he understood the importance of safeguarding the Cities, especially with the recent integration of the four-eared elves settling in.

"That's a relief. With this, we can redirect our focus elsewhere," the Village Chief said, exhaling lightly.

He trusted his wife and the Thak to handle the village affairs efficiently in his absence, leaving him with one less concern.

"And what's the plan for the remains of the Vylkr vine?" Stronghold Leader Seth asked, eyeing the transparent crystalline cylinder on the table before them.

To him, that container held the most dangerous contents in the room—the potential remains of a four-star Vylkr vine.

"To study it, of course. I have the rest of the day to experiment with it and explore other methods," Seraphina replied.

She carefully lifted the cylinder from the table, ensuring its safeness as she placed it on a nearby shelf. She intended to take it to her main office by day's end.

Until they discovered other potential four-star Vylkr vines, this remnant was their only lead, so she needed to keep it safe. Also, she was merely borrowing this laboratory for her work, as the dead Vylkr vine had been brought to the Third Border City Headquarters Branch of the Healers' Association.

Stronghold Leader Seth frowned sceptically, about to voice his doubts, but he was promptly cut off.

"Don't worry, Madam Seraphina is the best in her field. I trust her to handle this matter with care," the Village Chief reassured, preempting his son's concerns.

"Okay. Though I was just trying to be careful; however, if you say so, then I have no worries," Stronghold Leader Seth responded, shaking his head with a tired sigh escaping his lips.

The Village Chief nodded. "With that settled, we'll take our leave to organize everything," he said, offering a solemn nod to Seraphina and Greta before leaving.

He had to inspect the two imprisoned attackers alongside Stronghold Leader Zogar and Seth and gather information about them while also probing to affirm his doubts about whether there were any traitors among the four-eared elves.

Stronghold Leader Zogar, Queen Selene, and Stronghold Leader Seth followed suit, each nodding before exiting. Only Orion remained after they left.

"Shouldn't you be busy with something?" Greta asked, arching a brow in curiosity.

"I do. I have to inspect the homes that the four-eared elves have occupied and determine if there's a need to build more structures or leave them as they are," Orion replied as he approached Greta.