

Village Head 701

Chapter 701 Committing To Choice

"I don't know much about the Sanctuaries, but she does know something about them," Seig responded, shaking his head before gesturing towards the downcast Evadne.

Listening to Seig's words and feeling the various gazes on her, Evadne raised her head and briefly glanced at Seig before fixing her eyes on the Village Chief and the others.

Suddenly, Evadne narrowed her eyes at the Village Chief and the others. "I am sorry, but I am not giving out such information for free," she said firmly.

A frown suddenly emerged on the Village Chief's face, along with Stronghold Leader Zogar and Seth.

"Cough! Cough! Evadne, what are you doing?" Seig whispered, staring at Evadne in surprise.

Just a few minutes ago, she was okay with giving the Village Chief and the others all the information they needed, and now she was behaving as though she wasn't willing to share the information she possessed.

"Captain, since we have no chance of getting out of here, I don't think we should be willing to share whatever information we have. If we are going to die, then we might as well do so with our lips sealed," Evadne declared with a fierce gaze, her eyes locking in the direction of the Village Chief and the others.

'What is wrong with this woman?' Seig thought, his brows twitching in annoyance. He could tell just by looking at her that she meant every word she had just said.

"Are you sure about this, Lieutenant Evadne? If you don't give us the information we want, then I will make sure that your death will come swiftly," the Village Chief retorted, his voice cutting through the tense atmosphere.

"Then, go ahead. Since we will be dead anyway, I don't see any problem in that," Evadne replied defiantly.

Initially, she had thought they could survive by getting on the Village Chief's good side. However, after trying to pledge their allegiances to him and then listening to his response, Evadne had decided. She believed it was better to die with the information she possessed than share it with them.

At least she would die knowing they wouldn't get what they wanted from her, rather than telling them everything they needed to know and then still hoping their deaths wouldn't come sooner or later.

Seig couldn't help but feel the veins in his forehead threatening to explode at Evadne's words. If this was her plan, what was the point of him going through all this and explaining everything to them?

Seig held back the irritation in his voice and cleared his throat. "Hey, if you want to change plans midway, you should at least inform me first instead of leaving me in the dark," Seig said, his eyes fixated on Evadne's figure.

Evadne shifted her attention back to Seig. "I'm sorry, Captain. I promise it won't happen again," Evadne responded, lowering her gaze with a defeated sigh escaping her lips. She realized how her Captain hated to be put in a situation like this and quickly apologized.

Meanwhile, above the cell, the Village Chief frowned at Evadne's words. He thought that his threat had been successful, especially after he had shown their current position. However, they were much more strong-willed than he had believed.

The Village Chief nodded, "I will keep my promise and suspend your execution today since Captain Seig has shared with us what we needed to know. I will return tomorrow to ensure we have obtained the information we need, so unless you're keen on losing your lives, you may keep them until then," the Village Chief said.

With that, he turned around and left towards the exit, adding, "In the meantime, you can have the fruits. They will be your only meals for the day," his voice trailing behind him.

Stronghold Leader Zogar briefly cast one last scrutinizing glance at the two attackers, narrowing his eyes on their figures, before he turned around and walked away to catch up with the Village Chief and Stronghold Leader Seth.

Seig calmly observed the scene before bringing the apple-

shaped fruit to his mouth and biting. He turned his head towards Evadne, noticing that she was also eating.

As the strange energy of the fruit surged through him, filling him with strength, Seig relaxed on the ground. Since they wouldn't have the privilege of being in this Sanctuary anytime soon, he decided it was time to carefully consider his next move.

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

Seraphina powered down the furnace and carefully cleaned her work equipment, ensuring everything was neatly arranged. Exhausted, she sank into the chair and rested her head on the table.

"How did he manage it?" Seraphina muttered to herself. She had spent three hours attempting to detect divine energy within the potential three-star Vylkr vine, but none of her experiments had yielded any results.

Seraphina let out a weary sigh as she rose from her seat, gathering the remaining Vylkr vines into a box and preparing to head back home. Tomorrow, she planned to consult with the former Prismerions Healers' Council, now the branch heads of various Healers' Association branches scattered throughout the Cities, to see if they had any solutions.

While she knew the chances of them having techniques to identify divine energy within the Vylkr vine were slim, it was still worth a try.

Furthermore, Seraphina couldn't shake the nagging desire to ask Orion how he detected the divine energy within the vine as she packed up. However, she dismissed the thought; if Orion hadn't shared his method with her, there must have been a reason.

Nevertheless, the prospect of meeting with the former Prismerions Healers' Council after so long was something Seraphina looked forward to.

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Second Border City

Patriarch Rylan Residence

Patriarch Rylan's eyes slowly flickered open as he stirred awake, his gaze landing on the unfamiliar face before him before sweeping the room and recognizing the faces of his son, daughter, and the rest of the gods' chosen.

"Father!"

"Father!"

"Patriarch Rylan!!"

"Patriarch Rylan!!"

As Patriarch Rylan fully awoke and his gaze sharpened, Isadora, Lyndon, Leif, Leona, and the others erupted in excitement, rushing towards his bedside.

Chapter 702 The Divine Apostles

"Father, are you okay?" Isadora's voice trembled with emotion, her eyes swollen with tears as she gazed at Patriarch Rylan. Lyndon nodded in silent agreement with his sister's words.

"Patriarch, you scared us half to death. We were afraid something terrible had happened to you. It's a relief to see you finally awake," Leif's voice carried a mixture of relief and concern. Standing beside him, the other gods' chosen nodded solemnly in agreement.

However, instead of responding, Patriarch Rylan looked around the room. "How long have I been unconscious?" he asked, sighing deeply as he couldn't spot the other two warriors, meaning they had long left.

"You've been unconscious for three hours, Father," Isadora responded.

Hearing her words, Patriarch Rylan sighed again. "I am sorry for making you all worry," he said, stretching his hand towards his daughter to soothe the worry buried deep in her eyes before doing the same to his son.

He then shifted his attention towards Leif and the rest of the gods' chosen, silently nodding to reassure them that he was okay.

Leif sighed in relief, then shifted his attention towards the healer standing at the side.

"Thank you for your help. How should we repay you?" Leif asked.

Even though they had saved some wealth, he wasn't sure if it would be enough for the healer, considering their current location and how much she charged. He figured it was more respectful to ask.

However, the healer unexpectedly shook her head in response. "Don't worry about it. The Healers' Association has already received a message from the Village Chief to provide the Four-eared Elves race with treatment for a full month, so there is nothing to worry about," she responded.

Leif was momentarily stunned. He could feel his heart warming at the kind gestures this place had provided for him and his entire race, especially after such an abrupt entry.

Even Patriarch Rylan, Isadora, Lyndon, and the others couldn't help but sigh in defeat when they heard the healer's words. The sentiment of whether they would have done the same if they were in the Village's shoes was shared by everyone in the room.

'I'll definitely find a way to repay them generously in whichever way I can,' Patriarch Rylan thought with a hint of resolution.

Nonetheless, Leif nodded in understanding. "Alright, thank you for your help then. Let me show you the way out," he responded.

The healer nodded with a smile and followed Leif until he led her out of the compound.

Upon Leif's return to the master's bedroom, he found Patriarch Rylan already sitting upright, with the others patiently waiting around him.

Leif paused before Patriarch Rylan. "Patriarch, now that you are okay, can you please explain what all that was about?" Leif asked, his gaze fixed on Patriarch Rylan's figure.

He and the others didn't understand the conversation between the Patriarch and Iris, so they were eager to seek more answers and discover why he had fainted.

"I understand. There's no use keeping this a secret since we are already in this situation," Patriarch Rylan said, sighing tiredly as he noticed the expectant gazes of everyone around him.

"Yes, Father, please explain to us what happened," Isadora said pleadingly.

"Whatever it is, we want to hear it," Lyndon said eagerly.

Patriarch Rylan nodded solemnly. "Are you all aware of what 'Divine Apostles' are?" he asked, observing their confused and bewildered expressions.

"I'm sorry, Patriarch, but I have no idea what 'Divine Apostles' are. This might as well be my first time hearing about such a title," Leif responded, shaking his head in bewilderment.

Isadora, Lyndon, and the rest of the gods' chosen nodded in agreement, indicating their lack of knowledge about the term.

"Okay, it's not surprising that none of you know what a 'Divine Apostles' are. After all, only a few of us are aware of this information, so listen closely. In this world are 'Divine Apostles,' revered individuals bestowed with extraordinary powers or abilities capable of performing wonders directly connected to a divine being."

"Unlike the gods' chosen, who have been blessed with the compatibility to wield and control the Vylkr energy, Divine Apostles are selected by the divine to serve as conduits of their will and instruments of their divine purpose. With all this in mind, I'm sure you all understand why none of you seem to know about them," Patriarch Rylan explained, a deep exhale escaping his lips.

He surveyed their shocked and dumbfounded expressions.

However, Ronan couldn't help but furrow his brows as a frown suddenly emerged on his lips.

"Father... Do individuals like this actually exist?" Isadora asked, her eyes wide with shock as she stared at her father.

Patriarch Rylan nodded solemnly. "Yes, they do. However, from what I know, they can only be found in a few places," he replied.

"Where? And how could such a thing even be kept a secret?" Leif interjected, his voice tinged with disbelief.

He struggled to understand how such individuals could exist without anyone, especially someone like him, knowing about them. After all, he was a gods' chosen, so shouldn't he have known or at least heard about their existence if they were real?

It all seemed utterly ridiculous!

Patriarch Rylan noticed the agitating look in their eyes and sighed deeply, "The only information I have is that these Divine Apostles can only be found in the Sanctuaries and among some Grade 3 Runaway Cities," Patriarch Rylan responded.

Hearing Patriarch Rylan's words, Leif, Isadora, Lyndon, and the others gulped nervously.

Divine Apostles!

Sanctuaries!

Grade 3 Runaway Cities!

It suddenly made sense why they had never heard of such words before. These were the only places where a Divine Apostle could be found.

Suddenly, a realization dawned on their faces as they all gazed at Patriarch Rylan in disbelief once more.

"Patriarch, so that warrior..." Leif began, his eyes widening as he fixed his gaze on Patriarch Rylan.

The others present also stared at him wide-eyed, their gazes trembling with fear as the same thought formed within their minds.

Chapter 703 Unveiling Deceit

"Yes, if what we heard is true, then she is also a revered individual who has come in direct contact with a god," Patriarch Rylan interrupted, shaking his head wearily.

"Since there is a 'Divine Apostle' here, I also thought there would be a high chance of a temple nearby, granting me the opportunity to come in direct contact with a divine being. But it seems that will not be possible anymore," he added, sighing for the umpteenth time.

Though he didn't know who Aerialia, the goddess of the hunting moon, was, since Iris had mentioned that the goddess was already dead, he understood there was no chance for him to contact her again.

Also, after realizing that the Prismerions had a 'Divine Apostle' and gaining a glimpse into their background, Patriarch Rylan finally understood why he had never heard about them until today. However, he still couldn't understand how they came in contact with the Village, managed to settle comfortably with each other, and how the Village had developed itself and built such large structures in such a short period, to this very extent.

Still, no matter how disappointed he was, he was sure of one thing: his decision to come here was right.

"Patriarch, but she didn't mention she was the only one. She also mentioned several others like her," Leona said.

Leona had initially dismissed the Prismerions as barely strong and not worth mentioning simply because they couldn't use the Vylkr energy.

However, after listening to Patriarch Rylan's explanation about what a 'Divine Apostle' was, she suddenly felt a shiver run down her spine when she thought about the kind of power the woman

they had spoken to wielded. And recalling a few more individuals like her within these cities, Leona couldn't help but question whether this was truly the same place the Patriarch visited every year.

Patriarch Rylan furrowed his brows deeply, a frown etching as he recalled Iris mentioning those exact words. "Yes, you're right. Though if it were before, I would have believed it impossible for such a place to possess not only one 'Divine Apostle' but more than two. However, after what just occurred, I'm afraid I don't know what to believe anymore," he said, his shoulders slumping and his expression growing wearier by the moment.

Ronan was about to speak to discover why Patriarch Rylan was so anxious to see the goddess. However, before he could utter a word, the entire building suddenly trembled, and the resounding knock of a finger rasping against a door echoed through the air.

They all halted in their spots, wondering who would be making such a disturbance. They had only just settled into the building today and hadn't encountered anyone besides the key figures of the territory and a few warriors.

"I'll go and check who it is. Maybe it's one of the warriors," Leif suggested.

"I'll follow you," Lyndon chimed in.

Leif nodded in agreement to the prince's offer, and together, they left the room to find out who it was.

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Outside Patriarch Rylan's new mansion, the Village Chief and Stronghold Leaders Zogar and Seth waited patiently as they observed the figure of Leif darting back into the building.

Meanwhile, Leif stood with furrowed brows, his gaze fixed on the Village Chief and the others.

"Chief... Are you certain Captain Seig confessed to such a thing?" Leif asked hesitantly, his eyes fixed on the Village Chief.

The Village Chief nodded solemnly. "Yes. We interrogated the two attackers from earlier today, and they divulged everything, including the presence of a traitor among the gods' chosen. This traitor

may have enabled Captain Seig and his men to locate the Four-eared elves, no matter how hard you attempted to evade them," he confirmed.

Upon hearing the Village Chief's response, Leif remained rooted to his spot, his doubts evaporating into thin air.

Ronan? Who would have thought that Ronan could be why Captain Seig and his lieutenant always seemed to find them, regardless of their efforts to evade capture?

"That scoundrel," Leif muttered through clenched teeth, his fists tightening in frustration. He redirected his attention to the Village Chief.

"Chief, please allow us to handle this matter ourselves. After the trouble this traitor has caused us, I assure you everyone will be eager to ensure he pays dearly for his actions," Leif said, his voice laced with anger.

The Village Chief regarded Leif briefly before nodding in understanding. "Alright, just ensure that whatever you do, I want him removed from this city. But before that, I need to speak with Patriarch Rylan privately about some matters," he responded.

He had no worries about entrusting Leif and the others with the task, as he had already intended to leave this issue to Patriarch Rylan, especially since it concerned the Four-Eared race. His primary concern was ensuring that Ronan no longer remained in the city, as someone with such behaviour was unwelcome.

Leif nodded appreciatively at the Village Chief before turning toward the door. At that moment, Patriarch Rylan emerged, accompanied by Isadora and Lyndon, with the rest of the gods' chosen following closely behind.

"Village Chief Brane, I didn't expect to see you here at this hour. I assume you have important news to share?" Patriarch Rylan said, focusing intently on the Village Chief's serious demeanour.

From the solemn atmosphere, he could sense that whatever the Village Chief had to say was significant.

Meanwhile, Leif's furious gaze immediately fixated on Ronan's figure.

Ronan noticed Leif's intense glare and felt a chill run down his spine, causing his body to tense. A sense of foreboding gripped his heart as he swallowed nervously, shifting his attention to the Village Chief.

"Patriarch Rylan, I am here to inform you that there is an intruder among you—a traitor responsible for aiding Captain Seig and his men in tracking your movements, no matter how hard you tried to evade them," the Village Chief said, his words echoing through the ears of Patriarch Rylan, Isadora, and the other gods' chosen, freezing them in place with shock.

Chapter 704 Punishment For Treachery

Patriarch Rylan quickly regained his composure. "Village Chief Brane, are you absolutely certain about what you're saying?" he asked, his lips quivering as he stared at the Village Chief in disbelief.

The Village Chief nodded firmly. "I see no reason to deceive you, Patriarch Rylan," he replied. "And as for the identity of this person, he goes by the name Ronan."

Boom!

When the Village Chief's words resounded, Patriarch Rylan, Isadora, Leona, and the others felt like their eardrums had been assaulted by a sudden explosion.

Upon hearing his name, Ronan couldn't help but curse inwardly as he froze, sensing the sudden scrutiny of all eyes fixed upon him.

As a tight grip clenched around his hand, Ronan turned his head to find his wife, Lirien, holding onto him with a look of deep concern in her eyes.

"Please, Ronan, tell me this isn't true," Lirien pleaded, her voice trembling with despair.

Instead of answering, Ronan closed his eyes, unable to bear the anguish reflected in Lirien's gaze.

Patriarch Rylan glanced briefly at Ronan, his expression a mix of astonishment and disbelief, before returning to the Village Chief. Suppressing the heaviness in his heart, he opened his mouth to speak.

"Village Chief Brane, I understand that you wouldn't speak without reason, but are you absolutely certain this is the information you had obtained from Captain Seig?" he asked.

"Patriarch Rylan, the information I've provided comes directly from Captain Seig, so there is undoubtedly some validity. However, confirming its truth is precisely why we are here," the Village Chief replied, his gaze shifting to the other Four-eared elves, landing squarely on Ronan.

Patriarch Rylan's body trembled with fury as he absorbed the Village Chief's words. "RONAN!" he bellowed, snapping his gaze toward him. His eyes narrowed as they fixated on Ronan's stiff figure.

Observing the intense gazes of the Village Chief and Patriarch Rylan, Ronan's body tensed even further, his grip on Lirien's hand tightening involuntarily.

"Is it true? Were you the one aiding Captain Seig in tracking us down?" Patriarch Rylan's voice dripped with anger, his eyes blazing with betrayal as he stared at Ronan, whom he had once considered a trusted ally.

"Patriarch Rylan, this must be a misunderstanding... I would never betray our people," Ronan stammered, beads of sweat forming on his forehead.

But before he could finish, Patriarch Rylan's voice thundered, silencing him with a single word, "ENOUGH!"

A firm grip suddenly tightened around Ronan's neck, sending a chilling wave of despair through his body.

Ronan's eyes widened in shock as Leif tightened his grip and lifted him off the ground.

"You scoundrel! Are you suggesting that the Village Chief is lying, and we should believe you despite all the evidence against you?" Leif said, his voice seethed with fury as he gripped Ronan.

Desperately, Ronan tried to free himself, but Leif's hold was unwavering. His panicked gaze darted to Patriarch Rylan, Isadora, Lyndon, Leona, Carl, and the other gods' chosen, but their expressions mirrored Leif's anger and disappointment.

It felt as though they all wanted to take Leif's place and strangle him themselves.

The one person Ronan couldn't bring himself to look at was his wife, Lirien.

As if unable to bear the sight before her, Lirien steeled herself and grabbed Leif's arm. "Leif, please, let go. We need to hear Ronan out before jumping to conclusions," she pleaded, her eyes brimming with tears as she attempted to free Ronan from Leif's grasp. However...

PAAHH!

A resounding slap echoed as Leif's hand connected with Lirien's cheek, causing her to stagger backwards and nearly fall to the ground from the unexpected slap.

Ronan's eyes widened in disbelief at the scene unfolding before him. "YOU BASTARD!!" he screamed at Leif, his rage boiling over.

He unconsciously activated his Devourer's bracelet, causing it to hum and vibrate, its gears surging to life as they regulated the flow of Vylkr energy from the vial.

The Devourer's heart throbbed in sync with Ronan's emotions, pulsating with increasing intensity. As thick, inky black strands of Vylkr energy swirled around him—

BANNGG!!

Ronan unleashed a powerful punch at Leif's face, sending him hurtling backwards until he crashed into the wooden wall of the mansion with a deafening "BOOM!"

Without hesitation, Ronan seized the Lirien, ready to make a swift escape, but before he could take a single step, Seth immediately acted, activating his gift; a wall of thick lava emerged from the ground around Ronan, trapping him in place.

"Do you truly believe you can run in my presence?" Seth sneered, casting a disdainful glance at the now-imprisoned Ronan.

Glancing towards the Village Chief, Seth awaited his orders. "Go on," the Village Chief commanded.

With a nod, Seth refocused on the despairing Ronan. As he prepared to command the wall of lava to collapse inward, another voice pierced the air.

"WAIT!!" Isadora's cry echoed loudly as she sprinted forward, swiftly reaching the Village Chief, dropping to her knees, and pressing her forehead against the ground.

"What's this about?" The Village Chief inquired, his brow furrowing deeply as he observed Isadora's bowed figure.

He hadn't expected Patriarch Rylan's daughter to be the one opposing his judgment.

"Please, I understand Ronan's actions are unforgivable, but spare Lirien and her unborn child. They're innocent in all of this, Village Chief. Please, they don't deserve to die like this," Isadora pleaded, her eyes swollen with tears.

As Isadora spoke, a sudden realization struck Patriarch Rylan and the others like a hammer to the back of their heads.

Hold on!

Lirien and her unborn child... Could it be that...?

Their attention abruptly turned to the distraught Ronan, who held Lirien in his arms with a tearful, apologetic expression.

"I'm sorry... Hic!! I did what I thought was necessary. I didn't believe we would survive otherwise. If only I had known things would turn out differently, I swear I wouldn't have acted as I did, Lirien, please..." Ronan's voice trembled and cracked, tears flowing until he could no longer speak.

Tears streamed down Lirien's cheeks as she gently stroked Ronan's cheek to calm his emotions. "You don't need to explain, Ronan. I understand why you did it. We're partners, after all," Lirien said, her voice quivering with sadness as her face contorted in anguish.

"But if you had succeeded, would it have been worth it? Did you think I could continue living happily with our child without feeling guilty? Husband, why didn't you tell me before making such a deal?" she added.

Listening to Lirien's words, Ronan felt each syllable scrape painfully at his ears, stabbing his heart with every sentence.

"I'm sorry, Lirien," Ronan said, his voice trembling with a mix of apology and despair.

Watching this emotional exchange, Patriarch Rylan closed his eyes and took a deep breath before reopening them, his expression morphing into a calm resolve. Ronan had committed an unforgivable deed that could not be forgiven even with death.

However, as he pondered about Lirien and her unborn child, Patriarch Rylan couldn't help but furrow his brow.

The children of a god's chosen were the most promising candidates for wielding a Devourer's bracelet. Not only did they inherit their parents' compatibility with Vylkr energy, but they also had the potential for even higher compatibility rates due to growing up immersed in Vylkr energy.

However, it was widely known that god's chosen faced difficulties in bearing children due to the overwhelming amount of Vylkr energy within their bodies. The Vylkr energy only increased as they grew stronger, eventually rendering them incapable of giving birth.

Therefore, children born to god's chosen were highly cherished and favoured, as they were more likely to inherit the sacred lineage and become god's chosen.

Nevertheless, as Patriarch Rylan grappled with a decision, he encountered a dilemma. While the child of Lirien and Ronan would undoubtedly possess the potential to become a god's chosen, thereby bolstering the strength of the Four-eared elves, Patriarch Rylan couldn't shake the question of whether he genuinely wanted to raise such a child in the future.

"FATHER!" A familiar voice rang out, pulling Patriarch Rylan from his thoughts.

He turned to see Isadora, her eyes pleading with him and then shifted his gaze to the Village Chief, who was watching him intently.

Patriarch Rylan aged several more times as he sighed tiredly and bowed towards the Village Chief for the first time since their meeting. "Village Chief Brane, I will take responsibility for the trouble I have caused today in whatever manner you see fit. But please, I beg you to pardon Lirien and her unborn child. They are innocent and do not deserve punishment."

"Ronan, on the other hand, deserves to endure far more pain than he has inflicted upon us and the rest of the Four-eared elves," he said calmly, his voice carrying a chilling edge that sent a shiver down Ronan's spine, causing him to lower his head in remorse.

Upon hearing Patriarch Rylan's plea, the Village Chief nodded in understanding, then turned his attention to Seth, silently conveying his command.

Seth controlled the wall of molten lava, creating a passage wide enough for a person to pass through. As the entrance formed, Lirien emerged tearfully from the encased molten lava.

Just as Lirien stepped out of harm's way, a thunderous voice shattered the tense atmosphere.

"RONAN!! I WILL KILL YOU!!" Leif's scream echoed through the air as he descended from above, his Gearweaver sword gripped tightly and aimed straight at Ronan.

RIPP!!

Ronan stood frozen as a sharp pang pierced his heart, leaving him no time to understand or react.

"LIRRIENN!!" His anguished cry echoed as he witnessed Lirein's desperate attempt to shield him from harm.

But instead of repelling the attack, Leif's Gearweaver sword sliced through her hands, impaling her at the centre of her stomach.

"LIRRIEENN!!" Ronan's cry rang out once more as his Devourer's bracelet abruptly came to life. With a swift motion, he extended his right hand, causing one of the glyph-like tattoos to transform into a monstrous, 3-meter-tall, dark-haired translucent beast resembling a bull.

In an instant, the creature surged forward, aiming directly for Leif.

"BANGG!!"

Leif's body was sent hurtling backwards once more, his Gearweaver sword clattering to the ground several meters away as he crashed into the nearby wooden walls of the massive mansion again, this time teetering on the brink of unconsciousness.

"MOO MOO!!"

But the beast showed no signs of halting its charge, barreling toward the Village Chief and the others.

Just as Stronghold Leader Zogar prepared to intervene, Stronghold Leader Seth's voice cut through the air. "I'll handle it," he said, standing before the group.

Stronghold Leader Seth's right hand suddenly transformed into molten lava as droplets dripped from his arm to the ground below.

As the beast closed in, Stronghold Leader Seth extended his hand, seizing it and bringing it to an abrupt halt.

BANNNGG!

A sharp gust of wind stretched outwards as a result of the confrontation. Seth then lifted the beast and slammed it into the ground.

BAAMM!!

As the beast crashed to the ground, the earth immediately transformed into a pit of seething molten lava, consuming the creature before sealing it shut, leaving only scorched earth in its wake.

Witnessing this scene, Lyndon, Leona, and the other gods' chosen couldn't help but swallow hard in fear.

The terrifying ability Seth displayed, along with his seamless execution of it, left them all awestruck. First, the massive Waterman subdued Captain Seig and his lieutenant effortlessly, and now this. What kind of humans had they encountered? It was the question on everyone's mind.

Stronghold Leader Seth stepped forward toward Ronan, cradling Lirein in his arms, planning on making their escape.

BOOOOM!!

Ronan extended his left hand outward, still clutching Lirien in his right, and suddenly, a swarm of fifteen beasts emerged. Each was enveloped in swirling strands of Vylkr energy as they surged toward Seth. However—

A towering, 5-meter-high wall of molten lava emerged from the ground before Seth. It trembled momentarily before arcing downward, engulfing and annihilating the beasts until nothing remained.

Chapter 706 Punishment For Treachery (3)

Realising his glyphs were ineffective, Ronan made a split-second decision to flee. However, as he attempted to escape, a towering wall of molten lava, fifteen meters high, erupted from the ground, enclosing the entire compound of the mansion.

"You cannot escape, so don't waste your time," Seth said as he continued advancing toward Ronan.

Leona and the other gods' chosen had already accepted that Ronan stood no chance in this battle, even with his Gearweaver. With this in mind, they no longer dwelled on his fate and hurried to check on the fallen Leif's condition.

Ronan clenched his teeth and swiftly flicked his right arm again, causing one of the glyphs to materialise into a broad, inky black bird large enough to carry him and Lirien. Without hesitation,

Ronan commanded the bird to take flight, urging it to soar over the towering fifteen-meter wall of molten lava.

Seth scoffed at Ronan's attempt and paused his advance. Instantly, the fifteen-meter wall of molten lava began to rise even higher, reaching seventeen meters, then nineteen, twenty, twenty-four, and finally, twenty-eight meters, until it towered above the Second Border City walls, alerting everyone about the commotion within the Four-eared elves' residence.

The Four-eared elves who had settled nearby were startled by the sight and sounds of battle, shuttered their windows and drew their curtains shut in fear.

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Orion's mansion

Orion lay silently with Ursa, Sura, and Crystalia on the soft carpet in the master children's room, surrounded by all the newborns in their personal cradles. It was his turn to look after the children with Ursa and the others while the rest of his women rested.

Suddenly, Crystalia's eyes snapped open as she sensed something amiss. She raised her head to look at the window, calmly rubbing her eyes before sitting upright. The curtains on the windows suddenly fluttered, catching her attention.

Crystalia's eyes widened abruptly as she gazed at the bright wall of molten lava stretching high into the sky, seemingly originating from the other side of the city.

Immediately, she turned her gaze towards Orion.

"Orion, wake up," Crystalia whispered urgently, shaking Orion from his sleep.

Orion's eyes slowly fluttered open, and he yawned as he looked at Crystalia, who stared back at him with anxiety in her eyes.

Orion raised his brows and asked, "What is it? Did Remy wake up again?" as he pushed himself up to sit upright.

"You need to see this; I think something's happening in the City," Crystalia said urgently, pointing towards the window.

Upon hearing Crystalia's words, Orion's expression lit up with curiosity. He rose to his feet and made his way to the window to see what Crystalia was referring to. Pulling back the curtain, Orion's eyes widened in astonishment as he beheld a towering wall of molten lava stretching high into the sky with its bright red-and-orange hue illuminating the surroundings.

The sleepiness in Orion's eyes vanished instantly as he stared at the mesmerising yet alarming sight before him.

His expression turned solemn as he realised that not only was the towering wall of molten lava situated in the direction of the area where the Four-eared elves resided, but also that there was only one person capable of wielding such power and possessing enough capability to execute such a feat.

Seth!

However hard he tried, Orion couldn't come up with a plausible explanation for why Seth would be unleashing his gift to such an extent in the vicinity of the Four-eared elves' residence.

Orion turned his head back to Crystalia. "I need to head out for a while. Call Saria or Gina to cover for me and take care of the children," he instructed seriously.

"Do you need any help?" Crystalia asked, her voice filled with concern. She had sensed the seriousness of the situation and wanted to offer her aid if possible.

Orion shook his head. "No, don't worry. While your strength may be enough to take care of two-star warriors, I doubt it would be enough against a four-star warrior," he replied wearily.

Though he hoped his intuition was wrong, Orion didn't want to involve Crystalia in a situation he wasn't yet sure how to handle.

Crystalia bit her lip before nodding, a defeated sigh escaping her lips. "Okay, take care and don't do anything that will put you in harm's way. The children still need their father, and I haven't given birth to mine yet," she said, fixing him with a warning gaze.

Orion nodded. "Don't worry, I will," he assured her. Turning around, he opened the window and activated his gift.

CRACKLLLEEE!! CRACCKLLLEEE!!!

As a wave of bluish-vibrant lightning around his legs, Orion leapt out of the room, landing safely despite the incredible height. Taking off into the sky again, his gift propelling him higher, his body surged toward the direction of the Four-eared elves' new residence.

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Within the towering wall of molten lava

BANGG!!

"Arggh!" Ronan groaned in agony as another ball of molten lava surged from the towering wall of molten lava and slammed into his back. His body was sent hurtling off the bird, crashing heavily onto the ground and carving out a wide crater.

Despite patches of his leaf-crafted attire being scorched or burnt away, revealing his body adorned with detailed glyph-like tattoos, some appearing lighter than before, Ronan's right arm remained tightly wrapped around Lirien's cold body. Her attire showed only minor scorch marks.

Gritting his teeth, Ronan struggled to rise to his feet, but as soon as he managed to stand, he collapsed back onto the ground with a pained groan.

"Are you done embarrassing yourself?" Seth's voice cut through the air as he approached Ronan, halting beside him. His eyes bore into the man below him, tinged with pity.

"If you hadn't been so desperate to cling to life, she and your child would still be alive," he added, casting a solemn glance towards the bloodied figure of Lirien, now long dead.

Returning his focus to Ronan's guilt-ridden gaze, Seth continued, "But what's done is done. The consequences of your actions have played out. However, I can offer you a painless death," he said.

Chapter 707 Demanding Explanations

Ronan's expression flickered with conflict, his head shaking briefly. "No. Lirien didn't deserve to die like that, so I don't deserve a painless death," he said, his voice heavy with sorrow and regret.

Seth nodded decisively and commanded the towering wall of molten lava to retract slowly into the ground. The colossal mass gradually shrank until it vanished entirely, leaving only remnants of molten lava flowing towards Ronan like a river, encircling him in a fiery ring, trapping him at its centre.

With no need for further words, Seth directed the molten lava to stream toward Ronan from multiple directions, engulfing him in the scorching heat. As the searing torrents made contact with Ronan's body, flames erupted, and he let out a gut-wrenching scream, "ARRRGHHH!!!"

Observing the scene from the side, Leif, having regained his composure, lowered his head with a fierce glint in his eyes, his fists clenched tightly in anger.

Meanwhile, Isadora, still reeling from Lirien's death, couldn't bear to watch, shutting her eyes tightly alongside a few others who refused to witness their former teammate's death in such a manner.

Patriarch Rylan, however, remained firm, his gaze unwavering. As the former leader of the 'Four-eared Lone Rabbit' Runaway City, he had witnessed countless brutal deaths. However, given the gravity of the situation, he felt compelled to witness the events unfold entirely, ensuring accountability for the Four-eared elves who died due to Ronan's actions.

After five minutes, the agonizing screams that had previously filled the air abruptly ceased, leaving an eerie silence. All that remained was a scorched ring imprint on the ground, within which lay the charred outlines of Ronan and Lirien's bodies.

Surprisingly, their bodies had vanished completely, leaving no trace behind, not even a speck of ash.

Isadora briefly glanced at the scene before her, then lowered her head and began to weep uncontrollably.

Lyndon, Leona, and the other gods' chosen felt a wave of tiredness wash over them, exhaling deeply with complicated expressions as they took in the unsettling sight.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Rylan sighed heavily, closing his eyes briefly before regaining his composure and reopening them.

The Village Chief turned his gaze toward Patriarch Rylan. "Now that we've settled this issue, I believe we need to have a serious conversation, Patriarch Rylan," he said, narrowing his eyes.

Patriarch Rylan met the Village Chief's gaze, exhaling briefly before nodding in agreement. "Alright, let's go inside and discuss this privately," he responded.

His eyes briefly flickered to Lirien and Ronan's charred right hands, still wearing their unharmed Devourer's bracelets, before he shook his head and led the Village Chief into the mansion.

As Seth bent down to pick up the Devourer's bracelets belonging to Lirien and Ronan, which he intentionally did not harm, the sound of crackling lightning filled his ears, causing him to exhale deeply. He raised his head and looked at Orion, who had landed beside him with vibrant bluish sparks of lightning flickering around his legs as he surveyed the area with a solemn expression.

After scrutinizing the signs of battle around the mansion, Orion shifted his attention toward the two Devourers' bracelets on the ground, furrowing his brow with a deep frown before turning to Seth.

"Stronghold Leader Seth, can you tell me what is going on here and the reason for all this mess?" Orion asked with a solemn tone.

As soon as Orion appeared, Patriarch Rylan, the Village Chief and Stronghold Leader Zogar halted their steps.

The Village Chief cleared his throat lightly as he walked forward and stopped before Orion. "This is not something we can discuss outside. You can follow us inside so we can tell you what has occurred," he responded.

Since Orion was already here, it was best to inform him about the current situation and everything that had happened before he did the same for the rest of the key figures tomorrow.

Orion furrowed his brow and briefly glanced at Patriarch Rylan's solemn expression and the downcast expressions of his children and the rest of the gods' chosen. "Alright, let's go," he responded.

Though Orion could already guess what had occurred here, he understood that the Village Chief wouldn't take such actions without a reason, so he was prepared to hear what he had to say.

However, before Orion stepped forward, he picked up the two sizable Devourer's bracelets, safely securing them in his hands.

Since Seraphina was currently experimenting on the potential Four-star Vylkr vine and was interested in the Four-eared elves' Devourer's bracelet and the diluted Vylkr energy, he decided to give it to her.

Not only would Seraphina be pleased by such a gift, but it might also help her experiment with the potential Four-star Vylkr energy. And from how things look, he wouldn't need to speak with Patriarch Rylan and the rest of the other gods' chosen anymore.

Seeing Orion pick up the Devourer's bracelets, Seth inwardly exhaled. He was also curious about the Devourer's bracelet and wanted to personally have a look at how it works.

Nonetheless, he understood that he would also be able to look at it later, so he didn't pay it much heed.

Orion followed behind the Village Chief as he led the way forward, with Stronghold Leader Seth beside him. They met with Patriarch Rylan and Stronghold Leader Zogar and walked into the mansion.

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One hour later

"So, is that everything that happened?" Orion asked, his expression filled with surprise.

After hearing the Village Chief's explanations, he began to understand everything that had occurred.

Who would have guessed that one of the gods' chosen had made a deal with Captain Seig, betraying their own race, and was partly responsible for the sharp decline in numbers of the Four-eared elves before they could arrive at the city?

Nonetheless, Orion couldn't help but sigh as he pondered whether he would have done the same if he were in the same dilemma as Ronan.

If something terrible ever happens to their territory, would he make a deal with their enemies and betray the Village Chief and the others in exchange for the lives of himself, his wives, and his children?

Chapter 708 Equity In Payment

When this thought entered Orion's mind, he inwardly shook his head. There was no reason for him to entertain such thoughts because he wouldn't allow himself to be placed in such a situation.

"Yes, that's everything," the Village Chief responded.

Since Patriarch Rylan had already confirmed that everything Captain Seig said was correct, he no longer doubted the validity of the information he had received.

Orion nodded, shifting his attention towards Patriarch Rylan before refocusing on the Village Chief. "And what about Captain Seig and his Lieutenant?" he asked.

"They are still at the Left Stronghold Main Headquarters. I believe they will be ready to talk after spending a few days in the cells without food or water," the Village Chief replied.

Orion raised his brow. "And what if they don't?" he asked.

"If they don't say anything within a few days, then we have no use keeping them alive," the Village Chief replied. "Also, considering that we still don't know the limits of their strength, we have to be careful until then in case something goes wrong," he added.

Orion nodded. "How about their offers? What do you think about them?" Orion asked curiously.

The Village Chief furrowed his brows in response. "I've already thought about it. However, it's too dangerous because we still can't trust their words despite what they've said. Also, as I've said before, considering that we still don't know the limits of their strength, it would be dangerous to let them roam freely within the Cities," he responded.

Orion nodded in understanding as he sighed inwardly at the Chief's words. He knew that the Village Chief was very wary of Captain Seig and his Lieutenant because they did not hesitate to attack the City upon their arrival, regardless of their reasons.

Nonetheless, considering how exclusive the Village was, Orion understood that the Village Chief and the Stronghold Leaders would instead eliminate any threats they encountered as quickly as possible if they were left without a choice. He also realized that the reason the Four-eared elves were always welcomed to the Village might have been for the opposite reason.

Also, Orion understood that he would have to intervene to learn more about the Sanctuaries. Besides, he could sense some conspiracy around this issue, so he was more than ready to look into it personally.

Orion cleared his throat and looked at the Village Chief, "Chief, how about I try and speak with them?" he asked.

"Are you sure?" the Village Chief asked.

He was aware that Orion was brilliant enough to negotiate with the attackers. However, he didn't want to risk Orion's safety by having him in the same room with them.

"Yes," Orion nodded confidently. "Don't worry, Chief, I don't plan on going alone. I'm sure Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth will be willing to accompany me," he added.

Stronghold Leader Zogar and Seth sighed inwardly in response. Though they already had their hands full with searching for more potential Four-star Vylkr vines and managing the City's security, it seemed they wouldn't be getting any rest sooner or later.

The Village Chief shifted his focus to both of them.

Stronghold Leader Zogar and Seth noticed his gaze and nodded in agreement with Orion's words.

"If Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth are accompanying you, then I have no worries about your safety," the Village Chief responded with a serious tone.

Orion nodded before redirecting his attention towards Patriarch Rylan. With the previous matter resolved, he now focused on how to handle the issue concerning Patriarch Rylan and the Four-eared elves, particularly after learning about the 'Fruit of Complete Fulfillment,' another name they had given to the Kalna fruit, and the 'Elixir of the Four-ears.'

He understood that the trade was acceptable since both parties had agreed voluntarily and were satisfied. However, he couldn't deny the exploitation, especially now that they knew about the fruit's value and held the most authority in the room.

Moreover, Orion realized that as the leader of a Runaway City, Patriarch Rylan likely possessed something priceless. Therefore, he was prepared to see if Patriarch Rylan would provide fair compensation for their accommodation in the Second Body City.

"Patriarch Rylan, after considering everything the Village Chief has said, I don't think it's unreasonable if we decide to collect payments for the Four-eared elves settlement in the city, don't you agree?" Orion asked seriously, his gaze fixed on Patriarch Rylan.

Sensing Orion's scrutinizing gaze, Patriarch Rylan inwardly exhaled deeply. He had also listened to what the Village Chief had said and understood that the favour extended to the Four-

eared elves was nearing its end.

"You are right, Warrior Orion. I agree with your assessment. It is only fair that we pay the appropriate amount for our accommodation," Patriarch Rylan responded.

He felt a heaviness in his heart, fearing the potential expulsion of the Four-eared elves from the City to survive on their own against the Vylkr vines.

"Ahem! I have already given you my word regarding the Four-

eared elves' accommodation, so you needn't worry about them being expelled from the City and left to fend for themselves against the Vylkr vines. However, once the rest of the key figures are informed about everything that has occurred, if this matter isn't properly addressed today, it could make things even more difficult for you and the rest of the Four-eared elves surviving in the City," the Village Chief said, almost as if he could read Patriarch Rylan's thoughts.

Though the Village Chief had initially intended to speak with Patriarch Rylan personally about this, he observed silently as Orion decided to address Patriarch Rylan directly. After all, Orion was the next in line for Village Chief, so the Village Chief was curious to see how he would handle such a situation.

Orion exhaled deeply upon hearing the Village Chief's words.

The Village Chief appeared adamant about keeping his word and determined to ensure that Patriarch Rylan didn't escape without making a fair payment.

Hearing the Village Chief's words, the weight on Patriarch Rylan's shoulders instantly lifted, and he nodded gratefully toward the Village Chief.

Chapter 709 Solara's Divine Eye

Patriarch Rylan then turned his attention back to Orion. "Though I don't have much at the moment, as I couldn't gather all of my wealth, I possess something that might be valuable enough to cover the cost of the Four-eared Elves'elves' accommodation," he said with a sigh.

After briefly contemplating, he stretched his right hand into his leaf-crafted attire and withdrew an orb.

The orb was about the size of a human fist, pulsating with gold, amber, and crimson hues. Delicate lattice patterns adorned its surface, resembling the intricate veins of a leaf.

"This is the 'Solara's Divine Eye,' a divine artefact that grants the user unparalleled insight, enabling them to perceive hidden truths, unravel mysteries, and discern the true nature of people, objects, and events with uncanny accuracy. The only problem is, being a divine artefact, I don't know how to use

it yet," Patriarch Rylan explained as he extended his hand outward and placed the orb securely on the table for them to examine.

Orion, the Village Chief, Stronghold Leader Zogar, and Seth eyed the orb curiously when Patriarch Rylan first brought it out. However, after hearing his explanation, their eyes widened in surprise.

After Orion shared all the artefacts he had found with the warriors and the Prismersions, they were all familiar with what they were. They understood their incomparable value compared to standard weapons.

However, Orion couldn't help but narrow his eyes at the brilliant orb. After all, he also possessed two divine artefacts and understood their immense value. "Patriarch Rylan, are you certain this is a divine artefact?" Orion asked, his voice tinged with scepticism.

It seemed implausible that Patriarch Rylan could give out such an artefact, given its priceless value.

"Yes, I have had it appraised by many experts to confirm its authenticity. Some were even tempted to claim it for themselves, so I can assure you, it is genuine," Patriarch Rylan affirmed, nodding his head firmly.

Orion nodded in response. Nevertheless, even if Patriarch Rylan lied, he could have Aerialia examine the artefact and confirm its authenticity.

"Can I know how you came across a divine artefact, Patriarch Rylan?" Orion asked curiously.

Regardless of whether it was a high-level or middle-level divine artefact, Orion was aware that no one could acquire one without an extraordinary encounter, so he was truly curious about how Patriarch Rylan had managed to get his hands on it.

The Village Chief, Stronghold Leader Zogar, and Stronghold Leader Zogar Seth also stared at Patriarch Rylan curiously, wanting to know how he had acquired such an artefact.

Patriarch Rylan nodded, "I received this artefact after trying to save a strange man a few years ago on my way to the Village. Though he died shortly soon after, as gratitude, he gave me this divine artefact in return for safekeeping. So ever since then, I've kept it with me after confirming its authenticity," he responded with a sigh escaping his lips.

"Unfortunately, during one of my trips to confirm its validity and figure out how to use it, information about the artefact leaked, drawing the attention of a Grade 2 Runaway City, 'The Wandering Wolf Borough' Runaway City. This Runaway City was responsible for destroying the trading agreements I had made the 'The Sleeping Fox' Runaway City."

Orion, the Village Chief, and the others frowned when they heard Patriarch Rylan's words. The Village Chief couldn't help but ask, "So the trading agreement wasn't just broken because of the Kalna fruits?"

Patriarch Rylan nodded in response, "Yes. Though the Kalna fruit was part of why a Grade 2 Runaway City had taken an interest in us, their main goal was the 'Solara's Divine Eye,'" he said, gesturing towards the orb on the table. "Fortunately, they hadn't attacked us head-on because they were unaware of where it was hidden, so they could only bide their time until they found it."

"Though it's only a hunch, I think 'The Wandering Wolf Borough' Runaway City shared this information with 'The Sleeping Fox' Runaway City, which might be why they launched a sudden attack against us out of nowhere. Fortunately, I received information about their attack in time and fled with some of the four-eared elves we could carry. If not for that, I and the entire Four-eared elves would have fallen along with our 'Four-eared Lone Rabbit' Runaway City," Patriarch Rylan added.

"So, considering that this divine artefact is the major cause of our downfall, it shouldn't be surprising why I would willingly offer it up in exchange for the proper accommodation of my entire Four-eared elven race and, most of all, prove my sincerity to the Village and Orion's Cities."

"So, Warrior Orion, Village Chief Brane, do you think this payment is good enough to serve as fair compensation for the accommodation of the Four-eared elves in your territory?" Patriarch Rylan asked, shifting his attention towards Orion and the Village Chief.

Though tempted to respond and hold the orb to see how a divine artefact feels, the Village Chief remained silent, leaving the matter for Orion to handle.

However, without hesitation, Orion nodded in response. "Patriarch Rylan, a divine artefact is indeed enough to serve as fair payment for the Four-eared elves' accommodation, so with this, you no longer need to worry about what has occurred," he responded.

Patriarch Rylan sighed. His shoulders slumped, feeling like his body had just been released from a heavy burden. "Thank you," he said.

Orion nodded in acknowledgement.

"Since we are done here, I think it's time I meet with Captain Seig and his Lieutenant," Orion said, his gaze fixed on the Village Chief.

"Very well, you can go with Stronghold Leader Zogar and Seth. I'll be staying behind because there are still some matters I need to discuss with Patriarch Rylan," the Village Chief replied.

He observed as Orion briefly contemplated, then nodded in understanding. Orion retrieved a cloth from his pocket and carefully wrapped the orb before rising to his feet.

Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth nodded in acknowledgement before joining Orion as they exited the room.

Chapter 710 Princess Isadora's Plea

As Orion, Stronghold Leader Zogar, and Stronghold Leader Seth walked out of the hall, they immediately spotted the Patriarch Rylan's children and the gods' chosen. They seemed to be patiently waiting for the meeting to end; their expressions were solemn and depressed.

Upon noticing their presence, their expressions immediately brightened. Isadora, Lyndon, and the rest of the gods' chosen hastened towards them.

Orion raised a brow, wondering what they all wanted from him, especially since Patriarch Rylan and the Village Chief were still in discussion inside.

Suddenly, Isadora bowed, pleading, "Please forgive us for everything that has occurred. It's not Patriarch Rylan's fault. We never expected this to happen. Please, don't exile us from the city."

The others beside her gritted their teeth and nodded in agreement.

A look of realisation immediately crossed Orion's face.

"Don't worry, Patriarch Rylan has already explained everything to us, so you can rest assured that nothing will happen to the Four-eared elves' accommodation," Orion reassured, his gaze fixed on the group before him.

A collective exhale escaped their lips, their shoulders slumping in relief.

Witnessing their reaction, Orion attempted to walk around them to meet with Captain Seig and his Lueitenant quickly. However, when he stepped forward, Isadora immediately blocked his path.

Orion frowned, "What is it?" he asked.

Even Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth couldn't help but raise a brow with interest as they watched the woman bravely block their advance.

As Isadora blocked Orion and the other key figures behind him, her eyes couldn't help but trail downwards towards the two gods' chosen Devourer's bracelets hanging from a piece of cloth tied on his waist.

"Warrior Orion, may I please ask that you return Ronan's and Lirien's Devourer's bracelets to us? Considering our current situation, they are our only means to recover our strength. If you take them away, it would be the same as crippling us. So, please, Warrior Orion, I hope you can return the Devourer's Bracelets to us," Isadora pleaded.

Orion furrowed his brows in response before coughing lightly. "I'm sorry, Miss Isadora, but that won't be possible," Orion said, gesturing towards the Devourer's bracelets.

"You see, Patriarch Rylan has given us these Devourer's bracelets as a token of his sincerity to show that he is truly sorry for what occurred. After all, if the Village hadn't succeeded in finding out that there was a traitor in their midst, partly responsible for the sharp decline of the Four-eared elves, he would have been here hiding and pretending everything was okay," he added.

Though he was lying and merely needed a reason to hold the Devourer's bracelets so he could hand them over to Seraphina, he was confident that Patriarch Rylan wouldn't have any problems letting go of the two Devourer's bracelets after what had happened today. If not, he would have mentioned it during the meeting.

Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth, who were behind him, couldn't help but exchange looks with each other.

Though they understood the reason behind Orion's words, since they were also interested in the Devourer's bracelets, they had expected Orion to be more straightforward about it instead of wasting time coming up with such an explanation.

Meanwhile, Isadora, Lyndon, Leona, and the remaining gods' chosen froze in their spots as they heard Orion's words. They were stunned and surprised that Patriarch Rylan had handed over Ronan's and Lirien's Devourer's bracelets to the Village to apologise for everything that had transpired.

"That's impossible! Father would never do that. He knows how important the Devourer's bracelets are for developing the Four-

eared Elves race, so there is no way he would willingly hand them over without offering anything else first," Lyndon responded, gritting his teeth in frustration.

They had already lost Ronan and Lirien today. Now, hearing that they would also be handing over their Devourer's bracelets to the Village, Lyndon couldn't help but feel slightly agitated.

Orion raised a brow in response. "Are you implying that I'm lying and that I've stolen the Devourer's bracelets without Patriarch Rylan's consent?" he asked, narrowing his gaze at Lyndon.

Lyndon, who wanted to respond, immediately swallowed what he wanted to say when he heard Orion's words. Fortunately, Isadora intervened, pulling Orion's attention away from him.

"Please forgive my brother, Warrior Orion. That wasn't what he meant. He meant to say that the Devourer's bracelet is one of the keys to the restoration of the Four-eared Elves. So, it wouldn't be ideal for us to let go of it at such a critical time," Isadora said, her expression firm.

The gods' chosen all nodded in response.

"I can tell you have something in mind. What is it? But before you say anything else, I should warn you that unless you are ready to offer something of equal value in exchange for the Devourer's

bracelets, I won't be willing to give them up. Anything less than that won't be acceptable," Orion said, fixing his eyes on Isadora and the others with a smile.

He had already wasted enough time here and decided not to beat around the bush any longer.

Isadora, Lyndon, and the others fell silent immediately. Sure, they wanted the Devourer's bracelets, but did they currently possess anything of equal value to exchange for them?

No, they didn't!

Isadora sighed heavily, her shoulders slumping in defeat as she lowered her head with a dejected expression.

"Since you don't have anything of equal value to exchange for the Devourer's bracelets, I'll be taking my leave then," Orion said, observing their dejected countenances before walking around them and stepping towards the exit.

Stronghold Leader Zogar and Stronghold Leader Seth, who had been entertained by the scene, followed him.

Nobody attempted to block their path this time as they exited Patriarch Rylan's residence and headed towards the Village.

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Twenty minutes later

For someone like Orion, who lacked a shape-shifting gift, it would have taken about thirty-five minutes to travel from the Second Border City to the Leftward Stronghold Main Headquarters at the Village.

However, with the assistance of the two stronghold Leaders, both Four-star warriors, he arrived in less than twenty minutes.