

Village Head 931

Chapter 931 Leaving For New Horizons

"I entrust my responsibilities to you for the time being," Orion stated, directing his attention towards former Village Chief Brane. With the awakening ceremony approaching in a few days, he needed someone reliable to manage affairs during his absence.

"I'll do my best. May Nak..." Former Village Chief Brane began, then swiftly altered his words. "May all of you return safely from your journeys."

The key figures all nodded, exchanging brief words of farewell before it was time for departure.

Orion, Fifi, Stronghold Leader Seth, Captain Seig, Leif, the other gods' chosens, and Vylkr warriors clasped hands to form a connection. Orion activated his gift, and instantly, they vanished into the sky with a fierce bolt of lightning.

Queen Selene watched the unfolding scene with longing flashing in her eyes as the fierce bluish lightning bolt pierced through the Primordial barrier and vanished into the clouds.

"Come back soon," Queen Selene whispered before turning on her heels and departing with the others.

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Second Border City

Patriarch Rylan's residence

"They're finally asleep," Patriarch Rylan remarked, brushing his hands together as he descended the stairs and joined his daughter for breakfast.

"You were up all night showcasing your techniques and teaching them, so it's no surprise they had trouble sleeping," Isadora remarked, taking a bite of her kalna fruit. She savoured the flavour, never tiring of these fruits.

"Leif and the others were testing their skills to ensure they were ready to leave the floating island. If I didn't find a way to keep their attention, they would have been a distraction," Patriarch Rylan explained, recalling the pressure on Leif, Leona, Ryker, and the other gods' chosen to lead Orion and the others successfully.

"What's on your mind?" he asked, noticing his daughter's distant expression.

"Nothing," Isadora quickly shook her head, feigning ignorance to her momentary distraction during her father's explanation.

"Is it because of Village Chief Orion?" Patriarch Rylan immediately caught onto the reason behind her demeanour.

He would be foolish not to recognize his daughter's current fondness for the architect of Orion's Cities, who was also the new Village Chief. However, having encountered many lecherous men like Orion, he couldn't help but feel she should have chosen a more suitable partner.

"No, it isn't related to him," Isadora responded, shaking her head in denial of her father's assumption.

"Okay, since you don't want to tell me the reason, I'll stop asking," Patriarch Rylan replied. Although he wished his daughter were more like her younger brother, who had secretly started a relationship with Leona, whom he approved of, he had no choice but to let her follow her own path.

"Did you inform Village Chief Orion about what I told you regarding our race's settlement?" he asked, his tone serious. Now that Orion had descended from the floating island, it would be a problem if she hadn't informed him.

"Don't worry, I've informed him about it. He simply told me that he'd think about it. He hasn't given me an answer yet. But I think he wants to leverage Leif and the others' usefulness during their exploration to finalize his decision," Isadora sighed, recalling Orion's response when she had asked him this question several weeks ago.

Patriarch Rylan nodded thoughtfully, "Regardless, as long as you informed him on time, that's good enough. I know that Leif and the others will do their best, so they don't have to worry," he responded.

"But since they are gone, we must look after the race directly. So, finish up quickly so you can join me. Help me also wake up your brother when you're done," he added before focusing on the kalna fruits before him.

Isadora nodded and swiftly devoured her fruits. Her mind raced with thoughts of accomplishing the task Orion had left for her before his departure.

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Below the floating island

Hidden within the clouds, Orion, Fifi, Stronghold Seth, and eight Vylkr warriors stood atop a massive, majestic creature with the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle spanning over 55 meters (180ft), and the tail of a scorpion. Its fur and feathers were a striking crimson-grey, adorned with wisps of purple flame emanating at various intervals.

Meanwhile, Captain Sieg, Evadne, Leif, and the other gods' chosens perched atop a colossal winged beast resembling a deer with a wingspan exceeding 50 meters(164ft). Its scales possessed a dark, iridescent black that shimmered with deep blue and violet hues in the light. It had razor-sharp talons and a long, serpentine tail tipped with a venomous stinger, glowing with a menacing crimson light, its mouth bristled with rows of jagged, obsidian-like teeth.

Each of the accompanying warriors had been selected from among the best in both strongholds, possessing immense strength and unique gifts capable of overpowering anyone at the same level. They might have brought even more or less if they fully understood the levels of danger they were about to face.

"How surprising! It appears we already have a few unexpected guests," remarked Stronghold Leader Zogar, squinting into the distance at a group numbering less than fifty men and women who had set up camp near the immense, deep crater formed by the Aegis of the Arctic Deity when it lifted their territory into the sky.

"It seems Patriarch Rylan was correct. The event of the Vylkr veil phenomenon truly has drawn the attention of several others," Orion nodded in agreement.

Several stood around the area, effortlessly fending off the Vylkr vines and preventing them from encroaching on others within the protected zone. With thick metal bracelets on their wrists and

wielding enormous weapons that would pose a challenge even to seasoned warriors within an ordinary 'Hierarchy of power', it was clear that they were gods' chosens.

"It appears they are investigating the massive crater," Fifi remarked, scanning the area to see if there were any other hidden individuals they might have missed.

"I'll scout the entire surroundings to check for anyone else. Wait here until I return," Orion replied, also keen on searching for any others in hiding or those further away that they might have overlooked.

Chapter 932 Leaders of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City

As for the gods' chosens below, their energy readings were manageable, so there was no rush to engage them.

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Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City

Within a grand hall in the Citadel, decorated with beautiful murals and paintings depicting the history of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City, a high-domed ceiling stretched above, forged from magically reinforced steel and glass.

Sunlight filtered through the glass, casting a shimmering glow on the white tiles and illuminating the massive circular table, which had been crafted from an ancient oak-steel tree. Surrounding the table were ten high-backed chairs, each designated for the inner circle members—the leaders of the various sections of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City responsible for every significant decision affecting the city and its inhabitants.

At this moment, all eight chairs were occupied by various individuals, each waiting in silence for the arrival of the Queen, the supreme leader and ruler of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

"Commander Sy'ra, do you know why the Queen has suddenly called for such an abrupt meeting? Has the 1st Unit Vanguard Team made it through the Vylkr Veil phenomenon and discovered anything yet?" asked a man with piercing blue eyes and short black hair, his figure cloaked in black.

He was Lord Asher, Master of Espionage and Intelligence, responsible for operations deep within the shell. His gaze was fixed on the tall, imposing woman with grey-green skin, sharp fangs, and a powerful, muscular build clad in skin-tight leather and metal armour. She wore a thick devourer's bracelet on her right wrist, marking her as one of the gods' chosen.

"Lord Asher, I thought you would have figured out the reason by now; after all, that is your speciality," Commander Sy'ra responded with a light smile. Inwardly, her mind raced, pondering the Queen's decision after witnessing the 1st Unit's discovery.

As the Commander of the god's chosens and Chief of Security of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City, overseeing all four sections of the legs and the city above, she had received a significant mission since her Queen had accepted a task from a grade 2 Runaway City to capture a Divine artifact from Patriarch Rylan, the former ruler of the Four-eared Lone Rabbit Runaway City, which had been taken over by the Sleeping Fox Runaway City.

The mission promised immense rewards and resources upon completion. Despite the potential conflict with the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, she had readily accepted the mission—not only for the resources that would greatly benefit the security of their runaway city but also for the chance to foster connections with a grade 2 Runaway City and to witness the appearance and might of a Divine artifact.

She felt no remorse or pity even though they had once traded with the Four-eared Lone Rabbit Runaway City and fostered close connections with them.

This was the harsh reality of life in this ruined world: where the journey of one Runaway City ends, another rises to greater heights.

However, her focus shifted after the Captain of the 1st Unit of the Vanguard team returned with news of a massive deposit of Vylkr alloys. Ensuring the task's completion became secondary to addressing this new development.

A massive Vylkr deposit was beyond what their forces could handle alone, and she couldn't help but wonder how the Queen would handle this situation. One wrong move could destabilize or even lead to the destruction of their entire Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

Lord Asher frowned at Commander Sy'ra's reply. He knew her tone and character well, understanding that she knew what was happening. Also, his spy network, scattered throughout the Runaway city to uncover and eliminate any threats, had informed him about the Captain of the 1st Unit sneaking into the Citadel.

This made him even more suspicious about the nature of their actions.

'Have they already found Patriarch Rylan's whereabouts and secretly returned with the Divine Artefact?' Lord Asher pondered before swiftly dismissing the thought.

If they had truly uncovered the Divine Artefact, the entire 1st Unit of the Vanguard would have returned at once with Patriarch Rylan and any surviving Four-eared Elves. Alternatively, they would have engaged in an all-out clash with the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, alerting everyone to the discovery. None of this had occurred, so he remained doubtful about the situation.

"The Queen will be arriving any second now, so let's refrain from starting any arguments. We'll understand the purpose of this meeting once she arrives," advised Lord Bronn, a tall man clad in a sophisticated black suit with long auburn hair and piercing blue eyes.

As the Master of Commerce and Trade for the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City, he oversaw the operations of the Bazaar. Given the potential conflict with the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, he had implemented strict measures, such as shutting down businesses, to prevent unnecessary complications during the impending clash.

Although he was concerned about the Queen's summons, especially considering their precarious situation involving a Divine Artefact and a grade 2 Runaway City, he hoped it wouldn't escalate into a more dire scenario.

Lord Asher sighed, showing his displeasure at engaging in fruitless conversation. He decided to remain silent, focusing instead on analyzing every detail to uncover the reason behind their summons and ensure he hadn't overlooked anything important.

Commander Sy'ra nodded in agreement, her attention shifting toward a woman across from her. This woman stood out in a flamboyant long green dress, her long, curly brown hair poured around her mischievous green eyes. She exuded a charismatic and lively aura, meeting Commander Sy'ra's gaze with a playful expression.

Her name was Mistress Sylvana, Mistress of Ceremonies and Entertainment. Mistress Sylvana was responsible for the Red Light District situated in the city's neck and upper shell.

Mistress Sylvana pulled a mirror from her dress and examined herself with furrowed brows. Suddenly, her expression shifted to one of realization as she met Commander Sy'ra's gaze again.

"Ahem! Commander Sy'ra, I know I'm attractive, so you do not need to stare at me like that suddenly."

Chapter 933 Leaders of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City (2)

"But you seem tense. Why don't you come to visit the Red Light District while you still have time to ease the stress in your body? You know it's not good for a woman to have such a stern expression all the time; only the Queen can pull that off when she does it," Mistress Sylvana smiled, raising an eyebrow at Commander Sy'ra.

"Of course, I always wonder how you manage to handle so many gods' chosens and keep them in check. It must be tough, right?"

"You should consider yourself lucky I'm not in the mood for banter," Commander Sy'ra snorted, noting that she had remained silent throughout their conversation. However, hearing her speak, she realized she was mistaken; the Vixen was still as nonchalant as ever, as long as it didn't affect the Red Light District.

'Let's see how you react when the news finally breaks,' Commander Sy'ra thought, a glint flashing as she shifted her attention elsewhere.

Mistress Sylvana smiled in response, almost as if she already knew what Commander Sy'ra was thinking. However, her smile quickly turned into a frown when she caught the look in Commander Sy'ra's eyes.

While she shared the others' worries about the Queen's summons, she hoped it wasn't related to a direct confrontation with the Sleeping Fox Runaway City or the strange occurrences within the Vylkr Veil phenomenon.

Nonetheless, she noticed how they all seemed strategically avoiding those situations.

The wide steel door suddenly swung open, and a woman entered. She had long red hair flowing behind her, crowned with a golden tiara. Her piercing crimson eyes matched the colour of her regal red dress, adorned with jewels and intricate designs that accentuated her curves and undeniable allure.

It was Queen Eleanora Fairwind, leader of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

Following behind the Queen was a man in a sophisticated, tailored white suit, exuding an air of elegance and confidence. His dark hair framed his sharp features, and his demeanour spoke of authority.

He was Lord Lucien, the Chief Advisor and Strategist, serving as the Queen's primary advisor. Unlike most leaders, he didn't oversee a specific section of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City but played a crucial role in advising and strategizing for the city.

All eight city leaders stood up respectfully to welcome her entrance, but as they saw the next individual step in behind them, they couldn't help but stare in confusion and surprise.

Behind him was a woman dressed in leather and metal-plated armour that barely covered her ample cleavage but securely protected her arms and body. She wore a leather-like mini skirt around her waist, a garter belt-like undergarment beneath it, and a 1.8-meter (5.9 ft) long Gearweaver Sword strapped to her back, with a sack tied around her waist.

She was Freya, the Captain of the 1st Unit Vanguard Team of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

This unit had been sent to test the waters—observe and report on how the Sleeping Fox Runaway City would react to their presence, and retrieve Patriarch Rylan and the Divine Artefact, if possible, before deciding whether to send reinforcements.

Lord Asher glanced at Commander Sy'ra's unsurprised expression briefly, then shifted his attention back to Captain Freya, mainly focusing on the sack hanging from her waist.

Meanwhile, the other leaders noticed the subtle cues and glanced at Commander Sy'ra briefly.

Commander Sy'ra, however, pretended she hadn't noticed their gazes.

After taking her high-backed seat, which was adorned with various precious stones much more lavishly than the others, Queen Eleanora sat down and commanded, "Please be seated."

The leaders promptly took their seats, and Captain Freya positioned herself behind Queen Eleanora.

"I apologize for the delay; I was dealing with urgent matters concerning my younger sister's condition," Queen Eleanora explained, her gaze sweeping across everyone in the room.

Just as Lord Asher was about to speak, Queen Eleanora raised her hand, signalling him to hold his question.

"I know you may have guessed the reason for summoning you here. However, it's not what you think. This matter is unrelated to the Divine Artefact or the Sleeping Fox Runaway City," Queen Eleanora announced firmly, her expression serious and voice resonating across the room.

Upon hearing Queen Eleanora's words, the expressions of all seven leaders turned grave.

"Hand it over," Queen Eleanora commanded, extending her left hand toward Captain Freya, who promptly opened the bag and extracted the Vylkr alloy from the mine deposit, passing it to her.

As they observed Captain Freya's actions and the precious stone in her hands, they looked astonished at the sight of the Vylkr alloy.

Unlike ordinary inhabitants who might take some time to recognize it, they were at the top of the ecosystem and well-

versed in improving their lives and the city's prosperity. Therefore, they quickly identified the distinct nature of the Vylkr energy.

After all, it was one of the essential resources for any Runaway City to survive, something their city spent a fortune to acquire if they encountered another Runaway City in possession of it.

Even though it was just a tiny piece, not as large as the one before them, resembling the size of a head, they understood its immense value.

"Goodness, this is a Vylkr alloy!" Lord Kael exclaimed, his long black hair tied in a ponytail and spectacles perched on his nose, clad in a flowing deep brown robe that reached his ankles.

His shock was evident as he glanced at Captain Freya before composing himself and turning his attention back to Queen Eleanora, awaiting her explanation.

The other seven leaders mirrored Lord Kael's reaction, their eyes fixed on Queen Eleanora, awaiting her explanation.

"Yes, indeed, it's the Vylkr alloy," Queen Eleanora affirmed, nodding first at Lord Kael and then addressing the attentive leaders before her.

"After the Vylkr veil dissipated, the 1st unit of the Vanguard team discovered a massive crater wide enough to accommodate more than a hundred of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City and the Sleeping Fox Runaway City simultaneously. It was also deep enough that extracting anyone from it would require considerable effort, even with sufficient manpower."

"Within this immense crater, they found an enormous deposit of Vylkr alloys, each piece larger than any we have ever seen. This indicates an untouched, undiscovered Vylkr alloy mine," she explained, watching the leaders' expressions shift from shock and surprise to disbelief and then to an indescribable blend of emotions that defied simple expression.

Chapter 934 Critical Judgments

"Does the Sleeping Fox Runaway City know about this?" asked a woman with a mane of short, shimmering silver hair and piercing blue eyes. She was clad in a tailored dark grey blouse and loose-fitting trousers, her waist adorned with a leather utility belt brimming with tools.

She was Mistress Isolde, Mistress of the Forgepalace. She controlled the Underbelly, ensuring the Runaway City's defences and systems were not just up-to-date and effective. Her role extended beyond maintenance, as she also ensured that the Devourer's bracelets and Gearweavers were always in prime condition, allowing the gods' chosens to continue protecting the Runaway City.

Upon learning about the vast deposit of Vylkr alloys, Mistress Isolde's mind ignited with possibilities. The thought of what she could create with these incredible Vylkr alloys, such as more powerful Gearweavers and other innovations, filled her with excitement and anticipation.

Her only regret was her inability to make a Devourer's Bracelet; otherwise, they would have the ability to create even more gods' chosens, significantly boosting the strength of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City. Increasing the grade of the Runaway City to a Grade 2 Runaway City was a possibility she couldn't help but entertain.

"No, they don't know. They are all unaware of the discovery of the Vylkr alloy mine," Queen Eleanora shook her head in response.

Relief washed over Mistress Isolde's face like a cool breeze on a hot day. She turned her gaze to the side, acknowledging Captain Freya with a nod.

"You have done well, Captain Freya. Once we begin to mine these Vylkr alloys, I'll ensure my finest disciples craft the best and most powerful Gearweaver for you. I will personally handle the necessary check-ups for your Devourer's bracelets whenever you sense any issues," Mistress Isolde said with a smile.

She wanted to make the Gearweaver personally but figured she would be busy when the Vylkr alloys came in, so she entrusted the task to her disciples.

"Thank you, Mistress Isolde. I'll keep that in mind and hold onto your words," Captain Freya responded, her expression stern. However, inwardly, she was filled with incredible joy and happiness.

Despite being the Captain of the 1st Unit of the Vanguard team, Freya rarely had the privilege to meet with Mistress Isolde or any of the Inner Circle members. The opportunity to personally cooperate with Mistress Isolde, the foremost forge master in the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City, thrilled her, as it could potentially result in upgrades and advancements in her strength.

Mistress Isolde nodded and withdrew her attention.

"What are we waiting for then? Let's plan how to mine the Vylkr alloys and figure out what to do about the Sleeping Fox Runaway City," Lord Kael said.

As the Master of the Garden and Natural Resources, he restrained his eagerness to rush to the Vylkr alloy mine. Understanding the immense dangers and benefits the mine could bring to their Runaway City, he knew they needed a well-

thought-out plan.

Queen Eleanora nodded. "That is exactly why I called you all here. Due to the bizarre, prolonged Vylkr vine phenomenon and its immense disturbances, the Sleeping Fox Runaway City is likely using us to test the waters to avoid any dangerous casualties before taking action."

"They might also be waiting to snatch Patriarch Rylan and the Divine Artefact from our grasp once they are discovered. Given the shameful behaviour of some of our gods' chosen, who abandoned their mission and ran away, I suspect the latter option is more likely."

She paused, her gaze sweeping across the room. "Rather than waiting for them to respond to our movements, we will begin mining the Vylkr alloys and take a different approach. I've decided that we will inform the Sleeping Fox Runaway City of our discovery and propose a deal to jointly mine the Vylkr alloys. Considering the immense deposit size, there is more than enough for all of us to share equally."

Queen Eleanora wanted to ensure they didn't enter into a reckless and avoidable battle with the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, which would surely result in multiple casualties and hinder their city's development. By proposing a collaborative approach, she also wanted to prevent the nine leaders from infighting over the Vylkr alloys and unite them against a common potential enemy.

Although she trusted them, she didn't want to test their loyalty with enormous resources that even a Grade 2 Runaway City would kill or betray each other for.

Also, they still hadn't discovered what had caused the Vylkr vine Phenenom or who was behind it, making it too early to take significant risks. Involving the Sleeping Fox Runaway City would help them address this unknown threat together, turning it into a common enemy.

As for Patriarch Rylan and the Divine Artefact, they would determine their course of action once they located them.

"That's a brilliant idea," Lord Asher nodded, commending the Queen's foresight in handling the situation. He had also considered a similar approach.

The other ten leaders nodded thoughtfully at the Queen's words. Despite their current disputes, they recognized the necessity to collaborate to seize such a vast opportunity for wealth.

"However, there might be a problem," Lord Asher continued, his tone serious. "My network has detected unusual movements around the city. While we haven't identified the individuals or captured anyone, I have some suspicions. It's possible that 'The Journeying Jaguar' Runaway City has dispatched spies to monitor our progress in retrieving the Divine Artefact, intending to intercept it. And if we have spies, it's likely that 'The Sleeping Fox' Runaway City does too. Whether they are aware of our discovery remains uncertain."

The Journeying Jaguar Runaway City was the Grade 2 Runaway City that had assigned them this task in exchange for incredible resources. Initially, his focus was solely on completing their mission, disregarding the presence of spies, as they had no means to withstand a Grade 2 Runaway City.

However, dealing with the spies posed the risk of attracting even more powerful spies to monitor them upon their return.

Chapter 935 Critical Judgments (2)

Now, he doubted that anything 'The Journeying Jaguar' Runaway City could offer would compare to the immense deposit of Vylkr alloys.

Therefore, he wanted to proceed cautiously, mindful of every step they took.

He also began to suspect the man who caused a commotion in the wards and the bazaar by healing various sickly, incurable individuals, including the Queen's younger sister. He had decided to cross-check the information on his identity that they had collected. However, this was a discussion he could only have with the Queen privately, so he didn't bring it up.

Queen Eleanora nodded, her brows furrowing in deep thought. "You're right," she acknowledged, her tone hopeful. "Do you have a solution for handling this issue?"

"The only way would be to misdirect them until we uncover any traces of Patriarch Rylan and the Divine artefact," Lord Asher responded, showcasing his quick-wittedness and decision-making in delicate situations like this. "Then we'll observe how they act—whether they plan to snatch them away from us or escort us to 'The Journeying Jaguar' Runaway City before leaving our city."

"When we deliver the message to the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, we will have them pretend to have given up searching for the Patriarch Rylan and the Divine artefact and return to their territory. And if it comes to it, we'll have no choice but to eradicate them and enter a temporary alliance to face 'The Journeying Jaguar' Runaway City. Even if our alliance isn't strong, I doubt that either Runaway City would want to face a grade 2 Runaway alone.'

"Although I hate to agree with Lord Asher's words, he is right. Our Runaway City must never let go of this opportunity, so we must utilize every available option to make it possible. And if the worst happens, then you don't have to worry because my teams and I will be ready to fight against any enemies we encounter, no matter who they are," Commander Sy'ra responded with a gruff.

Her expressionless gaze landed on Captain Freya, who immediately straightened her back before it withdrew, causing the Captain to exhale in relief.

The other leaders nodded in agreement with Lord Asher's words.

"Okay. Lord Griffin, we will be leaving the matter for you to handle. Ensure that you take whatever you need for protection before leaving," Queen Eleanora said, her eyes fixed on a tall, handsome man with short, dark hair and sharp features dressed in a beautifully tailored deep navy blue robe accentuated with subtle silver and golden threads.

He was the Chief Diplomat and Envoy responsible for maintaining and expanding the city's diplomatic relations and securing beneficial alliances and treaties.

Lord Griffin has negotiated numerous impressive alliances and treaties on behalf of their? Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City in the past, so Queen Eleanora knew she didn't have to instruct him directly on what to do. She trusted that he could devise the best approach to deal with The Sleeping Fox Runaway City and their current situation.

Hearing the Queen's words, Lord Griffin nodded solemnly. "I'll ensure that I handle the situation in a way that minimizes any issues arising," he responded, his tone determined. He knew such a delicate situation couldn't go exactly as planned, so he decided not to make any promises.

Queen Eleanora and the other leaders nodded, understanding the meaning behind Lord Griffin's words.

"Now that we have taken care of these issues," Queen Eleanora shifted her attention towards Commander Sy'ra. "I want you to punish every member of the 1st unit of the Vanguard team who abandoned their mission and ran away. We cannot allow such cowardice to survive among our gods' chosens, especially in a delicate situation like this."

"If Captain Freya hadn't been brave enough to continue her mission without the members of their unit who had abandoned them, they would have never uncovered the tremendous Vylkr deposit on time. Even worse, The Sleeping Fox Runaway City might have beaten them to it, having witnessed their shameful actions.

"Of course, My Queen, they are already regretting their actions severely at this moment," Commander Sy'ra responded, a sharp glint flashing in her eyes as she recalled their current condition.

Even if the Queen hadn't given the orders, she would still have severely punished them.

'It seems I'll need to start the tests early and begin searching for more potential candidates to wield the Devourer's Bracelet,' Commander Sy'ra thought, deciding to commence the academy's new recruitment earlier than scheduled.

Queen Eleanora nodded and responded, "As for the mining of the Vylkr alloys, I've decided to put Captain Freya in charge of it, overseen by Lord Kael and Commander Sy'ra. Both of you are responsible for protecting and ensuring that every Vylkr alloy is well accounted for. Do any of you have any disagreements with this arrangement?" she asked.

The leaders all shook their heads in response. While they were eager to get their hands on the Vylkr alloys, they understood the need to handle external situations before deciding how to distribute them among themselves.

Captain Freya inwardly exhaled, relieved by the leaders' response. It showed their sensibility, which she had underestimated. After all, managing such a vast structure in a harsh world required incredible intelligence.

Nonetheless, she couldn't help but find Queen Eleanora more pleasing to the eye after hearing her decisive decisions.

With this, she was confident she and her remaining unit would secure their share of the Vylkr alloys.

"That's it. You may all return and begin with your tas—" Queen Eleanora began, but an ear-splitting crash of thunder and lightning suddenly broke through their conversation, interrupting her.

Queen Eleanora and the rest of the leaders immediately frowned. The sky was clear and would remain so for the next three months, mainly since the Vylkr Veil Phenomenon had just dissipated, so they couldn't comprehend where the thunderous sound had come from.

Another ear-splitting crash of thunder and lightning resounded as if the sky itself had gasped in surprise.

"Let's go and check out what's happening this time," Queen Eleanora turned to the other leaders and said. She stood up from her seat and walked towards the door, with the others following her.

Chapter 936 The Demigod's Dread

As Queen Eleanora and the rest of the leaders emerged from the room, they peered into the turbulent sky, filled with countless brilliant bluish streaks of lightning and thunder flashing above the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

"Look, there's someone there," Mistress Sylvana exclaimed, pointing skyward.

Queen Eleanora, Captain Freya, and the others shifted their attention in the direction she indicated.

Deep within the ominous clouds, they could make out the silhouette of a humanoid being. His body was ablaze with lightning and thunder as he looked down at their Runaway City.

Instantly, they all realized that this being was responsible for the lightning and thunderstorms.

"We are under attack!" Lord Asher's voice rang out, filled with concern. His eyes darted between the figure in the sky and Mistress Isolde. He couldn't ascertain the individual's identity—whether it

was someone sent by the Sleeping Fox Runaway City or one of the beings responsible for the Vylkr veil phenomenon.

However, for this figure to arrive at their Runaway City with such a grand entrance meant that he was either foolish or supremely confident in his abilities, and which of these options was correct wasn't something Lord Asher wanted to test with his life on the line.

Mistress Isolde, pale with fear, nodded and immediately brought out a thick metal square communication device. Her voice trembled with urgency as she screamed into it, "QUICKLY, ACTIVATE THE SHELL DEFENSE MODE! ACTIVATE THE SHELL DEFENSE MODE!" She hoped her message would swiftly reach.

Suddenly, a gust of wind swept past them out of nowhere.

"I'LL DEAL WITH THE ATTACKER UNTIL THE CITY ENTERS DEFENSE MODE!" Commander Sy'ra shouted, her voice trailing behind her as she ascended into the sky, seemingly stepping on the air.

No one noticed when she retrieved her Gearweaver, but the sight of the large mechanical club in her grasp made them exhale wearily as she rose into the air.

"BE CAREFUL, HE SEEMS STRONG!" Mistress Isolde shouted back.

Although she hoped that Commander Sy'ra would capture the attacker so they could interrogate him and make him pay for forcing her to activate the City's defence system, given the immense amount of energy it consumed, she couldn't help but worry about her safety.

Hearing Mistress Isolde's loud voice behind her, Commander Sy'ra nodded and instantly quickened her ascent.

As she rose higher, she skillfully dodged the violent streaks of lightning and thunder, her eyes fixed on the figure concealed within the clouds.

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A few minutes ago,

Within a guest room in the Queen's palace

Hearing the discussion between Queen Eleanora and the other Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City leaders, a look of surprise appeared on his otherwise stoic face.

A Vylkr alloy mine!

While a Vylkr alloy mine meant little to him, considering the lethality of Vylkr energy against gods and demigods like himself, it didn't render the discovery useless. However, his thoughts stopped as he realized the Vylkr alloy had appeared within the Vylkr veil phenomenon, the site of the battle between the Vylkr spawn and the divine being.

This indicated that the alloy had emerged within the territory of a divine being. So, obtaining it wouldn't be an easy feat!

'Forget it,' he thought. The aftermath of their battle had left him severely injured, and he had no desire to become an enemy of an unknown god.

His knowledge about them was limited, and risking a confrontation seemed unwise. Instead, he focused on finding a way to influence the leaders of the Runaway City to leave this territory quickly.

"Lord Teth, I've never seen you so expressive. What's on your mind?" Princess Ballesha, Queen Eleanora's younger sister, asked with curiosity. She lay on the bed, naked and panting softly, studying the mysterious man before her.

Lord Teth quickly reverted to his stoic demeanour, shifting his attention to Princess Ballesha. "It's nothing for you to worry about. I was simply deep in thought," he replied, brushing her fiery red hair.

Princess Ballesha's expression twisted into an angry pout. She was just about to voice her frustration when a deafening crash of lightning shook the room, cutting off her words.

"What's happening?" Princess Ballesha's confusion was evident on her face. Her sister had assured her of clear weather after the Vylkr veil phenomenon, so the sudden turbulence in the sky puzzled her.

Lord Teth's attention snapped to the window, his gaze piercing the clouds. He locked eyes with a humanoid silhouette crackling with a mask and body seemingly forged from lightning.

The sight was baffling; he couldn't fathom a grade-one Runaway City could possess such a technique. However, as he attempted to gauge the energy emanating from this being, a surge of fear rushed through him.

Vylkr energy!

Just as Lord Teth was about to extend his senses toward the humanoid silhouette, they abruptly halted, thwarted by the dense Vylkr energy enveloping the being.

Aware of the limited entities capable of creating such a potent anomaly, Lord Teth narrowed it down to two possibilities. The first was the gods' chosen, masters of harnessing the Vylkr energy through the devourer's bracelet—a crucial factor for any settlement surviving in this harsh world.

The second, and far more menacing, were the Vylkr spawns. These creatures matched the gods in power, devouring and assimilating them, and were responsible for the emergence of the 'godless age,' an age without divine influence.

His thoughts raced, considering various scenarios and attempting to unveil the silhouette identity. Nonetheless, he concluded that a mere gods' chosen couldn't obstruct his senses to such an extreme degree. There was only one conclusion he could draw at this very moment—

Vylkr spawn!

Instantly, Lord Teth realized that the Vylkr spawn hadn't perished in the hands of the divine being as he initially thought. Instead, they might have emerged victorious from the fierce battle.

However, the intensity of the Vylkr energy surrounding this particular Vylkr spawn differed from what he had encountered before.

This indicated the presence of multiple Vylkr spawns in the vicinity, all potentially aware of his current whereabouts.

Chapter 937 A Stormy Weather

"Damn it!" Lord Teth cursed, a sinking feeling settling in his chest as he realized the Vylkr spawn had likely sensed his presence and come seeking him out.

He had little doubt about its intentions, especially since it had chosen to arrive here first instead of heading to the nearby Runaway City.

"Lord Teth, what's the matter? Please, tell me. I'm sure I can help," Princess Ballesha urged, her voice laced with concern and her expression betraying worry.

Her heart stung witnessing his current expression, making her feel something terrible was about to occur.

However, he ignored her question; he rose from the bed, crossed the room to the window, and directed his gaze upward.

'Should I make a run for it? No, if it's already here, it probably knows exactly where I am. Running would just turn me into its target,' Lord Teth mused, grappling with his options.

His teeth clenched in frustration as he weighed his choices. Eventually, he settled on a plan.

If the Vylkr spawn hadn't directly confronted him, it likely meant it was still recovering from its previous battle and uncertain of his strength. This presented an opportunity. He decided to put on a facade of confidence, hiding any weakness, even if it meant exacerbating his injuries. Survival was paramount; healing could come later.

Yes, feigning strength was his best chance at survival!

As Lord Teth settled on a course of action, he calmed his emotions and prepared himself for whatever was to come. Suddenly, his gaze narrowed as he spotted one of the leaders ascending into the sky, heading directly towards the assailant.

Witnessing this scene, Princess Ballesha couldn't help but tighten her hand into a fist, her gaze fierce with a mix of emotions within.

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Orion stood in his lightning form, nestled deep within stormy clouds, watching with awe as the colossal tortoise, forged from unknown alloys, slowly traversed the Vylkr-infested lands below. Its immense shell bristled with towers, buildings, and homes that sparkled in the sunlight.

The sheer size of the massive mechanical tortoise was staggering, yet it moved with a slow, deliberate fineness that defied its weight.

The hums of machinery and the distant sounds of bustling life within it rang within his ears.

'So, this is a Runaway City?' Orion wondered, his mind filled with wonder at the engineering contraption capable of housing such a tremendous number of people.

What kind of tremendous energy powers it? How do they maintain such a colossal structure? What if one of its legs malfunctions, stranding it against the relentless swarm of Vylkr vines tailing its every move? And why are they shaped like animals?

Orion's mind raced with these pressing questions, but he found no immediate answers.

Turning his gaze towards a distant point, he spotted a moving fox crafted from the same metallic material and matching the size of the city below. He recalled the descriptions of the Sleeping Fox Runaway City from Patriarch Rylan and Seig's information, wondering if this was indeed the same Runaway City.

"Orion, have you discovered anything yet?" Fifi's voice suddenly broke through his thoughts.

"Yes, I've located two Runaway Cities. One is shaped like a colossal tortoise, while the other resembles a fox, matching Patriarch Rylan's and Seig's descriptions," Orion replied calmly.

He knew they could communicate through their masks, so Fifi's sudden voice didn't startle him.

"Are these Runaway Cities protected by gods?" Stronghold Leader Seth asked, his voice brimming with curiosity.

"I haven't confirmed that yet. But if they are, I need everyone ready to retreat to the Primordial barrier at my signal. Don't worry about me; I'll escape swiftly if I detect anything strange," Orion assured them.

"Alright, keep us updated and stay safe," Fifi replied.

Orion gave a warm hum in acknowledgement.

"We'll await your response, Chief," Stronghold Leader Seth acknowledged before the connection disconnected.

As the transmission ended, Orion intensified the lightning around him, directing his focus toward the head of the colossal moving tortoise. As he scrutinized the entire structure, he surmised that the ruler of this Runaway City must reside there.

The sheer grandeur of the structure hinted at its importance, particularly considering it was positioned at the 'head.'

Despite the information shared by Seig and Patriarch Rylan, Orion wasn't willing to take any risks. He would reassess and devise a new strategy if a god protected this Runaway city. However, if no such protection existed, capturing the Runaway City should prove relatively straightforward before proceeding to the other.

CRACCKLLEE!! BOOMMM!!!

The sky rumbled, lightning and thunder streaking across the heavens, converging at a single point aimed directly at the head of the colossal tortoise. The winds grew in intensity, swirling around the clouds as if compelled to follow his commands.

As Orion prepared to unleash the torrent of lightning, he halted as he caught sight of a figure ascending rapidly into the air, heading straight toward him.

An orc!

A flying female orc!

The grey-green-skinned orc was clad in skin-tight metal and leather armour that offered complete protection but appeared ill-suited for withstanding heavy frontal assaults.

She sported a thick metal bracelet around her wrist and wielded a Gearweaver, similar in size to the others he had seen but designed as a mechanical club bristling with spikes. Each step she took seemed to cover vast distances and propelled her upward, giving the illusion of flight.

She arrived at a distance before him in no time, standing firm in the sky on what seemed like an invisible platform.

After employing her sky-step technique to soar into the sky, Commander Sy'ra couldn't help but frown at the oppressive energy emanating from the attacker.

It felt familiar!

"Who are you?! And what gives you the arrogance to attack our Runaway City?" Commander Sy'ra demanded, cautiously eyeing the humanoid lightning being. She scrutinized his figure, searching for any sign of a Devourer's Bracelet, but found nothing.

Orion remained silent, halting his attack as he focused on her, using the mask to assess her strength.

Chapter 938 Commander Sy'ra's Shocking Defeat

"Energy Level - 1,805 BEM."

After testing the Energy Mask on various warriors, including Seig, his lieutenant, and the Four-Eared Elves' gods chosens, and with Seraphina's prior explanations, he had deduced the base energy measurements for each rank.

One-star warriors had energy levels below 100 BEM, two-star warriors ranged from 101 to 700 BEM, three-star warriors fell between 701 and 2,000 BEM, four-star warriors were between 2,001 and 5,000 BEM, and five-star warriors, based on Stronghold Leader Zogar's strength reading, were approximately 5,001+ BEM.

Orion didn't have further information on energy levels above five-star, but he believed they should be at least 10,001+ BEM.

Seeing that the orc before him was weaker than Seraphina and some of his wives, Orion lost interest in her. However, he was still curious about her abilities, considering she had just soared into the sky by stepping into the air.

"Which god do you serve?" Orion asked, his voice booming out of his mask. Since a denizen of the Runaway City below him was before him, he decided to extract as much information as possible.

Realizing that the being before her had ignored her question, Commander Sy'ra's brows creased in annoyance. Her frown deepened further when she heard his words.

"We don't serve any god. If we did, we wouldn't be in this situation. Besides, even if we wanted to, gods are nothing but myths and legends now. I don't understand why you would ask such a ridiculous question. You weren't sent by the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, were you?" Commander Sy'ra responded, her gaze fixed on the mysterious masked being before her.

She was very suspicious of his identity, and after his words, she realized he wasn't sent by the Sleeping Fox Runaway City to attack them.

He must have come from somewhere else.

Her mind raced, trying to come up with an explanation for the arrival of this mysterious figure. She could think of only one possibility: the Vylkr Veil phenomenon.

She guessed that this man might be responsible for the Vylkr Veil phenomenon or that he had come here for the Divine artefact and was trying to get rid of them to eliminate any witnesses.

How outrageous!

The audacity to think he possessed such power irked her to her very gut.

"I'm sorry, I'm still getting used to communicating with people from the outside world," Orion responded, then added, "Also, you can rest assured that I wasn't sent here by the Sleeping Fox Runaway City. I came here on my own authority. Why don't you introduce yourself?"

Feeling a deep anger rising within her, Commander Sy'ra swiftly controlled her emotions. Since this mysterious being wasn't sent by the Sleeping Fox Runaway City and seemed willing to talk, she decided to use the opportunity to her advantage and stall until their Runaway City entered shell's defence mode.

"I am Commander Sy'ra, Chief of Security and Commander of the gods' chosen of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City," Commander Sy'ra introduced herself.

'Chief of Security and Commander of the gods' chosen,' Orion pondered, realizing that she was similar to Stronghold Leader Seth and Zogar in their respective Strongholds.

Just as she was about to continue, Orion swiftly interrupted her.

Orion's voice resonated with a chilling confidence. "I understand your loyalty to your city, but trust is not easily earned. I will judge for myself if your city is protected by a divine being. If not, I will bear the consequences. If you choose to obstruct me, I suggest you reconsider. I am much stronger than you are," Orion replied, guessing why she had confronted him.

He gathered the lightning in the heavens again, ready to unleash his attack.

Noticing his actions, Commander Sy'ra frowned, her eyes deepening as she tightened her grip on her club. She activated her Devourer's bracelet, and her energy level sped under Orion's gaze.

"Energy level - 1,807 BEM."

"You don't know my strength yet, but you are confident you can defeat me. Why don't we see if you have the strength to back up your words," Commander Sy'ra replied, sensing her Gearweaver roaring to life as the Vylkr energy surged through it. Then, the spikes on it began to spin and rotate around it irregularly.

Just as Commander Sy'ra was about to advance, her body was halted by a bolt of lightning, rendering her immobile. Her expression was horrified as she realized that she had underestimated the prowess of her opponent.

She couldn't move. She couldn't speak. Her mind was blank, and a scent of burnt flesh filled her nostrils as she descended towards the ground.

A raging lightning storm filled her ears, and the only thing that surrounded her vision was a mysterious being seemingly forged from lightning standing within it.

A god? A demigod? A divine apostle?

Commander Sy'ra didn't have time to ponder it before she fellowshipped with darkness.

Below,

Meanwhile, a few minutes after her Commander rose to confront their assailant in the sky, Captain Freya observed her Commander falling from the sky like lightning.

BOOM!! BANG!!

A thunderous sound resounded through the atmosphere as her Commander smashed against the steel floor of the Citadel, tearing through it like a piece of paper and causing her to descend further down, all the way to the back of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

"SY'RA!!" Mistress Isolde screamed in fright, snapping everyone out of their shocked thoughts.

Mistress Isolde swiftly arrived at the spot where Commander Sy'ra had landed and immediately jumped into the hole to reach her quickly.

Queen Eleanora and the other leaders arrived shortly after and were horrified to see how deep the hole was and to see Commander Sy'ra's condition.

"Will she be okay?" Mistress Sylvana's voice quivered as she asked the question on everybody's mind.

However, none of them dared to respond as they all didn't know if she would even be able to survive the attack she had received.

Within their gaze, they observe Mistress Isolde leaping out of the hole, Commander Sy'ra's bulking, towering figure leaning against her back.

Chapter 939 An Enigmatic Divine Protection

Mistress Isolde looked at them with relief and concern. "She's okay, but we need to get her to a healer as soon as possible," she said, her voice tinged with urgency.

Nonetheless, her words made them sigh in relief and nod, but they could do nothing now.

Mistress Isolde anxiously refocused her gaze skywards at the silhouette of the being amidst the thunderous stormy clouds. She swiftly grabbed her communication device and screamed, "WHAT IS TAKING YOU ALL LONG TO ACTIVATE THE SHELL'S DEFENSE MODE?"

"We've exhausted too much power trying to keep up with the Sleeping Fox Runaway City, Mistress! We're doing everything we can!" An anxious voice resonated from the other side of the communication device.

"USELESS! USELESS!!" Mistress Isolde smashed her communicator against the ground and could only raise her head to look at the sky in fright.

The same was true for the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City leaders, who had heard the words from the communicator, including Captain Freya, who was still on the side.

Commander Sy'ra's weapon had already landed by her side, but she didn't even glance at it. Instead, her fist clenched, her eyes were fixed on the mysterious being controlling the weather above their Runaway City.

As the lightning forged, it was the biggest and fiercest lightning she had ever seen.

Captain Freya prayed for a miracle for the first time as a god's chosen who wielded the devourer's bracelet.

Above the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City, Orion unleashed charged thunderstorms forward.

CRACCKKLEEE! CRAACCKLLEEE!

However, just as the lightning storm loomed above the Citadel, a thick grey barrier appeared over the Runaway City, halting its advances. The barrier began slowly expanding as if possessing its own will, stretching its edges into the distance until it covered the entire Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

Captain Freya, Queen Eleanora, Mistress Isolde, and the other leaders were astounded by what had occurred. Witnessing Commander Sy'ra's defeat, they realized they couldn't challenge their assailant. So, when the enigmatic barrier appeared to halt the lightning's descent, they were dumbfounded, unsure of its origin.

Above, Orion observed the scene with furrowed brows. His judgment had proven correct; a god was protecting the Runaway City. Orion dispelled the gathered lightning and thunder, causing them to dissipate into the air.

Although the barrier didn't evoke the same sense of oppression and power as Aegis of the Arctic Deity's barrier, which made him doubt the owner's identity, he hesitated to flee. Running away would be akin to admitting weakness and giving their adversaries a mental advantage if they chose to stay and search for them.

Confronting the other Runaway City to check for divine protection would be even more foolish.

"There's no use turning back now that I've come this far," Orion muttered. He summoned the Crimson greatsword, its gleaming form materializing in his grasp, and Aerialia appeared beside him.

"This is not the aura of a god," Aerialia immediately spoke, surprising Orion.

She was already aware of Orion's plan to leave the floating island, so although she was surprised at how quickly he had located other races in the world and a moving creature like the City, which seemed to match some descriptions she had heard, her attention was drawn by the enigmatic grey barrier below her.

"What is it then?" Orion asked curiously. He suspected Aerialia might hold important information, so he wanted to know what it was.

"The divine energy does not give off the same feeling as if created by a god; instead, it feels unstable and less potent, as though it could lose its divinity at any moment like it was created by a lesser divine being," Aerialia replied.

She shifted her attention towards Orion. "I have a few guesses, which might be a demigod or an unknown divine creature. But regardless, you are obviously no match for whoever it is yet, so you should retreat for now."

"If we leave now, they will think we are afraid of their strength and choose to hunt us down for attacking their Runaway City. Besides, we've already advanced this far, and retreating would stunt our exploration into the world," Orion replied.

Aerialia furrowed her brows in response, a frown appearing on her face. "So, how do you plan to face the one responsible for this?"

"It's simple. Since they haven't yet shown themselves, it's best to say they also think we are protected by a god stronger than them, so they have chosen to confront us cautiously. I'll be alright if I don't apply too much pressure on them, so you don't have to worry about my safety," Orion replied.

"Fine, do whatever you want, but don't say that I didn't warn you. If anything happens, I won't sacrifice my life to save you. I'll simply take my sword and return to Aurora, bond with her, and find her a new husband," Aerialia responded before vanishing into a stream of light that reappeared inside the small crimson mark.

Orion shook his head, a sigh escaping as he understood she was only looking out for him. He coated the Crimson greatsword in lightning and descended until above the barrier.

With brilliant bluish bolts of lightning streaking around him and the already gloomy sky dimming the environment, gradually submerging it into darkness, Orion's actions were seen by all.

Unfazed, Orion planted the Crimson Greatsword against the barrier. Feeling its resistance, he pushed harder, piercing through and ripping a section apart before the barrier could repair itself. His sudden intrusion startled those within, already apprehensive about their situation.

"For trespassing into our territory, this Runaway City will now fall under the control of Paradise. Whoever you are, you have a chance to flee and never return. As for the leaders, gather your forces and head towards the immense crater formed by our god. Any attempts to escape will be met with Paradise's full force, seizing it from your bloody, weakened hands!" Orion's voice thundered through the atmosphere, echoing in the ears of every inhabitant of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

Chapter 940 The Weakening Curse!

After concluding his announcement, Orion didn't waste another second. He tore through the barrier again, transforming into a bolt of lightning that shot into the distance.

After his departure, a sudden pin-drop silence enveloped the entire Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

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Princess Ballesha had always been stubborn and impulsive, traits that intensified when she first fell victim to a rare illness that was the bane of every succubus and incubus.

The Weakening Curse! This affliction plagued her with chronic weakness, draining her life energy and causing her muscles to atrophy and her health to deteriorate.

The illness was particularly insidious for succubi and incubi because it targeted their ability to extract life energy from the world and others, a fundamental aspect of their survival and strength.

To combat this illness, Ballesha had to learn higher ranks of energy far beyond her current capabilities. However, her talent was painfully below average, making the challenge even more daunting.

She couldn't master magical, celestial, draconic, or even nature energy. Soon, she gave up hope, resigning to a life confined to the comfort of her bed. Her legs had given up on her, refusing her every command.

Her illness was a financial drain on her parents, who could barely afford their home in the lower ward. They worked until exhaustion, desperately seeking a cure for her terrible affliction, until their efforts consumed them, and they died.

Life was suffocating, like a cruel master slowly choking his servant to death with a compassionate smile. But one person stood by her side –her elder sister. When Ballesha needed food, she fed her. When she needed new clothes, she clothed her. When she needed to bathe, she bathed her. No request was too small for her elder sister to fulfil.

However, she hated it. No matter how much her sister tried, it always felt like a temporary relief before she was plunged into despair again.

Unlike her, her sister worked a menial job as a labourer, but she was talented enough to learn how to cultivate draconic energy quickly. As the days passed, she rose through the ranks of authority, utilizing her charm, strength, and cunning intellect to navigate the treacherous politics of the Wanderlust Traveling Tortoise Runaway City.

Ballesha knew she had always been stubborn and impulsive because she believed that was the only path to free herself from this wretched life.

One day, they finally afforded a capable healer. However, the Weakening Curse was rare, and the necessary ingredients were expensive, requiring them to seek a solution that involved freely granting life energy from another. Time passed, and she got married to a man who her sister had secretly paid to feed her the life energy needed for her recovery.

The treatment worked, and she got better. However, in exchange, her husband became weaker, taking her place on the wretched bed until he passed away. She wept ceaselessly for his demise. Later, she discovered he already had his own children before marrying her.

She knew her sister wasn't to blame; he had freely chosen. She could only blame herself and her illness for causing such a situation.

Ballesha sought death but couldn't find it. Her sister shielded her from danger, doing everything to keep her safe and aid her recovery. She was the best family anyone could ask for. However, her illness worsened, leaving her in a deteriorating state. Finding partners for her with the right energy wasn't difficult in a grade one Runaway City where intimacy was a primary commodity.

Within weeks, she had another partner, then another –from a brother, a husband, a son—they all perished within months, each succumbing to her wretched illness.

As this continued, Ballesha's hatred for her illness decreased, but her resentment toward her sister grew exponentially.

Her sister swiftly ascended to become one of the King's harem, showcasing her ruthlessness and cunning by poisoning the King and his bloodline to death. She then sold the remaining harems to other Runaway Cities, orchestrated the overthrow and reinstatement of leaders loyal to her, and cemented her image by gaining their support. This strategic maneuvering solidified her as the Queen of the Wanderlust Travelling Tortoise Runaway City.

Ballesha knew her sister's actions, having personally heard them from her. However, things took a turn for the worse. With access to abundant resources, she continued to have several partners, each meeting their demise three months after encountering her. And, finding such necessary rare resources for her treatment in this desolate world seemed impossible.

Ballesha finally grasped why her affliction was named the Weakening Curse! At that moment, she felt like nothing more than a wretched curse herself, fueling her growing resentment toward her sister for not granting her death.

Having grown accustomed to her condition, she ceased seeking new partners and instead resigned herself to waiting, her expression a mix of longing and defiance against death's cruel grasp.

However, during a journey to obtain a divine artefact for a grade 2 Runaway City, a rumour surfaced in the bazaar about a mysterious healer capable of curing any ailment within minutes.

Despite the buzz, Ballesha paid no mind to it. She had encountered countless healers, each with their own reputation, and had grown indifferent to their promises of salvation.

The day her sister brought him to her room was a turning point. Ballesha couldn't quite articulate it then. Perhaps it was due to her history of numerous partners, honing her ability to read through people to uncover their true nature and past.

Yet, when her gaze met him, an extraordinary sensation enveloped her—a sense of hope she hadn't felt before. It was as if he carried a unique aura unlike any healer she had encountered.

And indeed, her intuition proved correct.

He successfully cured her of her debilitating illness. At that moment, love blossomed within her, mingled with a fear that letting him go would mean a return to her previous torment.

Surprisingly, he reciprocated her feelings. However, as time passed, she discovered his ulterior motives; he used her to manipulate her sister and the Runaway City's leaders. Despite this knowledge, Ballesha didn't resist. She clung to him, afraid to let go and risk losing the newfound life he had brought her.