

## Village Head 1161

Chapter 1161: The Portal Of The Pocket Dimension Closes

The former leaders of the Bastion of Ashen Hope and its citizens widened their eyes in shock as they witnessed the astonishing scene. Soon, they trembled, wondering what kind of

terrifying force Paradise was.

Orion expanded the massive golden square door beside an immense pillar until it reached the opposite wall before stopping.

Then, Orion focused on the surprised expressions of the gathered masses.

"As long as you are willing to pledge your allegiance to Paradise and leave this place, take your belongings and valuables, and walk through this portal in an orderly manner. There are people on the other side waiting to welcome you. All you have to do is listen and obey their words without hesitation. You don't have to worry about encountering any issues as long as you can do that! For those unwilling to leave, you are free to remain!" Orion announced loudly.

A sudden silence enveloped the entire surroundings when he completed his words.

They hesitated. After five minutes, no one moved from their position. After another ten, a human man with his wife and two children stepped forward. A large bag was hoisted against their backs as they approached with solemn expressions.

They nodded gratefully toward Orion, Brane, and Zara and walked into the golden door, crossing over to the other side.

Their brave actions created a domino effect as several more individuals stepped forward, forming an orderly line as they entered the golden door.

Suddenly, after a day and a half, the golden door trembled.

"Everyone, stand back!" Orion commanded loudly.

The remaining Bastion of Ashen Hope citizens, awaiting their turn to walk through the golden door, obeyed his words, immediately stepping back with their expressions twisting in uncertainty and confusion.

The golden trembled as violent ripples spread across its surface, then slowly shrunk.

Orion frowned. Through his connection with the golden palace key, he sensed that it was being restricted by something. It only took a moment for him to understand what it was.

The portal to the pocket dimension was closing!

Ilse had informed him that the golden palace key would lose its ability to function properly if the spatial restrictions were powerful. Unsurprisingly, the barrier around Naka's former spatial laboratory was as formidable as he had anticipated.

Orion pondered deeply, trying to find a way out of the predicament.

Suddenly, his shadow rippled, and a figure emerged from it. Stunned, Orion snapped his head backwards, eyes widening in surprise behind his mask. To his astonishment, the figure was none other than Aurora.

"I sensed the portal to the pocket dimension closing and decided to come to lend my support. The restriction within the pocket dimension isn't as strong as it once was, or it wouldn't have opened within our territory. With my strength, I should be able to break through the barrier and open a stable gateway to the Golden Palace," Aurora said, smiling at Orion before turning her gaze toward the citizens of the Bastion of Ashen Hope and the unstable golden square door beside the pillar.

Orion nodded and willingly closed the shrinking gate, resummoning his key. He placed the golden key in his pocket.

Aurora summoned her sceptre, holding it in her left hand. She then took out her golden key and opened another door, just as large as the one Orion had previously opened.

Aurora used her power to stabilize the portal. She turned her head slightly and nodded at Orion.

Orion exhaled inwardly and nodded in understanding. He shifted his focus toward the citizens of the Bastion of Ashen Hope and said, "You can all continue!" His voice echoed across the assembled masses.

Previously, some had doubted whether they should go through the golden door but had chosen to stay within the Bastion.

However, after witnessing the golden door start to close and the sudden appearance of the mysterious woman who emerged from thin air to open a new golden door, they quickly realized the capabilities of these powerful strangers.

They understood that someone as formidable as this wouldn't need to offer them a choice if the intent was to harm them.

So, when Orion's words reverberated through the massive underground hall, everyone quickly gathered their belongings and valuables and moved forward in haste.

Seeing their enthusiasm, Orion nodded in approval. If he had known this approach would be so practical, he would have done it from the beginning.

Behind him, Gaverick and the other former leaders exchanged complicated looks and sighed tiredly. If they were in the citizens' shoes, they knew they would have reacted the same way. They, too, were intimidated by Paradise's capabilities and wondered how many powerful individuals resided within its ranks.

Paradise was more terrifying than they had anticipated.

Brane and Zara observed the situation with calm expressions. They weren't worried, confident that Orion and Aurora could handle any issues that arose. And if they couldn't, it would mean they'd have to step in themselves, something they weren't concerned about.

The entire migration took another three days with Aurora's aid.

Afterwards, Aurora closed the golden door and retrieved her key. She also unsummoned her sceptre.

"I've also completed things on my end within the Tidal Depths Kingdom. I've sent several spawns to aid Fifi and Iris to ensure they don't cause any trouble. Some had also chosen to stay behind and fight against the Harbingers. They were already heading toward the location before I arrived here. With my spawns protecting them, they shouldn't encounter any problems and should be awaiting our arrival," Aurora said.

They were confident that Ilse had predicted how they would use the golden key when she gave it so she wouldn't be upset by their actions. Moreover, considering the large number of Prismerions among them, they were confident that she would help manage the situation until they returned.

By their calculations, Ilse was expected to awaken in seven more days.

"The nymphs are also awaiting my return. Since we're done here, let's meet them," Orion nodded. He turned and walked toward Brane, Zara, and the others.

Aurora wanted to voice her concerns about the mysterious water woman that Orion had encountered and the plan to enter the Mirror Realm. Her mother had also sternly opposed it.

Aurora wanted to pull him out from the pocket dimension. However, she held back, understanding that Orion would never completely forgive her if she did such a thing.

The best she could do was protect him along the way.

Aurora followed suit beside him. They arrived before Brane and the others.

Brane and Zara quickly bowed respectfully to her.

Seeing this, Gaverick and the others followed suit, bowing toward Aurora.

"This is Goddess Aurora, one of the Divine Beings of Paradise," Orion gestured toward her. "You should thank her for being here, or the migration wouldn't have been successful."

Hearing his words, Gaverick and the others widened their eyes in shock and disbelief.

A goddess!

A genuine goddess! They inhaled sharply.

They had wondered what secrets Paradise possessed to become so powerful and were willing to lay down their lives to uncover them. But to their surprise, it wasn't about secrets at all.

They didn't only possess powerful warriors but also divine beings!

Gaverick's mind flashed back to his conversation with Brane and Zara during their meeting. At first, he had been confused by their words, but now, the pieces fit together. Instantly, he collapsed to his knees, prostrating before Aurora.

Bam!

Bam!

The others immediately followed suit.

"Thank you for your assistance, Goddess Aurora," Gaverick said, speaking on behalf of everyone. He wanted to laugh at himself for foolishly believing they could face Paradise and

emerge victorious.

Gaverick's voice cracked as he added, "If... you are willing to overlook and forgive our

previous foolish actions, we are ready to fully pledge our allegiance to Paradise and work until our bones break for its purpose."

He shifted his attention towards Orion and spoke on behalf of everyone once again. Whether they agreed with his words didn't matter; if they were unwilling to pledge their allegiance,

they would speak up themselves.

But how foolish would that be?

Fortunately, no one spoke, making Gaverick exhale inwardly. However, beads of sweat continued to form on his forehead as they all anxiously awaited a response. "Considering your past actions, you must prove yourselves and give Paradise a reason to accept your allegiance, let alone care for you. The time for negotiation is over. You should be thankful that you are all not yet dead," Orion responded, his tone and expression stern. Gaverick shivered but quickly nodded. "No problem... we are willing to do anything to prove our worth, no matter the treatment we receive," he replied.

The others behind him also nodded in agreement.

"Forgive me for asking this, Supreme Leader, but the others would..." Before Gaverick

could finish his sentence, a powerful force descended on his shoulders, forcing him to shut his mouth immediately. Blood dripped from his nostrils to the ground. "...Forgive me," Gaverick swiftly apologized, his expression fearful as he lowered his head

even further.

Chapter 1162: New Sub-Divine Skill, Reassembling With The Bastion Of Wailing Gnarled Forces

Orion glanced at Gaverick and the others without replying, then shifted his gaze toward Brane.

"Let's go. We've wasted enough time here already," Orion said.

Brane nodded in response. "I will lead the way. Follow me," he said. He glanced at Gaverick and the others, still prostrating, before turning and moving forward.

They had already received permission from Orion to deal with them as they saw fit. Simply taking their lives would have been too easy, so they chose a different path, one that would make them suffer. For Gaverick's and the others' attempt to poison Brane and Zara, who were on a quest for godhood, the consequences of their actions would be far worse than death.

Feeling the pressure lift from his shoulders, Gaverick remained frozen for a moment before he sighed softly and rose to his feet. Suddenly, a fierce determination ignited in his eyes as he followed behind the others.

Orion gazed at the hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the Bastion of Ashen Hope fortress, standing in orderly rows within a grand canyon.

From a glance, their numbers far exceeded those of the Bastion of Wailing Gnarled forces. Thousands of hulking armoured figures with disfigured limbs stood at the forefront. They were the Bastion of Ashen Hope's Arch-Knights.

The Cindersong Blade Corps!

The Scorchingwing Shield Corps!

The Pyresoul Corps!

The Smoldering Talon Corps!

The Saber Inferno Corps!

The Flamehearth Spear Corps!

The Armored Phoenixclad Corps!

There were seven Arch-Knight Corps, each numbering between seven hundred and twelve hundred knights—more than seven thousand Arch-Knights. With minimal losses, this alone would completely dominate the Bastion of Wailing Gnarled forces.

Despite this, Orion knew they weren't the strongest force within the Pocket Dimension. From what Aurora had told him, the Tidal Depths Kingdom had four to five times as many forces.

Orion now understood why the Bastion of Ashen Hope and the Wailing Gnarled had worked together to poison King Izak—it was only a matter of time before one of them was attacked and absorbed into the other's forces. Joining forces was the most reasonable choice.

"I want to lead them to the third Harbinger Domain," Orion said, looking at Brane. Nadia had informed him that the last Bastion had collapsed five years ago. However, he soon learned from

Mira that shortly after its fall, a Harbinger Domain had also mysteriously collapsed, causing the tainted within it to scatter into the ocean, where they were hunted down and eliminated.

Initially, this seemed like an odd coincidence, but after discovering that similar incidents had occurred several times, Orion realized it was no mere coincidence.

He gained insight into why Knight Izak had agreed to enter a treaty with the Bastion of Ashen Hope and Wailing Gnarled-it was to test their suspicions. Now that only a few remained, they wanted to see if the other two Harbinger Domains would collapse, leaving only one.

If the plan had succeeded, they would have led battalions of soldiers in a final stand against the single Harbinger Domain. Unfortunately, that plan never came to fruition, so they had no way to test it.

Orion wasn't interested in testing the plan either. He was more curious about the Harbingers' identities and connection to the Mirror Realm and the goddess. With their current strength, they could take down each Harbinger Domain without relying on the local forces.

This mission was meant to allow the residents to vent their grief and suffering on the tainted before being brought to Paradise.

Brane nodded at Orion's words.

"I will handle everything on my end and inform you when it's over," Brane said, nodding. "If I don't respond, don't panic. I'll be dealing with something important. It's like this..." Orion explained his encounter with the mysterious water woman to Brane and Zara.

Since they would be leading the attack against the Harbinger, sharing this secret with them was best.

Upon hearing his words, a glimmer of light appeared in Brane's and Zara's eyes.

"If that's the case, then we're even more curious about the Harbinger, and we can't help but look forward to our battle with them," Brane said with a smile.

"I agree. They must have a deeper understanding of this pocket dimension," Zara added.

"I'm telling you this for your own safety. I don't want you to follow me, Aurora, into the Mirror Realm. It's too dangerous. Even with Aurora's presence, I'm still not certain we'll make it back without a few sacrifices," Orion warned, his tone serious.

Brane exhaled and nodded in understanding. "I understand. Although this might be a chance to explore more ways to achieve godhood, we know our limits. When we kill the Harbinger, we won't take the portal to the Mirror Realm," he said.

Zara folded her arms across her chest, softening her serious expression as a sigh escaped her lips, nodding in agreement.

"I'll be leaving now," Orion said. He turned to Aurora and added, "Let's go."

Aurora nodded and placed her hand on his shoulder. "I know the fastest way there," she said, smiling lightly. Both of them instantly sank into her shadow, vanishing into thin air.

"No matter how many times I see it, the abilities of a divine being are still astonishing," Brane said, shaking his head with a sigh.

"Orion is a capable young man," Zara agreed with her husband. "Let's hope he wins that goddess over to our side and their encounter doesn't lead to anything dangerous."

From a distance, witnessing Orion and Aurora's disappearance, a chilling shiver rippled through Gaverick and the others' spines. They were unsure who was more terrifying—the mysterious Harbingers that had tormented them for many years or Paradise.

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Orion and Aurora emerged from within one of her headless, winged spawns.

Orion saw the grand armies of the nymphs in the distance, realizing they had crossed a vast distance instantly. He turned his gaze toward Aurora and asked, "Is this your new divine skill?" His tone was curious.

Aurora nodded. "While dealing with the Tidal Depths Kingdom, I was thinking about how to get to you instantly or bring you to me in a dangerous situation, and I came up with this. Even though I haven't mastered the laws as a goddess, I can tear through space to cross vast

distances."

"However, since the headless, winged spawns are my creation, I decided to try something else-tearing open space at both ends from within the spawns, creating a subtler rift that allows for instant teleportation," she explained with a smile.

"I call it the Eternal Void Leap, a sub-divine skill of the Eternal Chaos Legion. So, what do you think of my accomplishment? Aren't I smart, husband?" Aurora asked, her smirk widening. Orion nodded without hesitation. "Very smart. I'm amazed you managed to figure something like this out quickly," he said. He took off his mask, leaned up, and kissed her lips.

"Mmh~" Orion pulled back shortly.

"Hehe! Let's finish this quickly so you can get some rest-and give Liora a younger sibling. I'll ask Mother if she has a way to speed up the baby's development in the womb so we can do it again soon after," Aurora said, chuckling with a bright smile.

Orion coughed heavily, cleared his throat, and responded, "Considering what happened with Liora, we should take it slow. I don't want you to encounter any danger that could harm you." "True," Aurora said, her expression turning solemn as she nodded. But her face quickly shifted into a thoughtful look. "But if what happened before happens again, does that mean I would get another dual divine and Vylkr artefact?" she asked, her tone curious and filled with anticipation. Her eyes gleamed with an intense light.

Orion's cough grew more serious. He couldn't help but wonder what was going through his wife's mind.

"I don't think it works that way. The dual divine and Vylkr artefact formation might have been

a result of your ascension and Liora's birth, so it's best not to dwell on it too much. We should manage our expectations to avoid disappointment. Let's go we shouldn't keep them waiting much longer," he said, gesturing for her to follow.

Aurora nodded in understanding and pushed the thoughts to the back of her mind as she swam beside Orion. She gazed curiously at the tall trees floating in the water, surrounding the Bastion of Wailing Gnarled forces like a densely packed forest.

Soon, they arrived at the forefront and spotted Nadia and the other high advisors standing at the edge of a cliff, looking down.

Sensing their arrival, Nadia turned her head, her eyes widening in surprise, her expression filled with relief at seeing Orion's return. Her gaze lingered on the stunning and graceful woman beside him.

Probing her strength, she sensed a formidable aura surrounding her, causing her heart to almost leap out of her chest as she quickly withdrew her senses.

'How brazen,' Aurora thought, noticing Nadia's actions and looking at her curiously.

The high advisors also sensed their arrival and immediately approached them, their expressions filled with relief.

"Supreme Leader, you have finally arrived," Nadia said, bowing respectfully.

The high advisors followed suit. They glanced at Aurora curiously, but like Nadia, they swiftly averted their gaze after sensing her formidable aura.

## Chapter 1163: The Battle Begins, The Floating Fortress

"I apologize for the delay. There were several matters I needed to handle at the Bastion of Ashen Hope before I could return," Orion responded.

Nadia shook her head quickly. "No need to apologize. What matters is that you're finally here to lead us into the Harbinger's domain," she replied.

The high advisors nodded in agreement.

They had already assumed that Orion and his companions had delivered the same message they had given them to the Bastion of Ashen Hope and the Tidal Depths Kingdom. As for how those forces had responded, it wasn't her place to know, nor did she care to find out.

Orion smiled. "In that case, allow me to introduce you to Goddess Aurora, one of the divine beings primarily responsible for protecting Paradise. She's also the one who created the headless, winged spawns that have been protecting you all," he said, gesturing toward Aurora to introduce her to Nadia and the others.

Nadia and her high advisors stood frozen in place for a long moment before they recovered from their shock, their expressions becoming dignified.

BANG!!

BANG!!

BANG!!

They dropped to one knee on the watery rock, crushing it inward under their legs, and lowered their heads, bowing towards Aurora.

"A divine being from Paradise has graced us with her presence! Everyone, kneel and properly welcome her!" Nadia's words thundered across the ocean depths, piercing the ears of every nymph present.

In an instant, they all realized that a goddess was in their midst, and one by one, they dropped to their knees and bowed towards Aurora.

Countless soft chimes of bells resounded across the surrounding water, and the floating trees descended to the ground.

"On behalf of the Bastion of Wailing Gnarled, I welcome you and thank you for the aid you have provided us through our most desperate times!" Nadia spoke, her voice controlled and steady.

"I wasn't expecting such a welcome," Aurora said with a light chuckle. "I like you all more now. After this, I'll ensure you can fit right into Paradise, so you don't have to worry about encountering any issues."

Nadia was surprised by Aurora's words but showed a look of relief on her face. She had been worried about getting on the goddess's wrong side for not showing enough respect after all the help she had provided. However, it seemed she had been overthinking it.

Despite being responsible for creating such a dreadful technique, the goddess wasn't as intimidating as Nadia had initially thought.

Still, Nadia didn't ultimately lower her guard. After all, divine beings were said to live far longer than mortals, each possessing distinct personalities. She knew it was best to tread carefully around Aurora.

"Thank you for your support, goddess. We feel much more at ease with your presence," Nadia responded.

The high advisors also nodded excitedly. With the support of a genuine goddess, their settlement within Paradise would be much easier than they had initially expected.

"Alright, you can all rise. We don't have all day to spend here," Aurora said.

Nadia nodded and rose, gesturing for the others to do the same.

Orion walked forward toward the edge of the cliff, and Aurora followed beside him.

In the distance lay an enormous pit, seemingly created by a sunken landmass on the ocean bed. Floating above the pit was a large, flat mountain with an immense, jagged stone fortress built upon it.

Numerous tainted emerged from the pit and surrounded the entire area, even encircling the floating flat-top mountain. The fortress could only be seen in glimpses through the gaps between the swarming tainted.

With the help of his mask, Orion could make out energy levels as high as 4,998 BEM. Previously, he had wondered why they had only encountered weak tainted wandering around the ocean. Now, he had his answer-it was because they had all gathered here, guarding the Harbingers' domain, making it nearly impossible for anyone to break through.

"Have you gotten a sense of the situation inside?" Orion asked, glancing at Aurora.

She had sent her spawns to infiltrate each of the Harbingers' domains and report back on what they had observed, allowing them to end the battle smoothly and without unnecessary complications.

Aurora's strength was the cornerstone of his confidence, which would be instrumental to their victory. However, he wasn't about to take any chances by underestimating the enemy.

Aurora nodded. "There's an immensely powerful figure within it. It's not someone any mortal could face," she responded. "No wonder no one has been able to break into the domain. But I believe it's something I can easily handle."

Orion nodded. "And the others?" he asked.

"They're similar, though there's a slight fluctuation in strength. With my spawns accompanying the other forces, they can break in and out of the other domains as they

please," Aurora replied.

"Good," Orion said, turning to Nadia. "Lead the forces and conquer the domain. We'll break in directly and deal with the Harbinger."

Nadia nodded firmly. She turned to the nymphs and shouted, "Sisters, prepare yourselves! The battle is about to begin!"

The Bastion of the Wailing Gnarled readied themselves, unsheathing their weapons. Countless bells chimed across the surroundings, causing the trees at the edges of their formation to float upward. Their roots and branches moved more erratically than ever.

"The Stone Gale Corps, form an outer ring-scatter the enemy and distract them! Frost Spine Corps, take the vanguard-freeze the enemy and reduce their momentum. Cut them down as you see fit. Dead Roots Corps anchor the left flank and stop any flanking manoeuvres. Gnarled Shield Corps, guard the rear-be ready to turn defence into offence if they come close to attack. Spiked Branch Poison Corps, take the right flank! Mountain Blade Corps, hold the

centre!"

The Arch-Knights swiftly swam into their positions. Aurora's spawns followed overhead like guardians.

Tightly gripping her greatsword, Nadia turned towards the cliff's edge, her eyes locked on the Harbingers' domain in the distance.

"Everyone else, hold your positions; stay within the formation!" she called out, then

commanded loudly, "ATTACK!"

As her words rang out, waves of water rippled violently, and the entire force surged forward

with loud war cries, rushing toward the Harbingers' domain.

As they closed in, their figures were finally noticed by the swarms of tainteds, who swam toward them aggressively.

**BANNGG!!!**

BOOOMM!!

Countless violent ripples surged outward as both forces clashed fiercely.

Fortunately, the headless, winged spawns joined the fray, taking down the stronger tainted- three to six with a single strike-while leaving the weaker ones for the Bastion Of Wailing

Gnarled forces to handle.

Witnessing this, Nadia's heart swelled with confidence. She continued cutting down the

tainted that approached her, her frozen greatsword freezing them entirely before they shattered into pieces, scattering in the swirling water.

The entire Bastion of the Wailing Gnarled was also inspired by the sight and attacked with

renewed vigour as more tainted converged on their position.

On the cliff, Orion glanced at Aurora and nodded. "Let's go."

Aurora returned the nod, placed her hand on his shoulder, and vanished into her shadow.

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The atmosphere was stifled with silence and tension within a dimly lit, large hall. The floor was marble, yet there were no other decorations in the room, not even a door at the wide entrance, except for a sizeable throne at the far edge of the hall.

Seated upon the side of the throne was an armoured man. His pale blue skin was marred with

countless unnatural black spots, and his icy blue eyes shone brightly in the darkness. Sprouting from his head were two fierce, reindeer-like antlers that stretched upward.

Strangely, the antlers seemed alive, moving as if stirred by an unseen wind despite the absence of any breeze in the stony hall. Resting against the armrest and the ground was an enormous battle axe, its blade gleaming dully, with a darkened helm on top, featuring two

wide openings on either side.

Suddenly, the man snapped his head towards the entrance, with a brief flash of surprise crossing his eyes before his expression returned to normal. "Who is it? Reveal yourself!" he commanded, his voice reverberating across the hall and violently shaking its very foundation.

Without another word, the man picked up the helm and placed it over his head. His antlers squeezed themselves through the gaps with swift, nimble movements.

At that moment, two individuals stepped through the entrance. The first was a man dressed in

a black shirt and trousers adorned with detailed golden patterns embellished with precious stones. His shoes, similarly adorned with jewellery, fit snugly.

A black mask with no lip or nose outline covered his face. It featured two black crystal lenses and was decorated with strange vines and monster designs, concealing his identity. Beside him stood a woman with a blend of golden and green hair pouring down her waist. She wore a mixed green and crimson gown, flowing just above her ankles, adorned with shimmering patterns resembling stars.

On her feet were simple string sandals, and in her hand was a mysterious sceptre shrouded in

fog. Only its half-arching head and a strange ball of light were visible, pulsing with powerful, mysterious energy.

They halted a distance away from the throne.

Chapter 1164: Rimehelm, the Harbinger!

The man's lips curved into a frown as he scrutinized them, his gaze narrowing on the woman. "Divine energy... Vylkr energy... How is that possible?" he muttered to himself, his voice laced with disbelief. Then, louder, he said, "You are a goddess?"

Though it was phrased as a question, his tone suggested he sought confirmation rather than inquiring.

The woman responded with a simple nod.

The man's frown deepened further. "The war has only just begun, and I was already surprised that someone managed to get here so quickly. But it makes sense if it was a divine being," he said, his voice filled with grudging acknowledgement and lingering wariness.

After a brief pause, he shook his head. "Regardless of whoever comes, I am glad that after 2,500 years, someone has finally come to kill me."

Hearing the mysterious man's words, Orion and Aurora widened their eyes in surprise. They were taken aback at how he could live that long.

"His strength is comparable to that of a demigod. Stay close to me," Aurora said, glancing at Orion.

She was unsure how to measure his strength since he utilized Vylkr energy, guaranteeing he was far more powerful than an average demigod.

Only once they engaged in battle could she make an accurate judgment.

Orion nodded in understanding and focused on the mysterious man. "Who are you?" he asked with a frown.

He was particularly intrigued because the mysterious water woman they encountered earlier had been equally perplexing, leaving them unable to determine if she was a divine being or something else entirely.

"My name is Rimehelm," the man replied. "It has been so long since anyone asked me that question that I have forgotten much about my past. However, who I am does not matter. What matters is that you are here to kill me, and I will test whether you are qualified to do so." His grip tightened around the giant axe resting against his armrest as he stood from the throne.

Orion frowned. "Do we have to fight? We can help you escape and start a new life if you tell us how to activate the path to the Mirror Realm. I'm certain there are ways to activate it without your death, right?" he asked.

The mysterious water woman had informed him that he would need to kill the Harbinger to awaken the mechanism if he wanted to enter the Mirror Realm. However, Orion wasn't willing to give up on such a powerful figure, especially one that even Aurora acknowledged. He wanted to recruit Rimehelm to Paradise and add to its growing forces.

After all, there was no such thing as having too many divine beings in one's forces. With the many divine beings already in Paradise, along with the brilliant equipment they had collected from Naka's laboratory and elsewhere, he was confident that if there were any issues with Rimehelm's body, they would be able to resolve them.

A ripple appeared in the man's piercing blue eyes for the first time, but it quickly subsided.

"I seem to have misunderstood your intentions. Not only are you unwilling to fight, but you're also offering to help me?" the man said, exhaling a long, weary sigh as if Orion's words had burdened him.

"How do you know my death could open a passage to the Mirror Realm? This is knowledge privy only to us, the Harbingers," he continued, his voice rising with intensity, his expression hardening with suspicion and doubt.

Despite the man's reaction, Orion remained calm. With Aurora beside him, a divine being couldn't make him feel fear unless they had mastered the laws. Instead, his thoughts stirred, and he pondered the identity of the mysterious water woman who had provided them with this information.

"We have our ways of obtaining such information, and it's not something we can share with an outsider," Orion responded calmly.

Rimehelm wore a bewildered expression. He couldn't believe that even now, the mortal before him, whose face was hidden behind a strange mask, was still trying to recruit him. Suddenly, he chuckled briefly before calming down and regaining his composure.

"Why don't you introduce yourselves?" he asked, curiosity flickering in his icy blue gaze. "I am Orion, the Supreme Leader of Paradise. This is Aurora, one of the divine beings in charge of protecting Paradise," Orion introduced himself and Aurora.

Rimehelm's eyes widened in surprise again, and for a brief moment, an emotional fluctuation crossed his face before disappearing. "Do you have any connection to the former force known as 'Paradise'?" he asked, his tone cold, his grip tightening on the handle of his giant axe. Now, it was Orion's turn to be surprised. Very few knew of that name, and those who did were either familiar with events from the bygone era or directly tied to its history.

This was precisely why he had chosen the name for his forces. The association would cause others to either steer clear of them or approach cautiously, believing they were connected to the 'Paradise' of the past.

Depending on how knowledgeable or powerful an individual was, they might uncover fragments of information about Naka and other hidden truths. Meanwhile, Paradise forces could continue to grow steadily, undisturbed. It was a calculated, strategic move.

Despite this, Orion was curious about how Rimehelm knew of Paradise, especially since none of the forces in the pocket dimension seemed to have any information about it.

"It's complicated. I can assure you, we are not like the 'Paradise' you are familiar with," Orion replied.

"You have an unusual connection to the former Paradise and are masquerading under its name," Rimehelm responded in realization as he sighed in relief.

If the individuals before him genuinely belonged to the same Paradise he knew, he would have struggled to control his emotions and might have descended into a rampage. Rimehelm's gaze flickered toward Aurora's fog-shrouded staff, swirling with a ball of Vylkr and divine energy at its head. "I think I understand your connection to the previous Paradise and 'the name that must not be mentioned'-there are no crazier sights that wouldn't have his handiwork written all over them."

Orion and Aurora remained silent. They were sure the figure Rimehelm was referring to was none other than Naka.

"Do you have any other questions or prefer to proceed with the battle?" Rimehelm asked, refocusing his gaze on the two of them.

Orion nodded and asked, "Can you tell us the goddess's identity in the Mirror Realm?"

"I can't reveal her identity. The moment I do, I lose my life, and my purpose will be forfeit," Rimehelm responded, his expression a mix of weariness and bitterness.

"Don't bother asking again because there's nothing you can do to change that," he added, sensing Orion's intentions.

Orion sealed his lips, disappointed though not entirely surprised. He hadn't expected much but was still slightly disheartened that his plans hadn't worked.

"However, due to your persistence and courage, I will give you a piece of advice: don't mention those names around her—neither 'Paradise' nor 'the name that must not be called'—unless you have no intention of returning from the Mirror Realm," Rimehelm warned, his tone and expression turning solemn.

"Since we're done, I doubt you have any questions left, so let's begin." He stepped down from the throne and stood on the ground, facing Aurora and Orion, who stood on the opposite side.

Seeing there was nothing more they could do, Orion turned his attention to Aurora and

nodded in agreement.

Aurora returned the nod and stepped forward to confront Rimehelm.

"Only those who actively participate in killing me will be granted entry into the Mirror Realm. This is to prevent freeloaders from riding on the hard work of others to gain entry. And from the looks of it, the two of you are planning on going in at once," Rimehelm explained, his gaze shifting between Orion and Aurora.

"That's not a problem. I'll beat you down until you can't move, then hold you in place for him to deliver the final blow. That way, we'll both be involved in killing you and gain access," Aurora responded casually, as though the matter were of little concern. Rimehelm's brow twitched. "I'm not that easy to be captured or killed. Be careful not to lose because of your arrogance," he warned.

Aurora didn't reply. She raised her sceptre forward, and the ball of swirling Vylkr and Divine energy at the head of the sceptre pulsed violently, growing larger until it filled the centre.

The space around them trembled, and a heavy, suffocating pressure descended upon the fortress. Even the area outside shook, scaring away the tainteds guarding it. Had Aurora not contained her energy within the fortress, the whole pocket dimension would have also

quaked.

The pressure bore down on Rimehelm, causing him to grit his teeth in doubt and uncertainty. He had already known the goddess before him was powerful enough to storm his fortress, but he hadn't expected her to be this strong.

Aurora remained still as though waiting for him to make the first move.

Chapter 1165: 7th Order Demigod, Frightening Prowess

"Very well," Rimehelm said, closing his eyes and taking several deep breaths. "I was saving this until I was sure I couldn't win, but it seems I have no choice but to use it at the start of our battle."

Aurora watched him curiously, not taking the opportunity to attack. If she had wanted to kill him, she could have done so the moment she entered the throne room without much effort. But she wouldn't gain anything without letting him showcase his skills and trump cards. Orion observed, equally curious, waiting to see what the trump card of a Harbinger would be. Suddenly, a surge of Vylkr energy erupted from Rimehelm's body, enveloping him like a blazing inferno; countless thick strands of Vylkr energy covered him. Then, a strange phenomenon began to occur. The energy slowly compressed against his body, forming an armoured layer until his entire form was encased in a shell of Vylkr energy.

Reinforcement Technique!

Rimehelm's muscle bulged slightly before stabilizing.

Suddenly, silence enveloped the hall.

Orion and Aurora stared at him, their expressions filled with shock and astonishment. They had attempted to discern whether it was merely an illusion or if Rimehelm had tricked them, but it wasn't.

Rimehelm had used a technique based on Vylkr energy right before them!

Even though it wasn't a complex technique but a simple reinforcement technique, the sight alone was enough to make their hearts tremble. As individuals whose strength relied on Vylkr energy, they knew how volatile and fierce it was. It was unimaginable for someone to create even a simple technique using it-the pain and immense strength needed to withstand the backlash.

Aurora had made a mental note to prioritize researching whether she could develop techniques like this for Paradise in the future. However, she was unsure of how long it would take before she succeeded. While she had been granted control over divine and Vylkr energy, allowing the two to coexist within her, the challenge lay in their nature.

If divine energy was like fertile land with a prosperous garden already thriving, and she had only to learn its workings to cultivate it further, then Vylkr energy was like venomous, barren soil. With Vylkr, she had to start from scratch, figuring out how to work with the treacherous land before she could plant anything.

If she could learn a technique based on Vylkr energy, it would be a tremendous boon. Instantly, her attention was riveted on the scene unfolding before her.

Orion's thoughts aligned with hers.

Rimehelm focused on Aurora. "This simple technique infuses all the Vylkr energy I possess into my muscles, enhancing my strength to its limit and forming an impenetrable, armour-like layer that boosts my physical resilience. The technique's effects strengthen over time as I gather more Vylkr energy. The longer the battle lasts, the stronger I become. The only drawback is that the backlash my body will endure might exceed its limits, leaving me in a vegetative state for a certain period," he explained.

Seeing Aurora's expression-a complex mix of shock, surprise, and bewilderment-filled him with a surge of confidence.

"You might be wondering how something so astonishing is possible. Unfortunately, I can't take credit for it. This technique was created by the goddess. As far as I know, each Harbinger has a unique or similar technique," he added, shaking his head.

"Your goddess must have been a formidable divine being to achieve such a feat," Aurora responded, narrowing her eyes.

She wondered if the goddess was similar to her but doubted it. After all, the Will of the Divine Mysteries had informed her she was the first of her kind. It would have told her if she were the second or one among many.

"Yes, she was," Rimehelm replied with a nod, his expression tinged with a sad smile. "If you manage to kill me, not only will you gain entry into the Mirror Realm to meet her, but you'll also be granted the intricacies of this technique to use as you see fit," he added, as though offering an incentive to encourage Aurora to face him in battle without hesitation.

Contrary to Rimehelm's expectations, his display had the opposite effect: it only stirred Orion's and Aurora's hearts. If possible, they preferred capturing Rimehelm alive rather than killing him.

"Is this the full extent of your technique?" Aurora asked.

Rimehelm responded with a nod.

"Okay. I'm curious to see if you have any surprises left, so I'll let you make the first move," Aurora responded calmly.

Rimehelm's expression twisted into a frown, irritated by Aurora's continued arrogance. "Fine, you were warned," he spat.

As his words ended, he vanished from his spot.

In the blink of an eye, he appeared at both Aurora's left side and behind her simultaneously, swinging his axe diagonally toward her neck.

Two inky black tendrils shot out from the surrounding air, immediately blocking the deadly strikes.

BANGG!!

BANGG!!

BOOM!!

An invisible wind arc surged from the axe, etching itself deep into the ground, nearly splitting the foundation of the fortress.

Unfazed by his blocked attack, Rimehelm remained calm and unleashed a barrage of deadly strikes at Aurora, aiming to cleave her in two.

The hall was in ruins. Rifts in space emerged as his sweeping axe strikes tore through multiple layers, creating countless voids that healed at an incredible pace, only to be fractured again, making the restoration process strenuous.

Had Aurora not trapped their battle within the fortress, the ocean outside would have churned violently and hung in the sky. Countless rifts would have formed in the atmosphere, destabilizing the entire pocket dimension. Fortunately, the dimension was sturdier than she expected and managed to heal the lingering scars of their battle.

Yet, despite the chaotic destruction, Aurora hadn't moved an inch from her position.

Witnessing Aurora's nonchalant demeanour and realizing she wasn't taking him seriously, Rimehelm clenched his teeth and increased the intensity of his attack. His body blurred out of sight, transforming into a whirlwind that cracked the space wherever it passed.

BANGG!!

BOOMM!!

All that could be heard were faint, reverberating clashes of battle buried within the opened voids of their surroundings, echoing throughout the fortress like a deadly melody.

"I've gauged your strength-it's comparable to a 7th-order demigod, with your physical prowess enhanced to that of a 6th-order," Aurora remarked, calmly observing as countless tendrils swirled around her, deflecting Rimehelm's strikes and keeping him from getting too

close.

It was as if an adult was effortlessly fending off the frantic assaults of a toddler-only on a grand scale.

Sensing the increased intensity of his attacks, Aurora added, "For a mortal, regardless of how you gained this power, it's a compliment-impressive and frightening compared to an average demigod. You should be proud of yourself for achieving such a feat."

Suddenly, Rimehelm's axe stopped swinging, his attacks halting mid-air around Aurora. He floated in place among the cracked fissures before her. His armour was shattered, revealing bulging muscles covered in an inky black armoured layer. Veins pulsed unnaturally, cracks spreading across his skin, with inky black and crimson blood oozing out.

Breathing heavily, Rimehelm struggled to steady himself, his narrowed gaze scrutinizing Aurora. "Haaa...You're too powerful," he admitted with a tired sigh.

Aurora acknowledged his words with a nod as if they were natural. "Is that all the tricks you have up your sleeve?" she asked, her tone and expression calm.

"No," Rimehelm shook his head, his gaze flickering toward Orion, positioned at a distance, safely behind a barrier.

Aurora's expression darkened into a frown.

In an instant, Rimehelm vanished and reappeared before Orion, swinging his axe at him. The axe impaled deep into Orion's torso, embedding itself into his body.

"I warned you that your arrogance would lead to harm. Although I hate to do this, after everything I've been through, I'm not willing to die just like that. When you enter the Mirror Realm..." Rimehelm began, attempting to free his axe and unleash another attack. However, he paused mid-sentence, noticing a distortion around Orion's body.

In the blink of an eye, Orion transformed into a headless, winged entity resembling the

tainted.

Rimehelm's eyes widened in shock at the sudden turn of events. He tried to retreat from the unfamiliar creature, but it was too late. Countless tendrils shot out from the headless entity, wrapping tightly around him and holding him in place.

"What is this?" Rimehelm growled, gritting his teeth in fear and anger as he struggled to break free. But all his efforts were futile; the tendrils bound his entire body, leaving him only

able to move his head.

"It's disappointing you have no other tricks up your sleeve," Aurora spoke. Surprisingly, it didn't come from the Aurora standing behind him.

Aurora and Orion appeared out of thin air at a distance, surrounded by a transparent barrier.

A shiver ran down Rimehelm's spine as he watched the body of the Aurora behind him ripple and transform into a headless, winged entity, just like the one restraining him. He swallowed hard, realizing he hadn't been fighting the real Aurora all this time. And worse still, even the fakes had been enough to subdue him single-handedly.

Chapter 1166: Powerful Mind Barrier, An Immense Water Vortex

The sceptre flew out of the headless entity's grasp and floated toward Aurora, stopping between her outstretched fingers.

"You don't have to worry-our entire conversation was truly us, using them as a medium," Aurora said, noticing the disbelief in Rimehelm's gaze.

Suddenly, as though unable to contain his emotions, Rimehelm threw his head back and roared with laughter, "HAHAHAHA!!" Unexpectedly, his antlers stretched out from his head, growing larger like twisting vines, and shot toward Aurora and Orion.

However, unlike previously, the barrier protecting them blocked the attack.

Whoosh!!

Whoosh!!

Bang!!

The antlers coiled around the barrier, attempting to constrict it until it shattered. Instead, they snapped, breaking into countless bony fragments that fell to the ground below.

Seeing that his attack had failed, Rimehelm's antlers shrank back, reverting to their original form as though they hadn't sustained any damage. Rimehelm exhaled tiredly, lowering his head in defeat.

Orion and Aurora arrived before him.

"Can you read his memories?" Orion asked, shifting his focus to Aurora.

Aurora nodded, understanding his intent. She floated forward and placed her right hand on Rimehelm's head.

"What are you doing?! Stop!" Rimehelm shouted, fear creeping into his expression.

He realized they would do whatever it took to extract the needed information. As a demigod who had lived for 2,500 years, there were many reasons why he wanted to keep many secrets hidden. How could he accept such a fate? But his protests fell on deaf ears.

As Aurora attempted to gain control of Rimehelm's mind, she suddenly encountered a powerful blockage that resisted her and forced her out.

"What is it? Did you discover anything?" Orion asked, noticing the solemn look on Aurora's

face.

"I encountered a powerful barrier protecting his memories. It's more formidable than I expected, and... it's strange, as though someone else placed it. This could be why he can't reveal anything. I'm

unable to break through it to access his memories. I'm sorry," Aurora responded, shaking her head and glancing at Orion.

"There's no need to apologize. I understand," Orion said, his expression serious.

Rimehelm exhaled in relief.

"Do you have any last words?" Orion asked.

Rimehelm then raised his head and looked at Orion standing within the barrier's protection. "Since you've proven your capabilities by defeating me, don't end up like me. Whatever happens, I want you to see it through to the end," he said.

Orion wore a thoughtful expression. Just as he was about to ask what Rimehelm meant, he stopped, realizing that Rimehelm could not say more.

Orion nodded and swung his greatsword, severing Rimehelm's head from his body. He then changed his trajectory, bringing the blade down from above-splitting the tendrils and Rimehelm in half.

Rimehelm's dissected and decapitated body floated lifelessly in the air before them.

"He's dead. No sign of resurrection. Let me put him away for later," Aurora said, sensing that Rimehelm's life force had vanished entirely, leaving behind only a corpse.

Orion nodded and floated backwards. At that moment, Aerialia emerged, surrounded by a bright hue. Due to the battle's unpredictability, she had chosen to remain hidden in case the opponent had a way to target her divine soul.

Aurora sent her a detailed scene of everything that had transpired.

Aerialia stared at the corpse with a solemn, contemplative expression.

Aurora opened a rift in space and stored the corpse within it. She had considered experimenting with the strange demigod's heart to see how it would interact with one of her spawns but decided it

was too dangerous. At most, it would serve as research material for the Research centre before being discarded entirely.

Suddenly, Orion felt uncomfortable in his head and instinctively placed his right hand on it, massaging his temple. Moments later, his eyes widened in shock.

He snapped his gaze toward Aurora, noticing she wore the same astonished expression. "What's wrong?" Aurora asked, her voice filled with curiosity as she sensed the sudden shift in their demeanour.

"He wasn't lying," Orion muttered. He turned to Aurora and explained, "We both received the Strengthening Technique, built on utilizing Vylkr energy. The technique allowed him to fight with the physical prowess of a 6th-order demigod while being a 7th-order demigod."

Aurora's eyes lit up in realization. "We'll need to study it first to understand its effectiveness and decide whether it's worth learning," she said.

Orion nodded in agreement, and Aurora did as well.

At that moment, the entire floating mountain range shook violently. The already destabilized fortress began to crumble, disintegrating into specks of dust that dissipated into thin air. Even the barrier began to crack, allowing water from the outside to start flooding in.

Aurora quickly stabilized the barrier around them.

They watched as the Harbinger's domain was continuously destroyed, vanishing beneath the tides until it disappeared completely.

They were left floating above a sunken hole on the ocean floor.

In the distance, the forces of the Bastion of the Wailing Gnarled continued their feverish battle against the tainted.

They seemed to have noticed the disappearance of the Harbinger's fortress, boosting their morale as they fearlessly attacked the tainted. With Aurora's support, the overwhelming number of tainted had dwindled to the point where the forces could easily overpower and

push them back.

Orion calculated that the battle should be over in about ten minutes.

At that moment, a bizarre phenomenon occurred.

A massive water vortex, glowing with an inky black hue, emerged from the immense pit. It swirled violently, pulling water currents toward it. Yet no one was pulled in, as if the current had a mind of its own, ignoring their presence as it passed through them.

Only Orion and Aurora felt a faint suction, as though the water vortex was beckoning them, but it wasn't strong enough to force them in. According to the information they had received, this was the gateway that would lead them to the Mirror Realm.

They spotted a figure swiftly approaching the inky black swirling water vortex. It was none other than the mysterious water woman.

"I knew she was up to no good," Aerialia remarked, noticing her movement.

Just as the water woman reached out to touch the inky black water vortex, she was repelled backwards. She stood in a daze for a few moments before trying again, her expression filled

with determination.

But just like before, she was repelled.

After several more attempts, it became clear to everyone that the mysterious water woman could not pass through the inky black vortex. She withdrew and turned her focus toward Orion

and Aurora as though waiting for them to make an attempt.

Aerialia clicked her tongue softly, shifting her gaze toward the water vortex, sensing a

foreboding from within it.

"Let's get them out of here first," Orion said.

Aurora nodded in understanding.

The battle had already ended, with the nymphs suffering no losses-not even a deadly or severe injury. It was like they had participated in a friendly spar rather than a fatal war. However, they didn't seem to have witnessed the mysterious water woman attempting to

enter the swirling vortex.

They stood in a daze, processing their victory, before regrouping silently, awaiting Orion and

Aurora's instructions.

Aurora turned to face the group, brought out the key, and swiftly opened the golden door. The door stretched out over the ocean's depths until the nymphs appeared as tiny dots in the

distance.

"There will be others waiting for you on the other side when you arrive, so listen to them and don't stir up any trouble. You have all pledged your allegiance to Paradise, so they are your fellow companions from now on!" Orion announced.

They stared at him in reverence, not daring to miss a word. Their purpose here was already

fulfilled, so they ignored the massive water vortex. After sensing Orion and Aurora's interest in it, they were eager to leave this wretched ocean, knowing it would likely be also dealt with

like the floating Harbinger's fortress.

Nadia nodded in understanding. Without hesitation, she swam into the golden door, with the

high advisors following behind her.

Soon, the entire force followed in an orderly manner. It took thirty minutes for them all to pass through the golden door before it transformed back into a golden key and landed in Aurora's palm.

"Don't hesitate to inform me if you sense any danger," Aerialia said, her solemn gaze resting on Orion and Aurora.

"I will," Orion responded.

Aurora nodded in agreement, smiling lightly.

Orion unsummoned his Crimson Greatsword, and Aerialia disappeared along with it.

They both exchanged a nod before swimming toward the swirling water vortex. The suction around their bodies intensified as they got closer, though it still wasn't strong enough to pull them in, almost as if giving them the option to turn back.

They stopped in front of the inky black water vortex.

Aurora created a barrier around them.

Orion glanced at the mysterious water woman, who stared at them intently. After a moment,

he withdrew his gaze and focused forward.

Together, they plunged into the inky black water vortex. The vortex began to cool down when they went in, and the intense currents slowly subsided.

## Chapter 1167: Collapse Of The Harbingers Domains, Within The Mirror Realm

Soon, it vanished, and the immense pit on the ocean bed returned to its previous state.

The mysterious water woman didn't leave. She remained, her tense gaze fixed on the immense pit as though awaiting their return.

....

Far Southwest,

Rivers of molten lava flowed from the immense underwater volcano into the surrounding water, creating scalding steam and bursts of boiling currents powerful enough to penetrate the skin of a formidable warrior.

These fiery streams spread across the surrounding area. A massive fortress built upon an enormous molten core floated above the volcano, obscured by dense steam and bubbles.

Surrounding it were countless tainteds, each varying in size-from towering 10-meter (33ft) giants to beings the size of 2-meter (6.5ft). This was none other than one of the Harbinger's domains.

Since none of the factions had ever managed to force their way into the fortress, they had never encountered the Harbinger who presided over it or learned its name. The individuals who had ventured into the area had given it many names, but only one was widely accepted: The Abyss Cauldron!

The number of tainteds was drastically reduced as they clashed against the headless winged spawns and the Bastion of Ashen Hope forces.

Gaverick tore through another tainted, his arms wrapped in inky black flames. Turning his head to the side, he noticed Brane and Zara rushing into the Harbinger's fortress with several headless, winged spawns accompanying them.

Gaverick hesitated briefly before gritting his teeth, determination flashing in his eyes. He rushed after them, tearing down every tainted that blocked his path. Fortunately, the spawns attacked all the exceedingly powerful tainteds, so he hardly encountered any formidable opponents.

As Gaverick entered the fortress, he swiftly made his way in their direction.

Upon arriving in a vast, empty hall, he saw a bizarre scene.

tainted corpses were scattered across the hall, from the broken ceiling to the ground, like grotesque paintings. Brane and Zara hovered in the air, clad in spotless armour as if they hadn't participated in any battle.

A humanoid figure bathed in inky black flames was suspended in the air before them.

"Despite being mortals, you are far more powerful than I had expected... Who are you?" the flaming man asked, his voice reverberating across the hall. His intense gaze was fixed on Brane and Zara.

"We are inhabitants of Paradise!" Brane responded.

"Are you going to answer our questions now and tell us what's within the Mirror Realm?" he demanded, narrowing his eyes at the flaming man.

"I told you before... I can't say anything... cough..." The flaming man responded before coughing heavily, revealing that the injuries he had sustained were severe.

Brane frowned and turned to look at Zara, who was floating beside him.

"I can't see anything... He's too powerful," Zara responded, shaking her head with a defeated expression.

Brane nodded, refocusing his attention on the flaming demigod.

"Then we have no reason to keep you alive," he said coldly. "Kill him."

At that moment, the headless winged spawn holding the flaming demigod tore him apart with its tendrils. His internal organs were scattered across the ground below.

Witnessing the gruesome scene, Gaverick collapsed to his knees, pressing his hands against his chest in an attempt to steady his breathing. From the aura of the flaming man, he was sure this was the Harbinger of the domain.

Yet, he was killed so easily. And judging by the tainted corpses littering the area, it had clearly been a direct one-sided confrontation.

Still, Gaverick found it hard to believe. One of the Harbingers who had tormented countless Bastions within the ocean...

Where he had lost so many of his forces...

Where he had barely escaped with his life time and time again from the tainteds at the entrance to this territory...

Yet, that very Harbinger had been overpowered and killed just like that.

'Paradise!' Gaverick couldn't help but marvel at how formidable such a force must be.

Gaverick snapped his head up and swallowed hard as he saw Brane and Zara fixing their gaze on him. They seemed lost in thought, their expressions pensive, as though deeply pondering something.

Seizing the opportunity, Gaverick quickly recovered his composure and stood. He forced a bright smile onto his lips, waiting for their orders. He had already accepted whatever punishment he might receive for his previous actions against them, but he was unwilling to die without seeing what this 'Paradise' was like.

As someone who had once been the symbol of ashen hope, he wanted to see the embodiment of hope itself. So, he bet his extraordinary luck on at least achieving that.

South,

Izak floated in the water with the forces of the Tidal Depth Kingdom behind him, his trembling gaze fixed on the battlefield below. He couldn't believe that the Harbinger domain they had once feared could be overturned so that even the tainteds fled in retreat from the headless winged spawns.

Izak couldn't help but shudder, recalling how foolish they had been to attack her and how close they had come to losing their lives. Fortunately, Paradise was benevolent.

Zale felt a similar emotion.

They had been sent not to participate in destroying the Harbinger's domain but to oversee it.

Soon, Izak and his forces began to feel pity for the tainted, as some of them had once been their own, transformed after losing their reason.

However, when they remembered the punishments for their actions and the nymphs' enslavement, their hearts grew cold. Any lingering pity was wiped away, as they all understood that their own punishments would have been worse than this.

"ARGGGHHH!" Suddenly, a painful scream reverberated across the area.

Izak and the others lowered their heads toward the fortress floating within the massive swamp. A chill ran down their spines—they were sure that, at that moment, the Harbinger

had died.

Thirty minutes after the slaughter commenced, the Harbinger domain was annihilated.

"What's that?" Izak asked, squinting at the massive water vortex forming above a bottomless pit in the swamp.

Sensing its frightening aura, Izak quickly averted his gaze and waited for the headless winged spawns to return so they could continue carrying out the goddess's orders.

.....

Orion and Aurora emerged from the portal and landed on the frosty ground within a snowy

forest.

They got to their feet and brushed the snow off their bodies, looking around curiously. Surrounding them was a dense forest-tall, thick trees with vibrant greenery and fruits thriving amid the cold. The dense canopy made it impossible to see far through the forest. "Is this the Mirror Realm?" Orion asked, his voice tinged with surprise.

He had anticipated many things about the Mirror Realm's appearance, but a mesmerizing snowy forest with fruits wasn't one of them.

"My energy is sealed," Aurora exclaimed, her tone filled with shock and realization.

Orion snapped his head toward her. Seeing Aurora's anxious expression, he immediately channelled his Vylkr energy. It didn't work. A mysterious force sealed his Vylkr container, tightly binding it and preventing him from accessing his energy. He was also unable to use his

Celestial energy.

Orion's eyes widened in surprise. Realizing that his attempts were futile against the mysterious force, he swiftly tried something else. He activated his gift.

The Vylkr energy broke free of the mysterious seal with the aid of the dominant Primordial energy, flowing through his veins and reigniting his gift.

A burst of bluish lightning shot from his fingertips, scorching the snow and turning it into a vapour that rose into the air. Though he couldn't use Vylkr's energy to strengthen his body, the fact that he could still feel his gift gave him a sense of security.

Orion exhaled in relief. If the one responsible hadn't anticipated this result, he could use it to

his advantage when encountering a problem.

Orion summoned his artefacts to see if he could still utilize them. With a flicker of light, his miniature mountain, the Crimson Greatsword, the Morphic Puppet, and Solara's Divine Eye

appeared, floating in midair around him.

"It worked," Orion muttered.

With the Morphic Puppet alone possessing the strength of a five-star warrior and the Crimson

Greatsword—a divine weapon capable of cutting through anything of equal or lesser grade effortlessly—his chances of survival had increased, as had his ability to catch the enemy by surprise and emerge victorious.

Of course, all of this wouldn't matter if the enemy was a divine being. Still, it was better than being stripped of everything in an unknown place.

Watching Orion summon his equipment, Aurora quickly summoned her sceptre. Instantly, it appeared, glowing brightly as it hovered before her. She grabbed it and sighed in relief. Although she couldn't use her dual Vylkr and Divine energy, her sceptre had enough stored power to return her capabilities to a divine level.

The only issue was that she couldn't replenish her reserves quickly, as this strange land lacked divine or any other energy she could transform into Vylkr. It meant she would have to use her powers sparingly until they discovered the source of the problem.

Chapter 1168: Shackled Energies, Natives

Aerialia appeared with a flicker of shimmering light, hovering before them, her eyes scanning the snowy landscape with a heavy frown. "This place is devoid of divine and celestial energy... I can't sense any of the other energies either," she said, her frown deepening.

Orion nodded. "Fortunately, we can still use our equipment, and I can still utilize my gift," he responded. He then explained how he felt about the mysterious force sealing his energies.

"I think it didn't restrict my physical strength either," he said, raising his right hand. He clenched his fist and hurled a punch toward the snowy ground.

BOOM!!

The snow blasted away, revealing the ground deep beneath them.

Before Aurora's ascension, her physique had already surpassed that of anyone in Paradise. Their safety was also ensured by it.

Aerialia nodded, her expression filled with a mix of understanding and realization.

"Since the Mirror Realm is a reflection and a reconstruction of the mortal realm it's based on, it's not impossible for gods to control every aspect of it to suit their purposes. However, it consumes a lot of divine energy to maintain such a creation, and it can easily be torn apart by the laws. So, it's mostly ineffective against divine beings but can deceive mortals into believing this is an entirely new world."

"In reality, it's merely a realm where they can control what you see, feel, and experience on a larger scale without interruption. You've definitely been targeted the moment you entered the Mirror Realm, so be careful," she explained, her tone serious.

"We'll be careful," Orion replied with a solemn nod.

Aurora nodded in agreement.

Suddenly, their attention was drawn elsewhere-Orion looked up to the sky, noticing someone rapidly approaching their position, while Aurora scanned the forest, sensing something similar.

"We are surrounded," Aurora said, glancing at Orion and gripping her sceptre tightly. She would have sent her spawns to handle the situation, but she couldn't reveal her trump cards when they had yet to identify the enemy or determine if they were being watched.

Aurora bit her lip, her expression growing determined. She was going to protect Orion from any danger they might face. If the situation turned out to be worse than she expected, she would release her spawns to increase their chances of survival.

Orion swiftly unsummoned his artefacts, leaving only the Morphic Puppet and the Crimson Greatsword. He gripped the greatsword tightly. In an instant, his body was enveloped in scaly, inky

black armour, with the 1.7-meter-long greatsword in his hand glinting like blood, contrasting starkly with the snowy white landscape around them.

Aerialia withdrew into her space, not wanting to take any risks. If their opponent could see and harm her divine soul, she didn't want to cause unnecessary trouble for Orion and Aurora.

Soon, they came into view.

High in the sky, a large bird covered in vibrant azure, white, and icy blue feathers flew overhead. Its wingspan stretched about 25 feet(7.6m), and it had a long, crested beak with a crown of feathers on its head. Several more magical beasts entered their line of sight, circling above them.

Growls filled the air on the ground as another group approached, emerging from the dense vegetation. Before them stood majestic quadrupedal beasts, each covered in thick, double-layered fur ranging from white to pale blue.

Their heads were adorned with white and pale blue fur manes, and they had long, tufted ears. The rest of their bodies resembled wolves, and they stood about 7ft(2m) tall.

Wide-fitted saddles with front and rear grip rails were on the magical beasts' backs. Seated atop them were humanoid figures dressed in simple armoured attire. Most were human, while others belonged to races Orion recognized in the various Bastions. They surrounded Orion and Aurora, halting at a distance.

The magical beasts in the sky circled above them.

Orion and Aurora were surrounded on the ground and in the air.

He activated the energy-reading function. To his surprise, he saw nothing.

Orion was curious to know if their energies were sealed like his. Still, it made him even more wary of the situation.

Suddenly, the magical beasts parted, and another beast-about 10ft (3m) tall-emerged, carrying a man with a patchy beard under his chin. He was dressed in simple bronze fur-lined armour and had a sword strapped to the side of his waist. The man rode forward and halted in front of them.

"Stand down!" the man ordered, raising his hand as he glanced at the surrounding forces. Once they complied, he refocused on Orion and Aurora. His eyes lingered on their weapons, recognizing their high-grade artefacts. When he saw Aurora's foggy staff, he paused, sensing its bizarre power.

His gaze then lingered on Aurora, taking in her exceptional beauty, which even a battle-hardened warrior like him couldn't ignore.

Turning back to his men, he commanded, "Bring them a ride!"

Another human male rode forward, leading a similar magical beast, this one unmounted. It halted before them as the man with the patchy beard retreated with his beast, rejoining the formation.

Looking at the magical beast that had been brought forward for them, Orion frowned, his expression cautious and solemn. Then, he shifted his gaze back to the man.

Noticing Orion's wariness, the man smiled. "We've been sent to bring you to the fortress. If you want answers to the questions you're searching for, you'll have to follow us there." Despite the man's calm demeanour, Orion found it hard to trust his words. However, he had no choice but to follow them, as they needed answers and figure out their capabilities. Orion turned to look at Aurora.

Aurora nodded, a cloudy exhale escaping her lips. She also understood that they had no choice but to follow.

Orion unsummoned his crimson greatsword. "We will follow you. I hope you can keep us safe along the way," he said to the man before lightly leaping off the snowy ground and landing on

the saddle.

Aurora stepped forward and raised her left hand, allowing Orion to pull her onto the beast. She wrapped one arm around Orion's waist, the other still gripping her sceptre tightly. Meanwhile, Orion held onto the front rail grip to steady them.

"Take off your mask. You don't need to hide your identity, and it's irritating to look at," the man abruptly said, his eyes fixed on Orion.

After briefly contemplating, Orion removed the mask and hung it at his waist. "Is there anything else?" he asked.

The man's gaze flickered over Orion's face, and he shook his head. "It's good," he replied. He turned his beast to face the rest of the group.

"Let's go," he commanded, raising his hand to give a signal. At that moment, the giant flying magical beasts dotting the sky took flight, all heading in the same direction.

The group on the ground followed suit, with Orion and Aurora positioned at the centre of the formation, protected on all sides.

After a few minutes, seeing they weren't under attack, Orion looked toward the leader at the front. "I would like to know where we are," he asked.

"We're within the mirror realm," the man replied, turning his head to meet Orion's gaze. "Which faction are you from? It's been a while since we've picked up individuals this

wealthy," he added, glancing at Orion's fine armour and Aurora's sceptre.

Orion nodded at the man's words but hesitated when he heard the question.

"It's fine if you don't want to respond. I just want you to know that it's irrelevant no matter where you come from. There are no factions here, and anyone who brings any feuds, personal or otherwise, from the outside world will be severely punished," the man added, shaking his head with a sharp glint in his eyes as he finished his sentence.

Orion nodded, taking in this new information.

"Did you grow this magical beast?" Aurora asked, her right hand gently brushing against the furs of the beast.

She had encountered a few magical beasts from the Trekking Flamingo Runaway City, but they were all ugly and not something she would give to Liora as a playmate. This one, however, looked much more pleasing. She also needed to strengthen it a bit to withstand her

strength.

"Yes, they are natives of this world," the leader nodded.

"Natives?" Both Aurora and Orion raised their brows in surprise and contemplation.

"Yes," the man nodded, "Let's pick up speed. You'll understand once we return to the fortress and everything is explained to you." He patted his magical beast gently, and with a fierce growl, it and the others, including Orion and Aurora, began picking up speed.

After twenty minutes, they arrived at their destination.

Before Orion and Aurora stood an enormous wall, over a hundred meters tall, built from a metal-like material and lined with sharp icy spires that pierced into the sky. The walls were thick and round, occupying an incredibly vast amount of space, almost resembling a city.

Still, it wasn't enough to dwarf the surrounding forest, which provided shade and hid the fortress within its thick vegetation.

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Numerous figures dressed in fur-lined armour stood on top of the walls, peering down at them like the others.

The leader's beast roared, its voice thundering across the surroundings and reaching the sky as though announcing their arrival.

In the next moment, the thick gates were pulled open.

The leader stepped through first. Orion and Aurora followed, and the rest of the group followed behind.

In the sky, the giant flying magical beasts dove over the walls and into the fortress directly.

As the gate sealed shut, Orion and Aurora took in their surroundings.

They crossed a small bridge with tall, spiky metallic walls on either side, then passed through another gate. On the other side, two rows of soldiers stood waiting on either side of the entrance.

"We will walk from here," the group leader said as he dismounted the beast he had been riding.

The other soldiers behind them did the same.

Orion and Aurora nodded and dismounted as well.

The waiting soldiers stepped forward, taking hold of the beasts and leading them away in a different direction. The soldiers who had returned with them also departed.

"Follow me," the leader said, gesturing for Orion and Aurora to follow him.

They walked behind him, passing three patrol sections that appeared to be checkpoints before arriving at the residential area.

In front of them was a city, filled with numerous houses built from smooth stone, ranging from two-story buildings to single-story ones. The homes and buildings stood on a grassy plain. Compared to the snowy environment outside, there was little snow here, and thriving gardens and vegetation lined each house and road.

A paved road led the way through the grassy plain.

Countless individuals of various races moved in and out of the buildings, going about their daily activities.

To avoid drawing too much attention, Orion transformed the Morphic Puppet to conceal itself under his clothing. Aurora, however, unsummoned her sceptre. Despite their efforts, they still caught a few glances as they moved forward.

Even some magical beasts observed them curiously.

Soon, they arrived at the gate of a large manor. Compared to the other buildings and smaller manors they had passed, this one was far more impressive, signifying that a person of high status lived here.

The guards nodded and opened the gates, granting them entry.

As they stepped into the compound, they noticed that apart from the guards stationed at the entrance, the manor seemed empty. They quickly arrived at a garden and saw small birds flying in the sky, while other creatures on the ground paused and looked at them curiously.

In the distance, a woman sat on a comfortable wooden chair, her silver cornrow braids poured down her back. Opposite her sat a fair-skinned man dressed in fur-lined armour, similar to that worn by the soldiers they had seen earlier.

However, a red cloth was attached to his armoured right shoulder, hinting at some significance. Standing behind him was a light blue-skinned woman with her black hair tied in a ponytail and a slender tail, almost whip-like, extending behind her. She wore attire similar to the others but had a purple cloth on her right shoulder, distinct from the man's red cloth.

Orion glanced at the shoulder of the man leading them—he also had a small red piece of cloth similar to the seated man's. He had previously overlooked it, assuming it was merely an identifier, but now it seemed to carry more meaning.

In the centre of the group was a table set with a glass kettle, a tray of tea cups, and an assortment of fruits in a glass bowl.

It appeared they were discussing over tea.

At that moment, the discussion stopped and they turned to look in their direction.

Orion finally got a clearer view of the woman. She was dark-skinned and wore an eye patch over her right eye, while her other eye gleamed with a silvery hue, matching her hair. Faint scars lined the skin near the edge of the eye patch. She wore a beautifully styled dress, blending silver and black colour, and sat with her legs crossed, scrutinizing both Orion and Aurora.

The instant her gaze landed on them, Aurora halted in her tracks and immediately grabbed Orion's right hand, causing him to stop as well.

Orion turned his attention to Aurora, frowning, and asked, "What is it?" He knew Aurora wouldn't react this way without reason, and he was curious about what she had uncovered.

"She's dangerous," Aurora muttered, her teeth clenched tightly.

Orion stiffened at her words, feeling Aurora's shivering grip on his hand.

This was the first time he had sensed her react this way before an unfamiliar individual.

Maybe...

Orion swallowed, realizing that the silver-haired woman might be the goddess they had planned to meet. In their current state, they were completely defenceless before her.

As if arriving at the same conclusion, Aurora swiftly summoned her sceptre, ready to call out her spawns.

The man leading them halted and turned to look behind him. "What are you doing? Show respect to the Priestess and put away your artefacts quickly. Don't cause any problems," he said, his voice tinged with irritation and anger at seeing Orion and Aurora in a battle-ready stance, their gazes fixed on the woman in the distance.

He couldn't believe they would dare to attack the Priestess in her own home. He wondered if he had made a mistake by bringing them directly inside, rather than making them wait

outside.

Priestess! Orion and Aurora blinked, realizing they had mistaken the woman for a goddess. Still, they remained doubtful about her true identity, especially Aurora.

After all, no ordinary Priestess should have such a frightening aura to make her react in such a way and hesitate to approach. Her energy might have been sealed, but her physique and intuition were not.

The expressions of the woman and those beside her morphed into astonishment as if they were taken aback by the sudden and dramatic turn of events.

"Didn't you hear me when I said..." the man growled, drawing his sword from its sheath. The blade, about 73 cm(29 inches) long, had numerous cracked lines stretching across it like interlocked segmented blades holding it together.

"...those who bring whatever feuds they have from the outside world here will be severely punished..." Just as the man approached them, ready to finish his words, a crisp, clear feminine voice resonated from behind.

"Stop!"

The man halted in his tracks. Sheathing his blade, he withdrew and turned around, pulling his fierce gaze away from Orion and Aurora to face the woman.

"Arch-Knight Jareth, I informed you that the new arrivals this time would be special, so it's obvious they wouldn't react the same way as the others upon meeting for the first time," the woman spoke, her soft voice dissolving the tension that had filled the air moments earlier.

"Everyone can leave. I will speak with them privately," she added, waving her dainty hand dismissively at Jareth and the two individuals before her.

The man seated before her stood up, bowing alongside the blue-skinned, tailed woman. After straightening, they both turned and left.

They cast glances at Orion and Aurora as they passed, walking out of the garden.

Jareth shot them a quick, disdainful look before snorting and exiting the garden.

Now, the only ones left in the garden were the mysterious Priestess, Orion, and Aurora.

"Why don't you come and have a seat so we can talk? I'm sure you have many questions, and I will do my best to answer them all," the Priestess said, smiling lightly as she looked at Orion and Aurora, who were still standing in place.

After a few moments, Orion and Aurora exchanged glances and nodded. They steeled themselves and approached the Priestess.

"I'll get the workers to bring an extra seat," the Priestess said apologetically, attempting to clap her hands to call a worker. However, Aurora responded, "There's no need to waste that much time. We can get a chair ourselves."

The Priestess raised an eyebrow at Aurora's words. However, before she could respond, something astonishing happened right before her eyes.

Seizing the opportunity to demonstrate some of her skills and make the mysterious Priestess think twice before doing anything foolish, Aurora swiftly used her sceptre to create a chair similar to the one before them, out of thin air.

The ball of energy at the head of the sceptre shone brightly for a moment before returning to normal. Creating the chair was a simple effort that didn't deplete her reserves, so there was no

expenditure of energy.

Looking at the calm woman, whose expression twisted into complete shock and awe, her mouth gaping wide open, Aurora knew she had sent the right message.

The Priestess's gaze lingered on the foggy staff, narrowing on the ball of energy, before

refocusing on Aurora.

"You can still utilize your energy freely?" she asked, her voice filled with a mix of surprise and

curiosity.

Without responding, Aurora took her seat on the chair she had created.

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She wasn't going to answer until she was certain that all of her questions were addressed. Still, she couldn't help but shiver under the Priestess's scrutinizing gaze, feeling as though her body was being seen through.

This only made Aurora's suspicions rise, and she strengthened her defences.

Orion followed suit, sitting down with his gaze fixed intently on the Priestess, a mix of curiosity and caution in his expression.

Seeing that the two before her were unwilling to speak, the Priestess's expression softened into a light smile.

"Allow me to pour some tea for you before we begin," she said, leaning forward, putting away the used teacup, and taking two new ones from the tray to place before them. Then, she took the teapot and gracefully poured its contents, filling the teacups.

Orion glanced at the tea, which was a sky-green colour with a purple petal floating on the surface, before refocusing on the Priestess.

"Since you're both eager to start. Let's begin, allow me to introduce myself, I am Priestess Zera, serving under the goddess of Twilight Chorus, and Fortune," Zera introduced herself, crossing her legs. "Can I know what your identities are?"

Priestess of the goddess of Twilight Chorus and Fortune! Orion and Aurora took in the words.

After a brief hesitation, Orion introduced himself. "I am Orion," he said, remembering Rimehelm's advice and choosing not to mention 'Paradise.'

Zera nodded, raising an eyebrow with a slight smile, clearly expecting more. However, she chose not to press further and shifted her attention to Aurora.

"I am Goddess Aurora, daughter of the Goddess of the Hunting Moon," Aurora introduced, her gaze sharp, carefully gauging Zera's reaction.

As expected, the moment Aurora revealed her identity, Zera's expression froze before twisting into shock and realization. Her eyes widened, and her mouth gaped open once again. She scrutinized Aurora from head to toe before swallowing audibly.

"Forgive my manners; I didn't expect I would be meeting a genuine goddess. I would have prepared better if I had known," Zera uncrossed her legs, stood to her feet, and bowed respectfully toward Aurora, before crossing them again, her expression returning to normal.

However, unlike before, it now carried a hint of reverence and curiosity.

Unexpectedly, Aurora's brows twitched in irritation.

"Honestly, I had been expecting more guests than just the two of you. However, considering you are a goddess, it makes sense. All of the Harbingers must have died by your hands, and you were able to break my goddess's powerful restrictions on this realm to use your energy," she added, her gaze flickering toward Orion.

After all, anyone capable of accompanying a goddess of this calibre must also be someone extraordinary.

"Then your goddess is the one responsible for all of this?" Aurora asked, seeking clarification.

"Yes," Zera nodded.

"You're the Goddess of Twilight Chorus and Fortune, aren't you?" Aurora asked, unable to wait any longer, her questioning glare fixed intently on Zera.

Zera's brow furrowed before a look of understanding emerged.

"No, I'm not the Goddess of Twilight Chorus and Fortune, nor am I the one responsible for all of this. I am merely her most faithful and loyal follower, ready to carry out her will without hesitation," Zera replied, shaking her head tiredly, a sigh escaping her lips.

"She is dead," she added, her head lowered, a painful and sorrowful expression crossing her face. "If I were the goddess, would there be any reason or benefit for me to hide it?"

"Bullshit!" Aurora snapped, using a word she had learned from her husband.

"This is a Mirror Realm. From my understanding, it should have been destroyed after her death. Yet, it's still fine, and we are currently within it, and still subjected to her restrictions. Before we entered this Mirror Realm, we encountered individuals and heard several things. We are here to meet the goddess responsible for all of this and for answers," Aurora clenched her teeth, awaiting Zera's response.

A goddess who had prepared a Divine Embryonic Seed for her resurrection...

Who had defied the divine mysteries and held on for so long...

Who had created techniques based on the Vylkr energy...

Who had cultivated several demigods, all with exceptional battle prowess...

Whose rumoured capabilities even made her mother wary...

To say that such a goddess had died was hard for Aurora to believe. It was more believable

that the Priestess seated before her was that goddess, no matter how much she tried to deny

it.

Zera's shoulders slumped. "I'm sorry if you heard anything that raised your hopes and expectations about meeting my goddess. But I assure you, she is dead." She took a deep breath and exhaled.

"She died in her confrontation with the divine mysteries a few thousand years ago. The reason the Mirror Realm still exists is that it's part of the legacy she left behind, built upon the structure of the outside world. Should the pocket dimension collapse one day, the Mirror Realm will be destroyed with it."

"She was an extraordinary goddess, able to go toe-to-toe with the divine mysteries even before she had the chance to become a true god. She left behind this legacy to give the inhabitants of the outside world a chance to live free from their curse. That's why energies are restricted here, and they are shielded from the effects of the deathplague. Unfortunately, this restriction also applies to all other energies."

Zera looked at Aurora and Orion with genuine remorse. "I'm sorry if this has caused you any difficulty."

After hearing Zera's words, they remained silent, pondering over them. Even though they still had doubts about Zera's identity, they knew that they would have to provide evidence at this point to prove she wasn't lying.

"Does the restriction also apply to you, as her Priestess?" Orion asked.

Zera shook her head with a wry smile. "No. I am perfectly capable of utilizing my energies," she replied.

Orion nodded in understanding. "How do you know all of this?" he asked. "From the looks of it, you knew we were coming and sent someone to retrieve us."

"I know this because the goddess informed me of your presence and what's transpiring within the Harbinger's domain," Zera responded.

"Can we know the original purpose of defeating the Harbingers and entering the realm, given that we didn't enter through conventional means?" Orion asked.

While most people entered the Mirror Realm at the brink of losing their bodies and sanity to the death plague, Orion and Aurora entered through the water vortex. Orion figured their presence here must serve another purpose, regardless of the goddess's death.

"The Harbingers were said to be people who fought alongside the goddess against the divine mysteries and received her inheritance. However, after the goddess's death, they fled to the outside world, waiting for her rebirth, as they didn't believe that such a powerful goddess could truly be dead. But they were wrong."

"When I last sought information from the goddess, she informed me that she had blocked their memories, erasing the incident that had transpired. Now, they serve to protect the factions of the outside world by gathering the tainted in one place, making it easier for the inhabitants to hunt and kill them."

"However, because of their loyalty, the goddess gave them a way to return to the Mirror Realm whenever they wished. However, due to the guilt of being unable to protect her, they remained in their domain, waiting for a powerful figure to arise from one of the factions and kill them. They believed that anyone powerful enough to defeat them would be capable of going against the divine mysteries."

"Even though it was almost impossible to find someone like that, some held on to hope, while others went as far as sharing small portions of their inheritance with particular factions to hasten their growth. It became their purpose."

"As time passed, the factions began to die off, one by one, without a single person able to meet the requirements they had set. Some Harbingers gave up hope and ended their lives unable to hold back themselves from succumbing to the death plague and transforming into tainted beings. If they had chosen to return to the Mirror Realm, they could have lived, but they were too ashamed to reside in the peaceful world created by the goddess they had failed

to protect."

Zera's expression transformed into a smile as she looked at Orion and Aurora. "Fortunately, it seems that their hard work has paid off. They have found two special individuals to obtain the goddess's inheritance. It doesn't matter if you are not inhabitants of the outside world, as long as you can utilize Vylkr energy, that's all that matters," she said.

Orion sank into his thoughts, absorbing her words. He knew that the purpose of the Harbingers in the outside world would be complex, but he never expected them to be so

pitiful.

Now Orion understood why Rimehelm didn't want them to read his memories, the last things he said before being killed, and why they were told only their death could activate the pathway that would let them enter the Mirror Realm. They were on a suicide mission.