

Legion lich 151

Chapter 151 Treevor against all

"Shit, that fucking hurts!" The blue fang screamed as it grabbed its own arm, feeling the flesh on its arm being devoured. As a desperate measure, he tried to freeze part of his arm to ease the pain, finding that the poison had lost its effects.

The parasitic venom was weak against sudden temperature changes, the spores that made up the venom died easily in the cold.

"Good to know the poison is weak to cold. But man, we're fucked, aren't we?" Blue Fang asked as he looked at the nearly 2000 corpses that Treevor had killed in less than two minutes after he got away.

"It might not be as bad as you think. I doubt he can launch attacks like that whenever he wants. It's likely either consumed too much energy or has a long cooldown. Either way, he'll be weakened or unable to attack this form for some time." The black fang spoke trying to be positive, but he himself did not believe his words.

Treevor lost interest in the Crusaders after seeing the fear and hesitation underneath all that fanaticism. He turned to the adventurers busy removing the priests' robes and retrieving their equipment, now that his plans had been completely futile.

Most were unable to react to Treevor's sudden intrusion, but they recovered after seeing Treevor slaughter the Crusaders. All the adventurers slowly gathered around the blue fang, waiting for him to take command.

"Are you okay? Can you still fight?" An archer wearing green leather armor asked as she approached, never taking her eyes off Treevor.

She was Olivia, the wind mage of the blue fang group. She was responsible for hindering Treevor's movements, using her pressure control spell. Olivia could control the surrounding air using this spell, increasing and decreasing the pressure as she pleased.

The spell didn't have much offensive power, but it was excellent at controlling and sealing enemy movements, befitting its role as team support.

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"That should do it." The blue fang spoke as he took a mid-level healing potion and poured it on his forearm, closing the wound that the poison had opened. "Hey, piece stick! How long are you going to stand there?"

"I was hoping you all would regroup. It wouldn't be fun fighting you any other way." Treevor spoke in anticipation. Sensing the fight to come, the hawk flew away to avoid getting involved. His job was just to transmit the spells the mages cast, not to fight directly.

"You really are underestimating us." The blue fang spoke and stood guard, pointing its spear at Treevor's chest. "Ruy. My name is Ruy."

"You can find out my name after you die and join us." Treevor spoke and picked up a whip in each hand, each of the vines on the back of his head pointing at the adventurers.

"One last question. You must be about five meters tall, why are you human size?" Ruy asked something that had bothered him for some time.

"I just felt that being a huge monster would be a disadvantage here. Adventurers are used to fighting monsters that are bigger and stronger than them. It's also a great opportunity to train myself, as I'm not used to fighting that size." Treevor responded smoothly.

A moment of tension ensued as they both stared at each other, trying to anticipate the other's next move. Who moved first was Ruy.

He kicked the ground and lunged at Treevor, the stone floor cracking as he passed.

Treevor responded by swinging both whips in an X shape, at the same time releasing blades of aura from the whips.

Ruy leaned forward until his body almost touched the ground, letting both blades pass over his head, only for a perfectly timed stone spike to hit him in the chest and send him flying.

His titan sharkhide armor withstood the damage, but it still knocked the air out of his lungs and should have left him open to a second attack. The whips changed trajectory and tried to hit Ruy in the air, but the last one kicked an air platform conjured by his brother and narrowly dodged the attack.

'How did he use a wind spell? Was it the effect of his equipment?' Treevor wondered, but didn't let him get too far and used the spirit impulse to jump and tried to crush Ruy's skull with his fist.

"It won't be that easy!" Olivia screamed and cast pressure control again, stopping Treevor in mid-stride. Off the ground, Treevor wouldn't have many ways to resist the spell and ended up falling before reaching him.

Treevor fell to the ground and Ruy dove on top of him, aiming the spear at Treevor's forehead. With his body still restrained by air pressure, it would be difficult to dodge, but Treevor had already thought of a simple way to overcome this limitation. Just kill the spellcaster.

The vines on the back of her head curled into a spiral above her head, at the same time conjuring the ice age towards Olivia. The spear managed to pierce one, but there were dozens of whips and its strength was not enough to pierce through them all.

Olivia began breathing heavily and shivering from the cold, feeling her temperature drop rapidly. Black ice flakes accumulated on its body and sapped its strength. She tried to get as far away as possible, but Treevor had cast the spell using both his amber energy and his core energy, so the area of effect was quite large.

Lucky for her, the surrounding adventurers didn't just stand by and watch as she died. The spell had hit a few adventurers as well, and anyone with an affinity for fire or water tried to soften the spell's effect, their teamwork undoing Treevor's spell.

“Hey, don’t be a coward!” Ruy shouted angrily, releasing one of the spells his brother had cast. A flammable gas flew towards Treevor, passing through the gaps between the vines before it burned his body.

“Tch!” Treevor snapped his tongue in annoyance and backed away, conjuring a layer of black ice to smother the flames. He also cast a spell of darkness that restored his scorched vines.

Treevor tried to run at Ruy again, but a barrage of spells stopped him from advancing. The mages among the adventurers aimed their spells at Treevor the moment he and Ruy walked away.

A two-layered corrupted mana barrier appeared and blocked all spells. Whenever the first layer took damage, Treevor would let the second take the damage while restoring the first, allowing him to keep both of them.

‘Note to self. Practice double barriers if we survive this.’ Ruy thought with admiration.

“Annoying flies!” With a wave of his hand, Treevor rained down sharp ice crystals on the mages, but the tanks stepped forward and raised their shields, shielding the mages from the ice crystals.

Frontline adventurers rushed to surround Treevor. They were only on the second or third layer, but they would be enough to distract him.

Treevor attacked them all at once. the vines on the back of its head spread out in an attempt to impale the adventurers, but they all missed their targets.

The adventurers weren’t stupid and figured they wouldn’t be able to react to Treevor’s attacks, so they rolled the moment he moved, narrowly saving their lives.

Despite there being an auto-targeting enchantment, there was a limit to how many targets Treevor could attack at once and by splitting his focus, his attacks became telegraphed and predictable.

The adventurers immediately got up and cut down the nearest vines, making their biggest mistake. Normally, most weapons wouldn’t be able to harm Treevor, but the latter purposely lowered its resistance and all the vines were severed, releasing the contained parasitic poison.

The poison immediately took on a gaseous form and poisoned all of the adventurers. They began to writhe as they fell to the ground, most of the severed vines slithering along the ground like snakes and returning to Treevor’s body.

“It won’t work twice!” Ruy screamed and conjured an icy mist that rendered the poison useless, just as Treevor wanted.

Treevor cast two water spells, the first generating a wave of water that hit all surrounding adventurers and the second that immediately froze them.

Ruy cursed himself for his mistake and tried to unfreeze the closest adventurers, but Treevor’s whips were on him again and Ruy was forced to roll for his life.

Treevor took advantage of the gap to fire bullets of darkness at the frozen adventurers, killing them while they were unable to fight back.

“Looks like playtime is over.” Treevor muttered sadly. Rui didn’t understand right, but a war roar came from behind him, making him turn around in fright.

Orus was running towards them on the bicorn, with his personal guard, tamers and adventurers behind him. The adventurers who were supposed to protect the mages had stayed behind along with the mages, protecting them now that they were out of mana.

Orus rallied them all as he advanced, leaving the mages behind.

Chapter 152 When the curtains close

Orus didn’t say anything when he arrived, just releasing the spell his bicorn had cast.

A circle of black fire appeared around Treevor before collapsing into a perfect sphere and filling the interior with hellish heat.

‘Boss, do I still need to buy time?’ Treevor asked through the mind link, totally oblivious to the heat around him. He conjured a layer of black ice on the surface of his body, keeping the temperature of the willow stable.

Treevor was actually grateful to the enemy, as this gave him time to confirm status around the fortress.

‘Just a little more. The elite troops are almost reaching the gate where Vanilla is and we can start the plan. Do you need some help there? All army elites are surrounding you as we speak.’ Athos replied, watching the fight through the falcon’s eyes.

‘Nah. I’m going to fight seriously from now on and I want to know how far I can go. But prepare a second large-scale spell in case something I need help with. Also, try something more useful than those spikes of corruption.’

‘The hawk can’t hold the spell alone long enough to aim, so many thorns miss their targets.’

‘Noted.’ Athos spoke and ended the communication.

“Well, let’s get serious-” Before Treevor could finish speaking, the bicorn burst through the sphere of black fire and impaled Treevor through the chest. The flames were blocking his mystical senses, so Treevor only detected him when his horns were already piercing his chest.

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General Orus didn’t want to give him time to think and stabbed him in the forehead with his glaive. The glaive’s blade glowed with a powerful light, presumably an enchantment designed to deal massive damage to undead.

Treevor sidestepped the glaive by bending his head back until it touched its back, at the same time grabbing the bicorn’s horns and kicking the ground, the roots of his feet digging into the stone floor.

He returned to his 5 meter size and lifted the bicorn along with Orus, before slamming them against the ground with all his might. Stone spikes rose from the ground and impaled the familiar, but Orus jumped and dodged the attack.

'How troublesome. My defense really dropped, the bright willow would have withstood this blow.' Treevor thought slightly irritably, touching the two holes caused by the bicorn in his chest. His real body's ribs were fractured, but both injuries healed in seconds thanks to the darkness flowing through his body.

"Are you finally going to fight seriously?" Ruy asked angrily, conjuring a pool of lava under Treevor's feet.

Trevor's legs went under as they were seared, but Trevor just cooled the stone and yanked his legs out with brute force.

Spells rained down on their position, but Treevor used the boost of the spirits to dodge most, recasting his double barrier to cover the rest.

Treevor ran into the middle of the formation of adventurers, who quickly surrounded him, thinking he was targeting the mages.

Several spells specialized in restraining enemies were cast on Treevor, sealing his movements for a few seconds, but that was enough for the adventurers.

Dozens of aura blades rained down on his body, causing cuts across the entire barrier. The adventurers knew they couldn't attack at the same time, so they all used ranged attacks to rain attacks nonstop.

'Why did he stop casting spells all of a sudden?' Ruy wondered, but didn't have much time to think. The barriers were unable to withstand all the attacks and broke, so he and Orus charged forward at the same time.

They tried to cut off Treevor's legs to stop him from running away, but the last one just smiled at them.

'Shit-' Ruy belatedly realized that something was wrong and tried to stop, but it was too late. His vision and that of everyone around him darkened, a completely black dome rising in a 50 meter radius around Treevor.

Treevor had waited for as many adventurers as possible to gather around him before releasing the field of the dead. All light within the area of effect is gone, whether physical or magical in nature.

Wizards also became unable to cast spells, regardless of whether they were wearing conjuring rings or wands. Rings and wands would absorb the corrupted energy and self-destruct.

Enchanted items also became useless. Despite its previously stored energy, the corrupted world energy seeped into the metal and attacked the runes. The runes glowed with energy as they rejected corrupted energy and became temporarily unusable. Only skills were usable, but even those would have their effect reduced.

The corrupted world energy also slowly corroded the adventurers, while also making the air toxic.

In short, they were fucked.

Treevor broke free of the restraining spells and conjured bullets of darkness at everyone around him. The blind adventurers were hit and died before they could understand anything. The only thing they could do was give one last dying scream to let the others know they were under attack.

'Fuck! Where is the attack coming from??' Ruy wondered as he improved his hearing, but the darkness bullets didn't make a sound. One of the bullets flew towards his temple, but his shadow expanded and engulfed him, saving his life at the last second.

"Let's trade brother. I can see thanks to the shadow serpent, so I'll be more useful." The black fang whispered as they switched places and Ruy had no choice but to agree.

"Be careful, Roy." Was all he said.

Despite being able to see, there wasn't much Roy could do. With his magic gone, all he could do was carry Olivia and run as fast as he could out of the field of the dead. His familiar could only dive into the shadows with a single prey, so he had no choice if he wanted to save both his brother and his teammate.

Unfortunately for them, being the only ones getting away attracted Treevor's attention.

'How can they see without light? Is it a skill like the boss Sensory Field?' Treevor thought as he slaughtered all the adventurers around him. He didn't bother chasing him, knowing they couldn't get far.

Its vines spread out and released blades of aura that slashed everyone within the field of the dead, before Treevor raised them as undead. In less than a few seconds, over two hundred adventurers were killed. The only one who managed to save himself was Colonel Orus, but he didn't escape unscathed.

His armor had protected him from the slash, but he was still suffocating on the ground without being able to breathe. His gear was as good as Astrus's, but it wouldn't do anything to protect him from the toxic air around him.

Treevor didn't think much of it and just grabbed him by the foot with one of the vines before lifting him and slamming his body to the ground. And hit it again and again until you kill it.

It was a shameful death for a soldier who had come here to avenge his brother, but Treevor didn't bother with him and just turned him into an undead while healing all the wounds caused by repeatedly hitting the ground.

"Go out and kill everyone." Treevor ordered his newest subordinates, who immediately obeyed.

Outside the field of the dead, Roy had just left when the spell wore off and the skeletons of adventurers charged at the living.

"Retreat! Mission failed, all retreat!" Ruy left his brother's shadow and screamed as soon as he saw a skeleton wearing the colonel's armor.

The adventurers didn't think too much of it and immediately split into the smaller streets to give themselves more chance of escaping, but the same cannot be true of their personal guard. They were completely loyal to the colonel and the late Astrus.

They raced furiously against Treevor, but the adventurers stood in their way. Tanks stopped them from advancing, while mages cast spells on them.

The tamers also decided to flee, but Treevor threw himself in their midst and started a massacre. A tamer's strength mostly depended on the familiar they possessed so each one of them was unique, but that didn't matter in front of Treevor.

He grabbed an ice bear with just one hand and smashed it against the nearest familiar, before killing both tamers. A tyrannical gorilla tried to punch him in the face, but Treevor grabbed him by the shoulders and tore him in half.

Treevor continued slaughtering the fleeing tamers for a few more seconds before Athos' voice rang in his head.

'The elite troops have already stormed the gate. Let's close the curtains now.' Athos spoke happily.

'I understood. Is anyone still outside?' Treevor asked as he impaled a flaming bull with his talons and hurled the body at his tamer.

'The mercenaries and foot soldiers are near the gates along with the out-of-mana mages. The common troops that Vanilla drove out didn't dare to invade again, even after the elite troops arrived.

They are making their way around the fortress and retreating to a small group that stayed behind recording the entire fight. I'll send extermination units as soon as the curtains fall to make sure no one survives.' Athos reported.

'I'll go to the mercenaries as soon as I'm done here.' Treevor said and Athos nodded.

In the next moment, the entire fortress disappeared and was engulfed in darkness.

Chapter 153 Large scale skill

The mages in the control room had activated the fortress's latest enchantment, conjuring a gigantic field of the dead throughout the fortress.

Whether soldiers, adventurers or crusaders, everyone was temporarily blinded and unable to breathe. Those capable of circulating mana managed to prevent the corrupted world energy from corroding their skin, but it didn't do much to improve the overall situation.

Screams of pain and panic from soldiers trying to talk to each other were heard, but all were silenced by the sounds of buildings being crushed and bones creaking.

The bone abominations destroyed the buildings they were in to break free, roaring in happiness. They didn't like to be disassembled after their master had finally assembled them into a proper shape.

The closest soldiers were shocked by the sounds of destruction, but the bone abomination trampled them all and ran towards the gate, just as its master had ordered.

Athos would be upset if he couldn't see the humans' reaction to his new toy. No human could see into the field of the dead, so Athos couldn't take advantage of their reactions.

"Get out of the holes and kill them all!" Athos shouted excitedly as he leapt from the fortress walls and landed on the shoulder of the hecatonchires, the first bone abomination he created.

All the skeletons hiding inside buildings or behind roadblocks to defend against the crusader invasion rushed furiously to kill all the humans suffocating on the ground.

They would still die after a few minutes at most, but Athos wanted them dead ASAP.

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The soldiers lying on the ground couldn't resist for long as the skeletons attacked them. All they could do was wave their hands wildly in hopes of driving the undead away, but the skeletons were relentless.

"Shit! We have to get out of here, we can't save anyone else!" Roy yelled, dragging his brother as he plunged Olivia into the shadows. Unlike other humans, he could see into the field of the dead, but he preferred not to.

The undead were going crazy and killing everyone around. All he could do was save his brother and his teammate, and even that would be an uphill task.

Before heading for the walls, Treevor had warned that he had a human who could see and that they should be careful with him.

This made the skeletons concentrate their efforts on Ruy and Roy, the only ones who were running straight towards the gate.

'Fuck. The gate is too far away and it's going to be difficult to keep going. We have to find a way to get there before we run out of breath.' Roy thought desperately as he slashed a skeleton with his spare sword. Despite being able to see, he and Ruy still couldn't breathe with the air becoming toxic.

They had barely advanced 100 meters and both were starting to run out of breath. His brother was following behind him and killing skeletons nonstop, but his movements were getting slower and slower and his face was already red from the effort of holding his breath.

"Caution!" Ruy suddenly shouted, pointing forward. Roy was distracted for a second as he checked on his brother and one of the bone abominations running towards the gate turned and tried to squash him.

Before Roy could do anything, Ruy took a deep breath and jumped, piercing the skull on the chest of the bone abomination with his spear and jumped back, letting the abomination fall to the ground. Unlike his brother, he was completely blind, but he knew a skill similar to echolocation, so he could fight one way or another.

"Don't get distracted! We need to get away at once-cough!" Ruy couldn't finish the sentence, his lungs burning as the toxic air corroded his lungs. He fell to the ground while coughing up blood, only for the bone abomination to punch him and crush him to the ground.

Athos had taught the bone abomination to play dead when the chest skull was destroyed and attack the moment the enemy turned his back or let his guard down.

"Brother!" Roy screamed desperately, but the undead's fist suddenly exploded. Ruy was much more powerful than the abomination, so he managed to withstand the blow despite the difference in mass between them.

But he didn't escape unscathed. The sheer brute strength of the abomination had broken several of its bones while its left arm that had taken the direct hit was twisted at an unnatural angle.

He was leaning on the spear as he panted heavily, no longer caring if the air was poisonous or not.

The Abomination didn't care about his pain and attacked him with its three remaining limbs.

"ROAR!" Ruy spat out a mouthful of blood and roared like a wounded beast, before darting under the abomination's legs and breaking his right knee and leaping to the cluster of skulls at the base of the neck just as he began to fall.

Ruy used the multi-strike skill, destroying more than half of the skulls in a second and leaping back just as the abomination's heavy fist approached, causing him to slam into himself.

The bone abomination didn't give up the attack and tried to slash him with its claws while Ruy was in the air. He managed to use the spear to block the abomination's left claw, but the right still hit him and left 5 deep cuts on his side and threw him to the ground.

The undead tried to finish him off, but Roy grabbed his brother's body and ran as fast as he could. He was using short breaths to ingest as little poison as possible.

Unfortunately for him, the bone abomination was faster than expected. For the first time since the fight began, the abomination began circulating mana through its body. The energy of over fifty cores working together created the closest thing to a large-scale skill that ever existed.

It was a complete coincidence even for Athos, his creator, but it was even more so for Roy who was being chased by him.

'How can something so big move so fast?!' Roy thought desperately, seeing the creature practically teleport from where he was and crash into the building next to him. The abomination itself had never used mana in its short life, so what should have been a simple step became a full force charge.

None of the hive minds could react to their own speed and all they saw was a blur. Several of his bones were broken in the charge, but he attacked again as soon as his vision adjusted.

The abomination didn't make the same mistake twice and this time, it threw itself at Roy correctly, opening all its arms as wide as possible so that the human couldn't dodge.

All Roy could do was throw his brother out of the way before the abomination struck with the force of a freight train and crushed him.

Roy's death caused his familiar to disappear as well and Olivia to be cast out of his shadow. The bone abomination was surprised by the appearance of a new human, but just silently killed her while she tried to resist.

"Fuck..." Was all Ruy the blue fang said before the excessive bleeding caused him to lose consciousness. The abomination quickly killed him and returned to the gate, where his brothers had already passed.

Treevor had already killed all the light infantry and mercenaries near the gate, so there was nothing to stop them.

A few kilometers away from the fortress, on a plain of dry grass.

The mage in charge of recording the entire battle was stationary from the start of the battle and continued recording even after the fortress went dark. To say that the assembled nobles were shocked by what they saw was an understatement.

From the gigantic storm, the arrows with some kind of acid that melted people with a scratch, the slaughter of soldiers caused by less than 50 demihumans, the appearance of Treevor and his demonstration of power, as well as the giant black dome.

All of this happened in less than two hours, but it felt like minutes to the nobles watching.

The nobles in the throne room had been shouting nonsense for some time now, much to the unfortunate mage's misfortune. They shouted irrational things like ordering him to come closer so they could get a better view or running to help them.

Obviously, he rejected all unreasonable orders, but for some time now, the orders had changed to threats and name-calling, some of them even threatening his family if he continued to disobey.

The common soldiers that had been massacred at the opposite gate were retreating with all the survivors, as well as the mana-less mages and siege weapons, as they would be difficult to move inside the fortress, with all those blocks and holes all over the place.

Mana regeneration potions were handed to the mages, who drank them as if their lives depended on it, but none of them raised their voices to say that they should step forward to help those still trapped inside the fortress.

"Hey, there's something coming out the gate!" The supreme commander shouted, temporarily silencing all the nobles as they carefully watched the gate. Unfortunately for them, what came out was far from human.

The bone abominations exited one by one, their massive bodies having to bend to pass through the narrow gap of the gate.

Chapter 154 Cleaning the surroundings

Its colossal size and ghastly appearance sent shivers down even the bravest of men in the throne room, the most cowardly nearly pissing themselves with fear.

None of them had ever seen a bone chimera in their lives, so their amazement and disbelief was natural.

Before any of the nobles could recover from the shock, the abominations ran at breakneck speed, their heavy footsteps tearing up the earth and leaving deep holes in their wake.

Athos had closely watched the bone abomination's first battle, and was shocked by its burst of speed. He noticed that the burst of speed was caused by the use of mana and ordered all abominations to circulate mana to the maximum to observe the phenomenon closely.

What Athos observed is that the main core draws energy from all the auxiliary cores, before releasing all the energy at once. This caused an effect similar to a large-scale spell, where multiple cores worked together to cast something that would be impossible for a single.

“This is amazing!” Athos shouted excitedly, having to grab Hecatonchires’ shoulder to keep from being thrown away. Even Athos was having a hard time keeping up with their movement speed, needing to use his cold mind skill to see more than a blur in front of him.

From the fleeing army’s point of view on the other hand, it looked like the monstrosities had gained wings and would reach their position in a matter of seconds.

Any order or discipline vanished from their minds as everyone began to run for their lives, trampling over anyone too slow to flee.

“Hey, mage, take command of the troops and order them to retreat! If the soldiers continue to flee in a disorganized manner, the undead will easily slaughter them. We need someone to protect the rear so that the others can get away safely.” The supreme commander shouted at the shocked mage, but it had the opposite effect.

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The mage finally recovered from the shock and let the cube fall to the ground, before turning and running as fast as he could.

Unfortunately for them, abominations were several times faster than warhorses and didn’t need to slow down to kill, just trampling them was enough. The first to be hit were the heavy infantry, or what was left of them.

The abominations ran through the fleeing army, but they didn’t bother to kill all the surrounding soldiers. Their targets were the fastest knights and mages who had enough power to injure them, though it was questionable whether they could kill them.

‘Scatter out and slaughter them. Whoever kills the most humans will receive an upgrade.’ Athos spoke through the mind link to make sure everyone would hear, receiving a chorus of happy grunts in response.

The abominations fanned out to kill as many as possible and ensure they would be victorious. They doubled their bodies and ran on all sixes, using their upper arms to crush everyone within reach.

Athos didn’t stay put on the shoulder of the Hecatonchires, leaping towards the first group of desperate mages. The mages were still divided into five different groups, as they would have a better chance of surviving if they fought together.

The mages paid no attention to Athos until he jumped, considering him just an appendage or bones out of place.

His flesh was retracted at the moment and even though he was wearing armor, the dark color of the metal didn’t stand out on the black bones, so he would hardly stand out while on the shoulder of an abomination.

Those closest were startled by the skeleton detaching itself from the abomination, but they didn't consider it much of a threat and just cast simple spells against it, their entire focus on the abomination, the biggest threat in their eyes.

A big mistake they made.

Athos used lightning impulse and sensory field at the same time with his body, dodging most spells and relying on his equipment's magical dispersion to resist the rest. The mages were surprised by Athos' shocking speed and activated the barriers on their cloaks, but to no avail.

Athos activated the sword's enchantment, improving its strength and sharpness before slashing, its blade cutting through the barrier and the mage behind as if it were made of paper. As expected from an item made of magic wood and enchanted by Treevor, the corrupted willow sword could cut through an ordinary mana barrier easily.

He didn't stop to check the body after slashing it, immediately attacking the next mage. The surrounding mages cast lightning, ice spikes and stone bullets at him, but Athos felt the attacks approaching from a distance thanks to the sensory field.

Athos had evolved rapidly since becoming an undead and his abilities had evolved along with him. His sensory field now expanded to almost 20 meters around him, so he could clearly feel the attack the moment it was cast.

With a wave of his hand, a wall of black fire appeared and blocked the mages' vision, so they spread out their attacks so that at least one hit him. Athos ran towards the spikes of ice, certain that the combination of the wall of fire and the magic dispersion of his armor would be enough for him to escape unharmed.

"Shit, don't come closer!" One of the mages screamed desperately, hurling lightning at Athos as he passed through the wall of fire. Athos did the same, the black lightning meeting the enemy lightning midway and almost immediately overpowering it.

Athos' core was much more powerful than the mage's core and black lightning could absorb enemy energy, so the result couldn't be different.

The mage was hit by the black lightning and fell to the ground convulsing.

There were too many around him, so Athos didn't have time to kill each one of them, all he could do was make sure they were unconscious before moving on to the next target.

While Athos was busy killing the soldiers one by one, Hecatonchires had thought of a much more creative way to eliminate the little humans.

The bone abomination curled into a ball, placing their skulls in the middle and curling around it protectively, before kicking the ground and starting to roll. Whenever its bones touched the ground, Hecatonchires used them to propel themselves forward, constantly increasing its speed.

Unlike his brethren, Hecatonchires had watched Athos and the skeleton mages work using the bone crafter spell on all the abominations. He realized that he could change into forms other than just disassembling and reassembling the way Athos had shaped him.

The hecatonchires rolled non-stop, trampling all the soldiers and wizards they passed, killing them horribly. Most of the first group's mages were aiming their spells at him, but he just took the damage without caring.

He repositioned his bones whenever they were cracked, keeping their surface always intact.

"Pfft, hahaha! Since when does he know how to do that?" Athos started to laugh seeing the Hecatonchires roll at high speed and trample the humans. "I better speed up if I don't want to run out of targets."

The mages around him had become scarce, so Athos quickly finished off the few that were still alive and cast mass raise undead on all the corpses.

"Slaughter everyone around." Athos ordered, before looking for the next group of mages. They were the only ones who posed any danger to him and the abominations, so they were the priority.

"Fuck! What the hell are we supposed to do in this situation?" The captain of the 4th sent mage slayers said, watching the abominations slaughter the fleeing army.

Less than 15 minutes had passed since the abominations exited the gate, but more than half of the fleeing army had already been killed or lay dying on the ground with gruesome injuries.

The abominations cut through the army in a straight line, splitting the fleeing humans into two different groups before killing all riders running ahead and turning on those they had left behind.

Not only had the fleeing army been split in two, their escape route had been cut off, forcing them to flee left and right, but the captain knew that this would only delay the inevitable.

But the reason why the captain was angry was another. Three of the five mage slayer teams had breached the fortress before the field of the dead was activated and the teams outside were unable to make contact with them.

As the teams entered from different locations, they also entered at different times, as they needed to exploit the gaps in the skeletons' defense in order to invade. They all had enchantments on their suits that made them invisible, but undead capable of controlling mana could use their corrupted version of mana vision and possibly see through their disguise.

None of them were sure, as these skeletons were a new species, but the mage slayers weren't willing to risk their lives in uncertainty, so they waited for a breach in their defenses. The 4th was about to invade when the curtains were lowered and he hurriedly ordered them back.

The captain had no way of confirming the situation inside the fortress, but seeing as no other humans left and unknown undead were chasing what was left of the fleeing army, it was almost certain that all humans inside were dead.

Chapter 155 A new threat

"Captain of the 4th unit, can you hear me?" The 5rd unit captain spoke in the communiqué, snapping him out of his reverie.

"I hear you loud and clear. Is your entire unit okay?" The 4th asked back.

"None of ours made it through and luckily we weren't discovered, but I didn't contact you about that. The teams that managed to get in are probably dead at the moment, so it's impossible to continue the mission the way we are."

"I understand what you're saying, but I still don't understand what you're getting at. Are you suggesting giving up the mission?" The 4th asked with dread. Elder Louis was anxious to collect this corpse, so the captain didn't have the heart to tell him that not only did they fail the mission, but they also lost 3 entire teams without seeing the enemy leader's face.

"What? No. I'm suggesting calling for backup. The large-scale spell that redirected teleportation was disabled according to the dark elder, but we can still use our own crystals to signal the portal. The dark elder will still be irritated by we lost three teams, but it's still better than coming back empty-handed."

"That might work. The total strength the dark elder possesses is more than enough to decimate a single fortress, no matter how many lesser undead they have. Even the undead spirit would be killed easily." The 4th agreed with the idea, but the 5rd threw a bucket of cold water.

"The dark elder would never send all of his strength into a single experiment, no matter how rare the specimen is. However, we should still receive enough reinforcements to finish clearing the undead and recovering their leader's remains." 3rd said with a sigh, feeling tired just thinking about all the insults he would have to hear.

"Haah...let's meet for now." The 3rd ended communication and ordered his team to move. The entire unit moved slowly, taking care not to get too close to the fortress or the abominations slaughtering the fleeing army.

Their numbers had been heavily reduced now and only a tenth of their soldiers were left. The soldiers had resigned themselves to the fact that they couldn't run away and had formed a circle around the last group of mages.

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The abominations suffered some injuries and lost bones, but none of them were destroyed.

The two teams of mage slayers gathered as far away as they could, just behind a hill that perfectly hid them from the view of the undead.

Once he confirmed that none of them were seen, the captain of the 4th unit called the dark elder.

A few seconds passed as the call connected, both captains sweating buckets of nervousness.

"I suppose you failed, huh?" Elder Louis spoke as soon as the call connected, surprising both captains.

"As?" they asked in unison.

"The moment the mage stopped broadcasting the battle, an uproar started in the throne room. The supreme commander contacted the order requesting reinforcements or that we at least open portals to rescue the troops that were still alive, so I was informed that the plan failed." Elder Louis spoke with irritation.

“Obviously I denied his request, but the damn commander was insistent and claimed that I was letting the kingdom’s soldiers die and was forced to reveal that the portals weren’t as good as everyone thought. It was the only way to save the image of order.”

“With all elder respect, but isn’t that a big deal? Revealing one of the order’s secrets like that?” The captain of the 5th unit asked.

“No, it’s not a problem. It had already been decided that the order would implement a network of portals across all three realms, so we would share the information within a month at most. We still kept the crystals’ resonance a secret, but the realm of Mirkor now know that the portals are not as convenient as they thought.”

“Elder, although we failed to assassinate the enemy leader and recover their corpses, I think that if we receive reinforcements it is still possible to complete the mission. The team that entered the city carried both teleportation crystals, but we can open portals once the curtains rise again.” The captain of the 5th unit suggested.

“Hmm...” Strangely, the elder didn’t accept his idea right away, but thought deeply.

‘They don’t know it, but I don’t have troops at my disposal to use as I please. The situation on mainland Doravon is becoming more and more tense and they have already begun to send out scouts and small skirmishes have begun at sea. The entire order is on high alert for a possible invasion, so all mages are on standby and being watched.’

‘It would be a different story if these undead were a threat, but their current power level is just a joke, it’s only their value as material that matters to me.’

‘If I move enough mages to conquer a stronghold, it will be impossible to cover all tracks and keep the quest hidden. The last council of elders declared that they would not engage in any military action until the situation was resolved.’ The elder thought irritably.

He had been the first to go along with suggestion that he not get involved in the kingdom’s situation, and his decision was coming back to bite him now.

Even moving your personal troops would be difficult. Though he had an undead army of his own, the portal network was overseen by the entire order and even he could not open clandestine portals and erase the records.

Perhaps if he had a portal network of his own like the damn water elder or the Ripha family, but that was impossible for him.

“Elder? Is there a problem?” When the silence lasted long enough to become awkward, the 4th unit captain asked anxiously.

“It’s a pity, but it looks like I’m going to have to give up here. Back off immediately-” Elder Louis spoke with regret, but then he remembered something.

The wind elder had recently attacked a city in Brumia, with the excuse that he needed to test a new piece of equipment he had created. No one had questioned him for creating and testing a new weapon with the threat of a continental invasion on its doorstep and perhaps he could exploit that loophole.

Unlike the Wind Elder, he was not a runesmith, but a necromancer and an alchemist. Nobody expected him to runsmithing powerful equipment, but rather to create new necromancy spells and new powerful undead.

If he claimed to have created a powerful new undead and just wanted to test it out in a combat situation, that would be excuse enough to silence any opposition. Undead were any necromancer's main weapons, after all.

However, there was one thing he needed to do.

'Who shall I send? All my undead with enough power to clear a fortress are already known, so it wouldn't make sense to test anything on them. I need an undead powerful enough to destroy a stronghold and not yet known.' He began to think deeply.

Elder Louis began to think, picking up a ledger of all his most important undead, until his gaze landed on a recently added one. A juvenile red-eyed black dragon.

It came from a failed experiment where the elder tested whether he could transplant magical organs between nearly identical species but with different racial affinities and abilities. In theory, this would allow dragons of opposing elements to use each other's racial abilities, perhaps even allowing them to use magic of the opposite element, but the experiment was a failure.

The dragons' bodies rejected the newly transplanted organs. Even without mana circulating through the body, the elemental energy that permeated the dragons' bodies rejected the organs and extinguished their elemental energy, making them just ordinary organs.

Elder Louis still kept the transplanted organs, hoping that time would make them adapt, but without success. The dragons suffered for days, being forcibly kept alive by the use of potions and healing magic from one of their assistants, but they still died in the end.

He turned the black dragon into a zombie dragon and sold the white dragon's corpse to the wind elder. They were longtime trading partners and the dragon full of light element would make a terrible undead.

"I will send a zombie dragon to destroy the fortress, but its mission has not changed. While the dragon devastates the undead, find the enemy leader and assassinate him. The zombie dragon has no intelligence and will only obey simple orders and clear as kill all the undead and don't attack any humans."

"You need to kill the leader before all the undead are all destroyed, or this whole mission will be a failure. Got it?" Elder Louis asked with an icy look that sent shivers down the two captains.

"Understood. When are we going to start the mission?"

"You will know. Dragon breath is impossible to miss." The elder spoke irritably, as if saying that was enough to bring back bad memories.

He ended the communication and rose from his chair, walking around the secret laboratory. His secret laboratory was underground and although it was only his personal laboratory, it was almost the size of a small town and a defense that rivaled the royal castle of Mirkor.

With the absurd size of his laboratory, it would take a long time to walk from one end to the other, so Luís just took a teleportation crystal from his pocket and teleported to where he wanted.

His destination was the deepest section of the lab, the catacombs, as he liked to call them. Dozens of gigantic tombstones made of magic steel were arranged at regular intervals, each bearing a symbol of the creature they imprisoned.

Chapter 156 An irregularity

Tombstones were enchanted items that kept the undead buried below in a state of hibernation. The elder was an extremely powerful necromancer, possibly the best necromancer in mankind, but his power was still limited and controlling an undead army plus a few dozen powerful undead was too much for him.

That's what tombstones were for. Her enchantments kept the undead hibernating and lessened the burden they placed on her mind. Keeping the undead active even if they weren't doing anything put a burden on the necromancer after all.

To control an undead, a necromancer needs to subjugate its mind after creating it, but that doesn't mean the undead would become a vegetable after that.

Unlike the currents of Athos that altered the minds of the undead to make them loyal, normal necromancy erased all memories and personality from when they were alive, their minds regressing to the same level as newborns.

After having their minds regressed, the undead no longer resisted their necromancer's control, but they were still living beings and could slowly develop their minds, so the necromancer would constantly need to spend mana to destroy their minds to make them easily controllable.

Elder Louis walked over to the tombstone with a symbol of a dragon and fed it mana, feeling the earth begin to shake. The earth began to open up as the zombie dragon slowly awakened.

The undead rose and looked curiously around, but Elder Louis took control of the dragon's mind and prevented it from thinking.

'Kill all the black skeletons and spirits you find. Don't think about anything else, don't do anything else. Kill all the black skeletons and spirits you see. Don't think about anything else, don't do anything else,' He kept sending mental orders to the zombie dragon, until all that went through his mind was his orders.

He needed to make sure the dragon didn't attack his subordinates and focused exclusively on the black skeletons. Elder Louis also made sure to include the spirit in case the zombie dragon didn't recognize it as undead.

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'Excellent. I just hope those worthless ones can destroy their leader before the zombie dragon destroys them all.' That was all Elder thought as he called the mages responsible for activating the portals and requested that they track his subordinates' crystals.

In his mind, defeating the zombie dragon wasn't even a possibility. No matter how young or stupid the zombie dragon is, a dragon is still a dragon.

"And that was the last one!" Athos screamed, stabbing the last of the mages in the stomach before knocking him to the ground and firing a small bullet of darkness into his head to finish him off.

Athos looked around at the thousands of corpses crushed around him. The abominations were gathering around him, looking strangely sad. Athos did not understand the reason for all those sad skulls, until he saw Hecatonchires celebrating, despite all his injuries.

"Looks like we have an undisputed winner. I'll separate some corpses and let them expire for you." Athos patted his leg, the only part he could reach without jumping.

The abomination made a happy moan and patted Athos on the head as well.

'Emília, I finished things out here. How is your side?' Athos asked as he lifted the corpses like undead. He started with the mages obviously, gathering the most useful ones first.

Since some time ago, he had been feeling an absurd amount of life force accumulating up in his body, so it was likely that the skeleton mages were lifting corpses all over the fortress.

'We're already finishing here too. We barely need to spend mana to transform corpses into the field of the dead, so we're having an easy job here,' Emilia replied happily. 'Master, we made it. We won!'

'With a certain ease, I would say. We won at the moment when the troops broke into the fortress. It would be a different story if the church's forces managed to hold the holy field and create a safe space for the troops, but Treevor would still have teleported in and wiped it all out.' Athos spoke arrogantly, as if everything had gone according to plan.

'Things could still have gone very wrong. We should act more carefully next time – wait.' Emília was about to lecture him, but stopped in her tracks. 'Master, we have a problem.'

'What's it?' Athos heard the concern in her voice and asked.

'They found corpses of a team of mage slayers inside the fortress. An entire team dead.' Emilia spoke.

The teams that had broken into the fortress did not immediately die, but managed to hide while trying to take cover.

There was a dead team in the sewers, another that managed to break into the fortress, and the last one that hid in a building near the walls that the skeletons discovered.

'So we have extra corpses? More mages are always welcome.' Athos thought with relief, I don't understand her worries. He would understand if Emilia was worried about a breach in security that allowed the mage slayers to break in, but they would be leaving the fortress soon anyway, so it wasn't a big deal.

‘Master, I think you didn’t realize the danger. If there is a team of mage slayers, it means that the elder sent them to capture or most likely kill him! Also, I doubt he sent a single team. There are likely to be other teams hiding somewhere. Please retreat back to the fortress for now.’ Emília pleaded worriedly.

She was running as fast as she could to reunite with Athos, at the same time ordering Caio, the closest loyal skeleton to go to the corpses and turn them into undead. Caio quickly arrived at the scene and only shared a spark of his life force, the field of the dead covering all the energy spent.

Once transformed, it took a few seconds for mage slayers to tell them everything they wanted to know. These skeletons didn’t know what had happened to the other teams, but they explained how many teams came. Caio shared the information with everyone while Emília ordered the skeletons to abandon everything they were doing and search every corner of the fortress.

‘We should re-enable the passive spells we’ve disabled. The energy of the field of the dead will run out soon and if the enemies are alive, they may be in possession of teleportation crystals or they may flee using invisibility.’ Caio spoke worriedly.

They had temporarily disabled the enchantment that forced teleportation and detection spells to allow Treevor to attack the church and the alarms would be useless, as they went off non-stop in the middle of a battle.

‘Do it. I’m going back now, most mages have already been turned anyway.’ Athos agreed with his idea, using death vision to scan his surroundings just in case.

‘Let’s retreat, we can collect the corpses later.’ Athos ordered and climbed on the shoulders of the Hecatonchires. All the abominations and wizard skeletons followed them and were about to move, when a purple light appeared near the walls, indicating that someone was trying to teleport here.

The purple portal slowly formed, but there was something wrong with it. According to what Emília and Caio had explained, the portal should be as thin as a sheet, looking like a two-dimensional purple circle.

What was appearing in front of the gate was far from it.

The portal’s edges were purple just as Emilia had described, but its center was dark and seemed to suck in air, much like what happens when an undead uses a teleportation crystal.

As the purple light expanded in height and width, the black center expanded in length, turning what should have been a two-dimensional circle and back into a three-dimensional sphere.

The sphere began to distort as the hole in its center expanded and swallowed up the rest. The light around it was drained along with the air, distorting the image of the sphere’s.

‘Enemy reinforcements are coming! Everyone prepare for battle!’ Athos ordered all the skeletons, who immediately prepared for a second fight.

The field of the dead was already starting to run out of energy, so they would have to prepare for an uphill fight if the portal actually worked.

‘Does anyone know what’s going on with the portal? I’ve never seen anything like it.’ Treevor asked atop the walls, again shrinking to human size. The corrupted willow was completely recovered now, as it had absorbed corpses while rushing to the walls.

'I assume that the spell that redirects force teleportation spells is responsible for this. The portal appeared at the forced location after all.' Athos answered the obvious.

'That I already know. I want to know what that is!' Treevor pointed to the portal, which had become a shapeless purplish-black sphere. Its shape randomly changed from a sphere to an oval, sometimes even reverting back to being a circle.

The truth was that just as everyone expected, the spell that forced teleportation was responsible for it. The portal had been opened using one of the crystals inside the fortress as a coordinate and the spell forced the portal to appear in front of the gates.

What no one expected was that instead of just changing the coordinates of the portal to the front of the gates, spell created a fissure in space in the center of the portal.

Chapter 157 An irregularity Both the fissure and the portal overlapped, causing the anomaly the skeletons were seeing. When the portal began to expand, it forced the fissure to grow as well.

As the fissure expanded, something seemed to shift within it as the void swallowed the portal and it distorted uncontrollably. What the skeletons didn't know was that after the fissure swallowed the portal, the same happened on the other side.

A few minutes earlier, in Elder Louis' laboratory.

It took less than a minute for a portal to open inside his laboratory and Elder Louis walked through it along with the zombie dragon. The order's mages were as careful as possible with the requests and orders of the elders, as they could easily make or break the life of any mage in the order.

The portal took him to one of the order's branches, where the portal network was located. The order's portal network could open portals in almost any part of the world as long as there was a crystal with previously registered coordinates, but all portals would still connect to that place.

It was a silver tower over 200 meters high, with only 5 floors. The tower was entirely made of concrete mixed with divine mithril, a superior version of mithril. There were no windows or anything to give an outside view, its surface was smooth and immaculate despite being built a few decades ago.

The tower stood on the Adula continent, in the city of Blumue, in the Makima empire. Despite the discoverer and creator of the portals being a native of another continent, the elders of the order had decided that it was too dangerous to leave such an important asset in a continent where they did not have full control, so they chose to build here.

The first floor was the biggest and where most of the portals were. Great arches made of mithril inlaid with teleportation crystals were placed at regular intervals on both sides of the wall.

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Elder Louis had just walked past them and looked around with some contempt, but quickly recovered. Several tower employees and wizards were walking around, going in and out of portals to who knows where. The purple light from the portals did not allow the elder to look beyond the portals.

The second floor was the feeding room, since the order wasn't stupid to put the controls and the place where the runes were fed in the same place. The fourth and third floors of the tower were reserved for guards and sentries, as the tower was one of the order's greatest assets and required maximum protection.

The fifth floor was reserved for important figures and where Elder Louis would have appeared, if not for the zombie dragon that came through the portal right behind him. A red carpet and luxury furniture don't go well with a 50-foot zombie dragon.

"Dark elder, it's a pleasure to have you here. Would you like to drink some tea or-" An employee approached and with a professional smile tried to cajole him, but Elder Louis' response was cold.

"The crystals I asked you to track. Have you located and opened the portal yet?"

"We are working on it, elder. As you may already know, it takes a few minutes for a crystal to be tracked, so soon we will have your portal ready." The employee spoke in his best professional tone, but his eyes were traveling between the elder and the terrifying zombie dragon behind him.

In fact, it would take almost half an hour to find the coordinates of a crystal, but since the request came from an elder, they tried their best to speed up the process. But it wasn't enough for Elder Louis.

"Hurry up. I want this portal ready in less than a minute." Louis spoke arrogantly and stopped looking at the clerk, pulling out a pocket watch and checking the time, as if to prove his point.

"E-elder, please understand that this is impossible. We are already doing everything possible to speed up the process, but it will still take a minimum of 10 minutes until the portal is operational." The official tried to explain as calmly as possible, but the elder would not listen to what he considered to be just excuses.

"That's your problem. And you're going to have another problem if my portal isn't open in 55 seconds." The elder spoke still looking at his pocket watch.

The official realized that there was no point in arguing or pleading and ran as fast as possible. He was desperate because he knew the elder's threat was serious.

The elder was known for many things and his ruthlessness was the greatest of them. He was arrogant and looked down on everyone as inferior, getting rid of anyone who bothered him or got in his way.

There were not a few who had failed him, or just failed to meet his unreasonable demands and had their careers completely destroyed. Elder Louis had no qualms about using his influence or dirty tricks to destroy the lives of those beneath him.

The panicked employee managed to advance the tracking of the crystals and in less than two minutes the portal was ready to be opened.

"You made me wait for over a minute. I hope you're prepared for the consequences." Elder Louis spoke coldly when the employee returned to report.

"But-" The employee tried to plead, but Elder Louis ignored him and walked past him. Other employees who worked with him felt sorry for, but they didn't dare to confront the elder, certain that they would join him if they were to try to challenge Elder Louis.

“As soon as the purple portal appears, enter it. Remember, kill all the black skeletons and spirits you see. Don’t think about anything else, don’t do anything else.” He repeated as he ordered the zombie dragon to position itself in front of the arc starting to light up with power.

The dragon stopped in front of the portal and Elder Louis joined the team controlling the portals in the control room, much to the team’s chagrin.

It was a small glass room in the corner of the floor, a little over ten square meters.

“Loading the portal.” One of the team members spoke as he lifted one of the levers on the control panel in front of him. The controls were done in a non-magical way, as many employees who worked for the order were not magicians.

Many of the administrative roles were taken care of by civilians in the order, as mages weren’t big fans of dealing with paperwork.

The runes around the room lit up with energy, as did the runes on the portal.

The teleportation crystals embedded in the metal arc were quickly filled and a paper-thin purple light appeared in the center of the arc, but the employees quickly noticed something amiss.

“Hey, what’s that?” One of the employees who had sneaked up to get a good look at the zombie dragon asked, seeing the small black light in the center of the portal. “Control team, there’s something wrong with the portal!”

The fissure that overlapped the portal had appeared on both sides, causing the same distortion effect that had occurred in front of the fortress walls. The difference is that here, none of the staff or mages had any idea what was going on and it made everyone panic.

An alarm began to sound as the tower’s defensive enchantments were activated. A multi-layered barrier formed over the concrete surface, each of the barriers having a different element, but all possessing enough power to resist spells cast by an ancient dragon.

“Someone tell me what’s going on!” Elder Louis demanded in an authoritative voice, looking cautiously at the portal. He silently took the staff out of its storage ring and began casting his best spells, just in case.

His voice seemed to have brought some order to the panicked officials and one of them managed to stutter out a reply.

“Something seems to be interfering with the portal, although that should be impossible.”

“Is it possible to stop it?” The elder asked, immediately realizing the stupidity of his question. It was impossible to stop a teleportation crystal after being charged. The mithril bows were only responsible for changing the nature of the teleportation to a portal, but the crystals were already fully charged.

‘Damn it. This is sure to get me into trouble later on. But the priority now must be to minimize the damage before-’

“Wait, stop!” The desperate screams of the employees brought him out of his reverie.

The zombie dragon rushed forward just as the portal began to form, following the orders the elder gave him. The dragon didn't know what a portal was, but the purple light was the signal to move forward.

Elder Louis ran out of the control room in an instant to stop him, but it was too late. "Fuck!"

Only half of the dragon's body had entered, but the sphere's dark middle had sucked in the rest of its body. The sphere began to distort as the darkness swallowed the rest of it, sucking in the air and everything around it.

Having something physical inside broke what little balance the purple energy and purplish black had. The portal that was supposed to be two-dimensional had become three-dimensional, creating a void in its midst and forcing the zombie dragon inside to exist in two spaces at once.

"Argh! Help!" The surrounding servants and mages were also sucked into the distortion, further increasing the size of the distortion until it engulfed the mithril bow encrusted with teleportation crystals.

Chapter 158 Tower fall

"Deactivate all other portals now!" The elder realized that the situation had just changed from something troublesome to a real risk. He was strengthening his body to the maximum to resist the suction of the anomaly, but everyone else who wasn't in the control room was unable to resist.

The employees inside the control room obeyed his orders and all portals that were about to be loaded were cancelled, but those already active could not be deactivated until all their energy ran out.

The anomaly was growing by the second, its shape changing more and more. Dozens of staff and mages had already been sucked in and presumably killed. The nearby floor and walls were also swallowed up without resistance, although the runes should have made the floor as strong as adamant.

'This can no longer be stopped. I need to get out of here before it's too late.' Elder Louis thought, trying to find a way to escape. There was no exit or entrance to the tower, the only way to enter the tower was through the portals and Louis didn't intend to take chances in a portal.

"Is there an emergency exit? We need to evacuate the tower immediately!" Elder Louis grabbed the clerk beside him who nearly went flying.

"The only way in and out is through the portals. I don't know of any other way out!" The clerk screamed desperately trying to grab Elder's arm to save himself, but Elder just let go of him after confirming that he was useless.

'If I can't physically flee, I have no other choice but to take my chances in a portal. Let's hope the exclusive portal is not affected by this anomaly.' Elder Louis thought as he fled as quickly as possible towards the stairs. He didn't try to save any of the surrounding servants or mages, considering them only encumbrances.

He sprinted up the stairs, running over anyone who was too slow to get out of his way. In less than a minute he was already on the fifth floor, but Louis wasn't the only one who had the idea of escaping through the portals exclusive to elites.

The only problem is that the team had turned off the power to all of the tower's portals to prevent any more from exploding, so no one was able to escape, creating a mob of desperate mages and employees on the floor.

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"Get out of my way!" Elder Louis didn't have time to deal with all these desperate people and released his aura in full force, knocking all the mages and employees to the ground.

As expected of a mage in the seventeenth layer of life, his aura alone was enough to subdue all the mages on the floor.

Louis paid no attention to the fallen mages and walked to the gate at the end of the hallway. The mithril arc here was much smaller compared to the behemoths on the ground floor, as it was meant to carry only elites and their escorts, rather than troops or cargo.

He ran past all the fallen people and arrived in front of the mithril arc, before taking off the medallion bearing the order's symbol and holding it up in front of the arch. Unlike the medallions worn by most mages, elders' medallions were personalized and had their respective elements at the center.

The locket glowed darkly for a second, and the mithril arc did the same a moment later, as if recognizing the elder. The elite-only portal served as both an exclusive transport and an emergency escape for the elders.

the crystal arc had a backup power source of its own, which began powering the teleportation crystals the moment the mithril arc recognized the elder locket.

The portal would open and take the elder to the order's headquarters in Makima's capital. This would also send out an emergency alert and let the entire order know that an emergency situation was happening in the portal network, something so serious that even an elder needed to flee.

It would be a shame and a stain on the elder name, especially after it was discovered that the emergency was caused by him, but Louis chose to swallow his pride and run for his life.

"Charge faster, shit!" Elder Louis shouted impatiently, watching the crystals slowly charge. As soon as the crystals finished charging, he took a step back, fearing that the same thing that happened in the portal below would happen.

Lucky for her, the portal was normal and stable, the purplish-black hole nowhere to be seen. Louis smiled and was about to cross when a small squeal of happiness from behind reminded him that he wasn't alone.

"An outlet!" One of the wizards shouted gleefully, but the elder's icy gaze silenced him.

"I almost forgot to cut loose ends. Having you alive to report what happened here is going to be a risk I'm not willing to take." Was all Louis said before unleashing one of the spells he'd been keeping at bay, unleashing a hail of darkness-filled stone bullets.

Despite darkness and earth being the two slowest magical elements, the black stone bullets moved at lightning speed and impaled the mages' hearts before exploding like a shrapnel grenade.

'If any one of them survives to explain what happened here, I will be doomed with no escape. But if I'm the only survivor, they'll have no choice but to hear my side of the story. Even trying to read my mind is useless, as at my level my psychological defenses are so strong that mind reading spells are practically useless.'

'I just hope the crystal records survive this incident. The mithril arches can be easily reconstructed, but the records of all the crystals would take months to re-record, needing to travel to almost every corner of the Adula continent to record everything again.'

The tower began to shake violently at that moment, reminding him that he wasn't safe yet. Louis grabbed a small glass bottle and smashed it against the crystal arc before quickly stepping through the portal.

The broken bottle released a green gas that immediately began to corrode the mithril, making the portal unstable until one side of the arc melted and fell to the ground, collapsing the portal under itself. The corrosive gas did not disappear and began to melt the corpses, erasing the evidence of the elder's murder.

On the first floor of the tower, the anomaly had grown and its edges had swallowed the other open portals, increasing its size to the point of engulfing the first floor and the walls of the tower, the anomaly expanding outwards.

The barriers that should have been able to withstand an ancient dragon's attacks have long since disappeared, as the anomaly has swallowed the tower along with the runes that form the barriers.

Alarms were already ringing across the city as mages flew from a safe distance while surrounding the tower, but none of them dared to approach. The anomaly was sucking in everything around it with frightening force. A first group of mages had gotten too close and were sucked in, disappearing inside the anomaly.

The tower began to collapse, its structure unable to stand after losing half of its walls and the anomaly putting even more pressure on it.

Anomaly sucked in the falling tower until the void at its center was filled and unable to drain anything more, collapsing in on itself. It imploded, disappearing half of the tower and leaving a gigantic crater. The upper floors of the tower fell into the crater with a thud, raising a curtain of dust.

The surrounding mages were shocked, wondering what the hell had happened here and where did the first few floors of the tower go.

It took some time for a brave person to approach the wreckage of the tower and begin the search for survivors, although everyone already knew that the chances were minimal.

In the fortress of the platinum fist.

"Hey, won't this thing stop growing?" Athos asked, looking at the gigantic anomaly outside the walls.

The forced teleportation spell moved the portal approximately 200~300 meters away from the walls, at the limit of the range of ballistae and catapults. Thanks to this distance, there were no casualties among the skeletons, but the ever-expanding anomaly was making Athos anxious.

Athos, the skeleton mages, and the bone abominations had already returned to the fortress, bypassing the anomaly as it grew uncontrollably.

“Whatever it is, I doubt the enemies were expecting this to happen. If my guess is correct, it’s likely the same thing is happening on the other side and they must be panicking by now.” Treevor was nearby and spoke.

“I just hope this is over soon. We’re not in our best condition right now.” Emília, who was also nearby, joined the conversation.

The field of the dead had run out of power a few minutes ago, so the dome of darkness that surrounded the fortress disappeared. The skeleton mages had turned as many corpses as possible into new undead, but their overall power was still weaker than before the battle started.

Without the storm and barrier, they would have no choice but to face the enemies head on.

Chapter 159 Dragon breath

“Don’t worry Patriarch...we will definitely win...no matter how many enemies...attack us.” Vanilla spoke with confidence, though no one knew whether the confidence came from her naivety or her blind trust in Athos.

“Shut up. Something’s going on.” Athos ordered, noticing that the anomaly had stopped growing. For a moment he thought the whole thing was going to explode, but nothing too dramatic happened.

The anomaly simply disappeared, as if it had never existed to begin with. In its place, a sphere made of earth, stone, concrete and whatever else was in the tower appeared, before collapsing to the ground.

The space within the anomaly was fickle and changing just like its surface, so whatever was swallowed was twisted hideously beyond recognition.

“Okay, I really don’t know what’s going on.” Athos muttered as he looked cautiously at the wreckage there is distance, trying and failing to recognize anything useful.

“My theory was probably correct, boss. What we’re seeing is probably the enemy base’s wreckage, or at least what’s left.” Treevor spoke in a mocking tone, wondering how many people had died in this idiocy.

“That I can understand. What I still don’t understand is why teleported the garbage into my backyard.” Athos said confused.

“Ah, that’s simple, master. The portal’s coordinates were here, so it was natural for the wreckage to end up here. The nature of teleportation crystals has always been to move something from point A to point B and although the order managed to tamper with the arc mithril them to allow movement on both sides, the anomaly still threw things at the portal’s coordinates.” Emília explained, sighing with relief internally.

She knew about the tower of portals, and she also knew that with so much wreckage here, it was likely that the tower had been partially, if not completely destroyed. Emilia doubted they could send enemies against them until everything was rebuilt.

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"Well, it looks like we're not going to have any big fights at the moment. We're safe, though I don't know for how long. Astrus, how's the investigation going on your side?" Athos asked after confirming they were safe.

"I scattered all the skeletons that wouldn't be needed for defense around the fortress and found a total of two teams of mage slayers in addition to the one we were already aware of. Both teams were turned into the undead, but we didn't get any new information." Astrus reported.

He had been tasked with looking for the mage slayers by Athos, who was suspicious that they were still alive and lurking somewhere.

"So the two remaining teams are still alive, right? What are the chances they're conveniently dead somewhere in the fortress?" Athos asked ironically.

"We haven't finished searching the entire fortress yet so I can't say for sure, but it's very unlikely, my king. I believe the mage slayers are alive and lurking around the fortress. I've already sent skeleton birds to investigate the surroundings and look for them. them, but without success so far."

What neither of them expected was that both teams were running desperately at the moment, fleeing the fortress with all their might. Both captains realized that there was something wrong with the portal and started to flee the moment the anomaly appeared.

They didn't know what it was, but it looked nothing like a dragon zombie that Elder Louis had promised to send.

"Got it. It'll be almost impossible to find them using just the skeleton birds thanks to that damn invisibility, but at least make sure there's nobody around the fortress." Athos ordered and Astrus nodded.

"Vanilla, order the demihumans to collect all the corpses you impaled on the back gate. Emilia, bring some skeletons and let's look for anything useful in the wreckage. Even destroyed magic weapons can be melted by metal." Athos ordered.

Both skeletons nodded their heads and were about to retreat to do his bidding, but froze in place. Not just them, but all of the skeletons near the wall found themselves unable to move, their bones shaking in what felt like fear, though that should have been impossible.

Athos felt his knees tremble and a shiver ran down his spine. He looked at the rubble almost instinctively and noticed that something was moving among the rubble, as if it were trying to get out.

Cracks appeared through the concrete before a giant scaly paw ripped through the concrete to break free. The zombie dragon had survived the anomaly.

As he was the first to enter the anomaly, all the concrete and earth that was sucked in afterwards formed around him, crushing his body and sealing off his every movement.

A living dragon would have died after its body was crushed by several tons of concrete and stone, but the zombie dragon managed to survive despite all the injuries on its body.

Its wings were crushed and one of them was completely torn off and missing somewhere in the wreckage. Its front right leg was broken and held loosely to its body.

Many of the scales on its body were crushed and there were places where rotting flesh was exposed. He had several broken bones and torn muscles, black blood oozing from open wounds.

His long tail was cut in half, the severed half trapped in a mithril arc. He had ripped its own tail in an attempt to free itself.

The right half of the dragon's face was crushed, several of its tusks broken and falling off as it walked.

The zombie dragon slowly emerged from the wreckage and looked around, trying to understand where it was. From his perspective, all he had done was follow his master's orders and enter the portal, only to appear in a dark place and be buried.

He circulated as much mana as possible to resist, but still nearly died several times as the anomaly distorted uncontrollably.

But all those thoughts disappeared from his mind when he looked up at the wall and saw the black skeletons at the top. The elder's orders echoed in his mind, forcing his body to move.

The zombie dragon began to run at an absurd speed, despite all the injuries on its body. He took a deep breath as he ran, energy from the world around him being sucked in and filling his lungs.

"Get away from the wall now!!" Treevor screamed desperately, his mystical senses allowing him to feel the world's energy being sucked up by the dragon. He knew what it meant and it terrified him.

Treevor returned to his giant size and grabbed all the high-ranking skeletons with his vines and jumped off the wall, running to the right as fast as possible. Only an idiot would run in a straight line from a dragon breath, after all.

After reaching approximately 100 meters and filling its lungs with world energy, the zombie dragon moved the energy from its lungs through its neck to its mouth, where a magical organ at the base of its throat ignited the world energy with a spark of darkness, transforming the world energy in black flames.

The zombie dragon spat out the black flames, which spread out in the shape of a cone, increasing out until it was twice the dragon's diameter. The black flames left a trail of destruction on the floor, before reaching the wall and immediately destroying it.

Dragon breath evaporated the undead at the top, the black flames corroding their bones to dust. Even the mithril plates failed and rusted in a matter of seconds.

The black flames didn't stop at the wall and continued for almost 50 meters, before it disappeared. Hundreds of undead behind the wall were destroyed by the dragon breath, but the zombie dragon attack was not over yet.

Dragon Zombie jumped through the hole in the wall and immediately conjured two 10 meter spheres of darkness, launching one to each side as he continued to run forever and engage in melee combat.

"We have to flee immediately. A dragon is not something we can face." Treevor spoke bitterly, but never stopped running. He glanced back, worried that Athos was unusually silent.

"..." Athos was busy investigating the dragon's body as it was being carried, using the death vision to analyze it.

He noticed that the dragon's entire body was filled with power to the point of overshadowing its core and that the mana moved in a complex pattern, as if the mana flowed through its veins like blood. Athos knew of skills that had similar effects, but the dragon didn't seem to be using a skill.

What confirmed his theory was that the blood leaking from the wounds still carried the dragon's mana. If it was a skill, the mana would have dispersed the moment it moved away from the body. It was likely a racial ability, but Athos was focused on something else.

The shadows he was able to see in living beings, for some reason, he was able to see them in the zombie dragon as well.

Faint shadows spread across the zombie dragon's body, scarring all the wounds on its body, but one stood out from the rest. Athos noticed that a tiny shadow, almost invisible on its black body was on its back, right between the joints of its wings.

He was only able to notice why Treevor, in his desperation to flee, shook the vines and allowed him an up view of the dragon.

"Treevor, stop running, let's kill this thing." Athos screamed as he freed himself from the grip of the vines.

Chapter 160 Restriction spell

"What, are you crazy? No, scratch it. You've been crazy since before we met. But it's impossible to kill a dragon with our current power. We've both seen the power of dragon breath. If either of us gets hit by that, we're going to be pulverized!" Treevor spoke in alarm.

Treevor pointed to where the dragon was butchering the skeletons as they spoke. He was casting simple darkness spells like balls and darkness breath, at the same time using his remaining claw to crush the undead.

Although their spells were simple, they were incredibly powerful, killing at least a hundred each. His physical attacks were also absurd.

Despite its limited methods of attacking physically because of its injuries, dragon zombie would tear apart any skeleton it could reach. The few skeletons that managed to get past the claw tried to cut into the dragon's body, but failed miserably.

Iron spears and swords didn't even scratch its scales, while its flesh was barely damaged. Even if the undead detonated their own cores to try and do some damage, such a small amount of darkness could never seriously damage the dragon zombie.

"Use death vision and look at his back where the middle of his wings should be." Athos spoke curtly to Treevor to stop complaining.

Treevor and the other skeletons did as ordered, noting the small shadow on the dragon's back.

"What is it?" Treevor didn't know what shadows were, so he didn't understand what Athos was saying.

"I don't know exactly either, but these shadows always appear on the wounds of the living or when they die. I don't know why it appeared on a zombie dragon, but it's clear where we should attack." Athos spoke with conviction, but Treevor was still skeptical.

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"I already imagine that you want to approach using the teleportation crystal, but how are you going to seal the dragon's movements? Even I have difficulty following its movements, despite the distance between us." Treevor spoke, resigned to facing the dragon.

"But there's one thing I still don't understand. If he's a zombie, why not heal him with dark magic? Why stay injured?" Emilia asked.

"The dragon zombie's mind is a blank slate. The necromancer who created him must have completely destroyed his mind, so he simply must not know that it's possible to heal. It's likely he's using magic instinctively and therefore didn't use any. complex spell so far." Treevor spoke, using his mystical senses to look into the dragon's soul.

Treevor was a little calmer now, realizing that the dragon wasn't focusing on anyone in particular, just moving forward without thinking. Treevor suspected that the necromancer controlling it had given sloppy orders like 'kill all skeletons', so the dragon zombie was just killing whatever it came across.

'Skeleton mages. start casting chains of corrupted mana. I doubt I can keep the dragon zombie still for more than a few seconds, but it should be enough for us to attack.' Athos ordered through the mental link.

The mages obeyed his orders and cast urgently. They were still standing inside the main keep, but they sensed the emergency outside thanks to the voices over the general link they all shared.

Most of them still resisted Athos' control and only wanted to sabotage the mission, but the currents forced them to obey and work as quickly as possible.

For a few minutes, the dragon zombie had an easy time slaughtering the skeletons. All he had to do was move and step on the skeletons to kill them. The dragon even stopped using magic, considering it a waste against such weak beings.

Athos ordered the skeletons to spread out as much as possible so that the zombie dragon had to waste time chasing them. He was busy feeding the teleportation crystal in his hands, the only way to reach the dragon without getting killed.

The dragon zombie bought the trick, considering it a game of catch, and started hunting the black skeletons.

Treevor, Athos, and all the high-ranking skeletons followed his trail of destruction, taking care to stay out of the dragon zombie's sight. He didn't seem to be using any detection skills to sense his surroundings, but a dragon's keen senses cannot be underestimated, even if they were dulled after turning into a zombie.

“Are we really going to do this?” Treevor asked for the umpteenth time, having a hard time keeping up with the dragon zombie’s movements now that he was chasing the fleeing skeletons. Ordering them to flee lessened their losses, but also made their movement wider and harder to target.

“Don’t be a coward...the spell will be...ready soon...all we need to...do is land a...killing blow...what could go wrong?” Vanilla spoke, making Treevor and Athos wish she couldn’t speak.

‘My lord, we are ready.’ Sevenus informed him, before Athos could complain.

Athos swallowed the curses about to come out and realized that the entire flock of hive hawks was descending from the sky. A single hawk wouldn’t be enough to control a large-scale spell, but over two hundred of them would.

The dragon zombie also noticed the approaching skeleton birds and raised its head. He didn’t think much of the birds and just conjured a sphere of darkness when he felt they were in range.

The hive hawks weren’t stupid and scattered the moment the sphere was cast, casting wind spells under their wings to propel themselves away, much to Athos’ surprise. As far as he knew, the queen was the only one capable of casting wind spells.

But the truth was very different. Both the female and the male were capable of using wind magic, the only reason the males seemed incapable was the female destroying their minds. After spending some time relaying the spells and controlling the stormcloud though, they had relearned how to use magic, even though they could only use simple spells.

Most of the hive hawks managed to successfully escape, only five of them being destroyed by the sphere of darkness.

Dragon zombie was mildly surprised that his spell had been avoided, but he didn’t stand still as they approached, quickly casting the next sphere of darkness.

‘Constraint spell, now!’ Athos ordered the Skeleton mages.

The hive hawks dodged the sphere of darkness once more, not losing any skeletons now that they expected the attack.

They fanned out above and around the dragon zombie, before black chains shot out of its body and surrounded the dragon zombie like a net. The hive hawks threw the chains on the dragon to try and bind it, but it was much stronger than expected.

The dragon zombie quickly reacted to the chains, biting the ones closest to its face and using its claw to tear at the ones that got close to its body. He even cast a breath of darkness at the hive hawks, who found themselves unable to dodge now that they needed to focus on controlling the currents.

The breath of darkness wasn’t really a dragon breath, just a normal spell that the dragon preferred to breath out of habit. Dragon breath was an incredibly powerful skill at no cost to the dragon, but it had a long delay between shots.

Despite the dragon’s efforts to destroy the chains, they were too many for him to destroy without a proper spell.

A chain managed to trap its broken paw in a moment of distraction from the dragon zombie. The dragon couldn't move its paw and the second it took to break the chain, another three wrapped around its body.

The dragon zombie fought with everything it had to break free, but with only one paw and its fangs to defend itself, there wasn't much to work with. Even her limited use of magic couldn't break the chains fast enough.

He tried to spit out another breath of darkness, but the chains clamped down on his jaw. Dozens of chains caught his only remaining front paw and chained it against his body.

The dragon zombie fell to the ground and all the remaining chains chained its body, preventing it from escaping. Hive hawks also spent all their mana reinforcing even more the chains.

Despite all his efforts, the chains would not last long. The dragon zombie was squirming furiously to break free, its sheer brute strength putting immense strain on the spell. Every time he writhed, rotten blood gushed profusely across the floor, his injured body unable to withstand the strain.

The currents were also draining its strength, but the dragon zombie quickly learned to deal with it. He began releasing a layer of darkness across his body, protecting himself from the corrupted mana's energy drain effect.

"Come on, the chains won't last long." Athos ordered Treevor and Vanilla, who quickly approached him. Athos fed what was left to the teleportation crystal to fill it up and its surroundings quickly turned dark, before appearing a few feet above the dragon.

The dragon zombie felt the gust of wind overhead and its magical senses detected the sudden appearance of enemies high above it.