

Titan King 491

Chapter 491: How do you have sex with women?

Valkorath Realm, Soraya City.

Sitting on the throne, Orion opened his eyes, a look of delight flickering across them.

"Lumi has just advanced to the Legendary level, so the situation in Blackstone City should be pretty much guaranteed now."

In truth, Blackstone City is Orion's lair. With looming danger in Blackstone City, there's no way he could have stayed calm. However, once the will projection Orion had planted in Lumi transmitted the good news of her breakthrough, he already had a plan in mind.

Lumi's advance to the Legendary level happened right after the first will-projection clash erupted in the underworld. While keeping a close watch on the ongoing battles there, Orion had asked Lumi to travel to Blackstone City.

On the other side of the cross-realm teleportation array, the invading lord Loska was constantly testing the Stoneheart Horde's limits; naturally, Orion had to remain on guard.

"Now I can focus fully on the Valkorath Realm battlefield!"

"In half a month, there'll be another surge of slime mold attacks. I have to stay alert!"

Closing his eyes again, Orion directed his consciousness toward the Survivor's Platform and entered the public channel of the Champions Alliance.

Leonidas: "Damn it, these slime molds have such disgusting vitality!"

Arthas: "Leonidas, if you flatter me a little, I'll share a secret with you."

Arthas: "It won't necessarily resolve the trouble in your area, but at least it'll ease your frustration."

Leonidas: "Arthas, if you've got something to say, then say it. If you need to fart, then just let it rip!"

Arthas: "Heh heh!"

On the southern battlefield, Leonidas—who was only the size of a small dog—stood atop a towering peak, looking rather distressed.

In fact, that "mountain peak" under Leonidas's paws was actually a city, a nest of sorts. Unlike other intelligent creatures, Leonidas's way of building cities was quite bizarre.

"Is that narcissist Arthas trying to poke fun at me?"

"No, wait, that guy might be aloof and standoffish, but he's not the type who enjoys cracking jokes."

"Darn it! As the mighty Leonidas, I should learn to be flexible and carry the burdens of my people!"

Using a tone hinting at patient endurance, Leonidas comforted himself, reminding himself of his honor and responsibility.

A moment later, in the Champions Alliance public channel:

Leonidas: "Arthas, I love you, you are the best, the coolest, and the most dashing. Now spill the secret already!"

Edward: "Some things never change, do they?"

Alexander: "I refuse to work with anyone who's that shameless!"

As Deputy Commander Edward and Alexander mocked him, Leonidas simply ignored them.

Kraken: "Big boss, are you still the Leonidas I know? Did a broodmother mess with your mind?"

Leonidas: "Let me teach you a lesson today, Squiddy. When benefits are on the line, dignity isn't worth much."

Leonidas: "Oh handsome, magnificent Arthas, how's that performance? Are you satisfied now?"

Reading this, Orion couldn't help feeling a wave of revulsion.

He could just picture Leonidas—who looked like a little dog—climbing into Arthas's arms, licking his fingers while desperately wagging his tail to please him. That thought alone made Orion shiver.

In one brief moment, the tall "big boss" figure Orion had built up in his mind for Leonidas instantly collapsed.

Arthas: "That's gross!"

Though he spoke disparagingly, Arthas still seemed rather pleased.

Arthas: "Just in the last couple of days, Hulk built a Purification Tower in his newly established Soraya City."

Arthas's revelation had everyone in the public channel stunned for several seconds.

Leonidas: "Holy crap, is that really true? You're not pulling my leg, are you?"

Arthas: "Believe it or not, go ask him yourself."

Edward: "Hulk is something else. Quite the lucky guy!"

Alexander: "Did he pick it up as a leftover find or acquire it himself?"

Kraken: "Not only am I weaker than others, but now my luck is worse too? What's the point of living?"

Seeing this newest development, Orion couldn't resist chiming in.

Hulk: "Yes, the Purification Tower is real. I got it from a dropped Survivor's Chest. Ever since I awakened, this is the only high-quality special building I've ever managed to obtain."

Orion wasn't lying. Apart from common Arrow Towers, he really hadn't gotten any other top-tier special structures. The few he owned before—Mysterious Tavern, Tower of Truth, and a Mysterious Shop—were all bartered from other people. Only this Purification Tower had come from his own draw.

Leonidas: "Hahaha... Hulk, you're my savior! You have no idea—Commander's Purification Tower in the central area is so backed up that my people would have to wait a month just to get purified."

Edward: "In the next couple of days, I'll find time to head over to Hulk's place and set up a teleportation circle for everyone."

Leonidas: "Deputy Commander, you're awesome! Deputy Commander, you rock!"

Leonidas's flattery meant nothing to Edward, who didn't respond at all. Noticing the Deputy Commander's silence, Leonidas turned once more to Arthas.

Leonidas: "Arthas, I wasn't finished earlier. Sure, you look great, but does it do you any good if you're just a bag of bones? You don't even have a cock. I'm really curious—how do you have sex with women?"

With that, the public channel went dead silent.

After quite a while, both Alexander and the Deputy Commander spoke in turn:

Edward: "I saw that coming!"

Alexander: "I've been waiting for this moment."

Orion and Kraken avoided commenting, sensing that it was better not to chime in. They weren't comfortable enough in that circle of banter anyway. Still, Orion could easily imagine that Arthas and Leonidas were now in a private conversation, trading furious insults or perhaps forcing Leonidas to apologize. He didn't really know for sure.

Nonetheless, Orion brought up his own question to Arthas.

"Hey, bro, when the Deputy Commander says he'll set up a teleportation circle, is he talking about a cross-realm teleportation array?"

It was ten minutes before Arthas finally responded.

"Cross-realm teleportation array? In your dreams."

Orion could tell that the message came with a hint of anger.

"Leonidas didn't apologize, huh?"

Orion had gotten comfortable enough with Arthas that their exchanges now felt genuinely friendly.

"Don't even mention that dumb dog to me!"

"The Deputy Commander is referring to an inter-city teleportation circle here in the Valkorath Realm, allowing travel between our various cities."

"It still consumes a decent amount of supplies, but for someone like him—a demigod tier—it's not that big a deal."

"As for the large-scale cross-realm teleportation array you're asking about, an ordinary person could never afford the insane resource cost to build that."

Arthas seemed to guess what Orion was aiming for and spelled it out.

"That cross-realm teleportation array in the depths of your lair was most likely placed there as a special building."

"And remember, if Earth's survivors managed to awaken after our world was destroyed, then beings in other worlds can too."

"Take these slime molds we're up against now: for them to have evolved to this size, do you think their civilization was any less advanced than ours?"

"The Survivor's Platform isn't the only alliance, and it isn't necessarily the strongest. There are others out there who far surpass us."

Orion was quick to catch Arthas's deeper meaning.

Chapter 492: Reinforcement

Arthas used the slime mold creatures as an example specifically to give Orion a subtle warning.

Slime molds are incredibly powerful! Having killed so many Legendary-level slime molds, Orion was bound to remain in the broodmother's thoughts.

The slime molds would no doubt launch an unprecedented assault. The slime mold broodmother and her counterpart would likely emerge from the slime molds' Nest. At that point, Orion would almost certainly face an ambush.

Orion truly grasped the deeper meaning in Arthas's words and was grateful.

"Thank you for the warning. I'll proceed with caution."

Arthas didn't reply; Orion was smart enough not to press him further.

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Bottomless Abyss, underworld.

Amid slaughter and demise, amid the hiss of insects and the roars of beasts, all those under the Stoneheart Horde watched a dark red worm's will projection crawl out from the corpse of a dead Dark Worm. It rose slowly into the air, exuding a heavy oppressive force over the battlefield.

"So, you're out of tricks?"

Loska—lord of the Red Thread Clan—had been waiting and watching for a long while. Once the situation was locked in stalemate again, he finally chose to reveal himself.

"Can you feel it?"

"This cold body of mine is somehow sensing both chill and the heat of blood."

Clymene made a low remark. Lifting the warhammer Orion had given her, she stepped forward to face Loska's will projection.

Behind Clymene, five Alpha-level Skeletal Knights—Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona—burst out of the insect horde and followed closely.

"You don't belong here."

"This place was mine long ago. If you surrender to me, I may choose to spare you."

Truthfully, Loska did covet Clymene and the might of these Skeletal Knights. There was also the legion of skeletal warriors and death spiders under their command. If the Red Thread Clan could obtain their support, their strength would be significantly enhanced.

"This is Stoneheart Horde territory!"

Clymene's words were resolute. There was no chance Loska's will projection could entice them to join him.

"Do you realize what refusal means?"

Hovering in midair, the will projection released an ever-intensifying pressure. Around them, many skeletal warriors and cave spiders—serving as fodder—were forced to the ground, losing their ability to resist.

The dark worms along the front lines became increasingly frenzied, howling with savage glee. Some, driven by greed, had already started devouring the fallen cave spiders right where they stood.

"Death?"

"I know that taste well."

"I used to regret not explaining myself to those I held dear before I faced death."

"Now, we live alongside death, finding our place only in the darkness."

"Dying for the Horde one more time would be our honor—and a release."

Clymene's voice was low and hoarse, with a strange, mesmerizing quality. It sounded like both a prayer and a lament for herself. Floating overhead, Loska's will projection perceived a mysterious shift in energy. Without hesitation, he attacked.

His phantom shape turned into a streak of crimson. The red glow stretched out, becoming a thin, intangible thread lashing rapidly toward Clymene and the other five.

"Charge!"

Clymene roared, and Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona bellowed in unison behind her.

The five Alpha-level Skeletal Knights and Clymene launched a combined death charge, black fumes of necrotic energy streaming from their bodies. As though consumed by flames, they ignored everything else and plunged forward.

In a split second, the six clouds of black fog collided with the red thread. The fog churned violently while the thread glimmered like an elongated, blood-colored river. In the void, it seemed as if an unknown power was shifting the path of that crimson line—at times it coiled like a worm, at others it straightened like a steel wire, constantly lengthening and extending.

Barely fifteen minutes passed before all but Clymene dropped to their knees.

Crack—crack—crack!

That sound was their bones splintering. The five Skeletal Knights' skeletal bodies were cut into fragments no larger than an inch across.

At the same time, five wisps of black death aura peeled away from their broken frames, surging once again at Loska's will projection like waves of impending doom.

This was the core undead attack—if the black aura were completely extinguished, it would mean the true end for Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona.

"In that case, if you won't bow to me, just die already!"

"Haha..."

The crimson line in midair dimmed significantly. Seeing the deathly aura strike again, Loska grew enraged. The thread coiled into a spiral and re-formed into the phantom image of a worm. Its jaws gaped, ready to devour the aura and obliterate it.

However, a sudden gale of ice and snow swept across the battlefield, and everything seemed to freeze in place. A single, snow-white, translucent hand manifested within the swirling blizzard.

Squelch!

With one crushing motion, the pale hand snuffed out the dark red worm phantom like a candle's flickering flame in the wind.

"No...way... wasn't your lord defending the void passage?"

Loska's disbelieving voice lingered in the air, taking a long moment to vanish completely.

Amid the swirling snow, Lumi slowly took shape. Wearing a flowing white gown, she levitated gracefully, her face breathtaking and impassive.

Lumi showed no regard for the deathly aura floating just in front of her. Instead, she lifted a hand, and heavy snow began to fall across the underworld. Soon, from the mounting drifts of snow, one little snow monster after another crawled out and joined the fight.

"It's snowing!"

"A Legendary-level being!"

"Is this our reinforcements?"

"...?"

It was only then that Vargrum and his companions grasped what was happening. Lumi paid no attention to their astonishment. She raised her hand again, summoning eight colossal wind blades from the swirling snow. A moment later, those wind blades came crashing down, accompanied by eight piercing, agonized screeches from the worm horde.

In just three seconds, the shrieking vanished. With one gesture, Lumi pulled eight Alpha-level dark source crystals from the ground and let them drop into her hand. Only then did she turn her attention to everyone else.

Lumi had never encountered Skeletal Knights before. Besides, Clymene had been critically wounded and was momentarily unable to speak.

"Orion sent me."

"I'll defend this place for now, so there's nothing for you to worry about."

Her voice was cool and devoid of any discernible emotion. Clymene simply nodded in thanks, smiling at Lumi in response.

Chapter 493: Storm avatar

Lumi's arrival made the underworld considerably safer.

Of course, there was still a chance that Loska on the other side of the teleportation array might descend in person to the underworld, sparking a war among lords.

What's more, those dark worms that had been teleported over were still putting up fierce resistance; the war was far from over.

However, with the arrival of countless little snow monsters, the Stoneheart Horde gradually gained the upper hand after a period of chaos.

Those worms clustered near the teleportation array were visibly dwindling.

"Clymene, what should we do now?"

Desdemona was asking Clymene. Although they had lost their bodies, their death energy (souls) still remained; they were not truly dead yet.

In the previous battle with Loska's will projection, their bodies had been torn to shreds. If the death energy had not poured out, there was still a chance for regeneration. But now, with their death energy gone, those broken bones had completely lost vitality.

In other words, aside from Clymene, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Desdemona, and the others were all souls without bodies.

"Either re-form your own bodies or seize the skeleton warriors' bodies."

Reforming a body would take at least several decades, which was far too long for Vargrum and his companions. On the other hand, if they seized skeleton warriors' bodies, their strength would be severely diminished.

Just as Mordak and the others were about to drift toward a few skeleton warriors, Vargrum suddenly warned them.

"Grendel is still unconscious. His soul fire is close to going out!"

After getting ambushed by an Alpha-level Dark Worm, Grendel had then been caught in the direct shock wave of Orion and Loska's will projection clashing while he was unprepared, causing him to fall into a deep sleep.

Grendel's condition was worse than that of Mordak and the others. The only upside was that Grendel still had a physical form; though he was in a deep sleep, he would eventually awaken. The exact time frame, however, was uncertain.

Clymene hesitated for a moment. After thinking things through, she placed her hand on Grendel's body, helping him recover with her power.

Seeing this, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona also slipped into Grendel's body.

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Emerald Dream Realm, Red Moon Valley.

"Damn it, how did they manage to send a Legendary level fighter to the other side?"

"The void passage has already been opened; a Legendary level fighter shouldn't have been left free to roam."

"Unless..."

Unless the Legendary level fighter who appeared on the other side of the teleportation array had advanced after the void passage was activated.

Unfortunately, Lumi fell exactly into that category.

"What now?"

"Do we have to abandon those subjects?"

"No..."

Loska felt both anxious and uncertain, struggling to make a decision. On the other side of the teleportation array, there were hundreds of thousands of Red Thread Clan insectoid beings he could not bear to ditch. If he left them to their own fate, the Red Thread Clan would remain in decline after this battle.

"The lord on the other side is definitely a newly ascended Legendary level. With my middle Legendary level strength, if I descend there, I can suppress her easily."

"Yes... I can suppress her. I would hold the advantage."

"But that's just suppression!"

"If I'm held up by the other side, I won't be able to activate the teleportation array. My people will keep dying in battle."

"If time drags on until the dark beast tides subside, another lord might return, and I could end up falling right then and there."

"No, I can't go."

The moment those scenarios crossed his mind, the always-cautious Loska immediately gave up on descending into the Titanion Realm. Yet along with that thought, a wave of sorrow welled up in him.

Doing so meant that the members of the Red Thread Clan on the other side of the teleportation array were essentially abandoned. Such a choice was agonizing for a lord.

"I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I'm sorry..."

"Ah...!"

At first, Loska spoke the words as though consoling himself. Next, he was sobbing, and finally, his voice rose into a heart-wrenching roar.

In the end, for the sake of the Red Thread Clan's survival, Loska did not choose to descend into the underworld. As long as he was still alive, there would still be hope—Loska understood that all too well.

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Valkorath Realm, Soraya City.

With Orion in the lead and Vexis and Soraya behind him, they arrived at the center of Soraya City to welcome Deputy Commander Edward's descent.

A mass of swirling black clouds churned in the sky, forming a giant funnel-like storm's eye. Under the fearful gazes of countless Stoneheart Horde bloodline warriors, Deputy Commander Edward stepped out from within that vortex.

Once Deputy Commander Edward had arrived in Soraya City, the storm's eye vanished like a wisp of smoke.

"Don't stare too long. It's only my storm avatar."

"My real body is busy containing a demigod. A mere avatar is enough to set up the teleportation array."

Hearing this, Orion quickly withdrew his probing senses and strode forward.

"Deputy Commander, we are very grateful for your arrival!"

Like a subordinate greeting his superior, Orion showed great enthusiasm and a humble demeanor. Vexis and Soraya followed at Orion's side without daring to say a word.

Though only the avatar of a demigod had arrived, Orion still could not gauge the storm avatar's power—meaning this avatar was at least of arch lord level.

"Where do you want the teleportation array built?"

The storm avatar of Deputy Commander Edward was all business. He was here solely to build a teleportation array, and once that was completed, he needed to return to guard the eastern sector.

Orion stepped aside to guide him, leading the Deputy Commander toward a square not far from the Purification Tower.

"You can leave me to it. Once I'm done, I'll let you know."

In a flicker of movement, the storm avatar multiplied across the small square into countless phantoms—some chanting, some inscribing runes, others becoming wind blades slicing through the surrounding void.

This was Orion's first time seeing such an extraordinary display.

"You can go deal with your tasks now!"

Unfortunately, those words did not make Vexis or Soraya budge an inch. There was no way they would miss witnessing an arch lord at work constructing a teleportation array.

In truth, after watching for half a day, Orion and Soraya only found the process fascinating and eye-opening, yet they gained nothing concrete from it. Vexis, on the other hand, watched with keen interest; flashes of clarity lit her eyes from time to time, as though resolving certain doubts.

Two days later, the phantoms on the square vanished one by one, finally reconverging before Orion in the form of the storm avatar.

"It's done. As long as no one deliberately sabotages this teleportation array, it'll be good for three hundred years."

"If there's a problem, remember to find me. Most folks can't fix a teleportation formation that I set up."

The Deputy Commander's tone brimmed with pride. As a demigod level mage, he had the utmost confidence in his mastery of magical formations.

Every teleportation array in the Valkorath Realm was built by his hand, infused with both his personal expertise and a hidden countermeasure for enemies who might invade the Valkorath Realm.

Chapter 494: Legendary level really is only the beginning

"Many thanks, Deputy Commander!"

Orion expressed his gratitude. The construction of the teleportation array would not only benefit Leonidas but also facilitate Orion's communication with several other allies.

"Your progress is impressive. Keep it up, and don't let everyone down."

Edward's storm avatar fixed its gaze on Orion. Runes flickered in its eyes, as though both examining and scanning Orion's body.

"I've noticed a curse within you. With your strength, you should be able to dispel it quite easily."

"Yet you continue suppressing it. Are you planning on devouring a god?"

"How bold—and very interesting!"

Orion merely nodded and smiled, saying nothing in response. While scrutinizing Orion, Deputy Commander Edward had discovered the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms and deduced Orion's intentions.

Sensing Orion's reluctance to discuss the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms further, Deputy Commander Edward glanced once at Soraya and Vexis, then looked away.

"Your Soraya City is newly built, and its defenses are lacking. Allow me to lend you a hand."

Before Orion could inquire further, the storm avatar split into countless phantoms once more, darting toward the arrow towers on the city walls.

Soraya City's walls were lined with many arrow towers, but only a handful on each wall were equipped with mini arrow towers that could launch attacks on their own. Those were the full extent of Orion's accumulated defensive resources.

The Deputy Commander's storm avatar targeted the ordinary arrow towers instead. The phantoms entwined themselves around each tower, inscribing countless magical runes upon their surfaces.

Half a day later, the storm avatar emerged once again, looking out at its handiwork with obvious satisfaction.

"I've etched magical runes on those ordinary arrow towers, and I've also added an elemental absorption magical formation inside them."

"Simply put, those arrow towers are now the most basic form of magic towers. Whenever they encounter enemies, they'll draw wind elements in the air and transform them into wind blades to attack."

"Granted, wind blades aren't as devastating as the attacks from your specialized arrow towers."

"But the most important detail is that your soldiers can still enter those towers and fire their bows and crossbows from within."

Hearing this news, Orion beamed with delight.

"Make sure you're well prepared. The largest wave of slime molds is coming soon."

With that, a storm's eye gathered once again above Soraya City. Deputy Commander Edward's storm avatar became a tornado, swept upward, and vanished from the city in the blink of an eye.

"Lord Orion, I'm returning to the undead tower to absorb death energy!"

Vexis the lich spoke quietly, then bade farewell and headed back to the undead tower.

Soraya followed Orion, and the two made their way into the palace.

Upon the throne, Soraya leaned against Orion's chest.

"It's unbelievable that such a powerful presence was only an avatar."

For Soraya, who had just reached Legendary level, Deputy Commander Edward's appearance—constructing teleportation arrays, inscribing magic towers, summoning storms—was both new and astonishing. She felt as though the world before her eyes was shrouded in endless mist.

Now, through Orion, a portion of that mist had dispersed, revealing a world that made Soraya keenly aware of her own smallness and filled her with a sense of uncertainty.

"So Legendary level really is only the beginning!"

"Arch lord, demigod, even god—those are all realms we can aspire to."

Orion lowered his head and kissed Soraya's neck.

Under Orion's teasing, Soraya gradually grew aroused. She became the one to take the initiative, removing her clothes and straddling Orion's cock. For a while, the palace was filled with the sounds of skin colliding and enchanting moans.

After Orion finished satisfying his desire, Soraya returned to the Nest. She still had a heavy task of hatching ahead.

Soraya City had just sent one million small scorpions to Arthas's front lines. At the moment, that left Soraya City with a rather thin defense. She needed to hatch more small scorpions to prepare for the upcoming wave of slime molds.

Orion slowly closed his eyes, resting while letting his consciousness sink into the Survivor's Platform. He opened the public channel of the Champions Alliance and shared the good news with everyone.

Hulk: "Hey, everyone! With the Deputy Commander's help, the teleportation array in Soraya City is complete."

Hulk: "Leonidas, Alexander, you can send over those subordinates who need purification."

Having sent out the news of the finished teleportation array, Orion hoped his Purification Tower might help everyone soon. Such a tower could benefit allies and earn Orion a fair bit of goodwill, so he was more than happy to accommodate them.

Leonidas: "Hahaha... fantastic! Just wait and see—my people will fill your Purification Tower in no time."

Arthas: "The Purification Tower uses up a huge amount of energy. Don't forget to bring your own supplies!"

Leonidas: "Arthas, do you really have to say that? As if I'm short on resources?"

Arthas: "I'm just reminding you—Hulk advanced too quickly, and he doesn't have much saved up. It wouldn't do for you to drain him."

Leonidas: "Kiss my ass; I don't need your reminders!"

Orion watched Leonidas and Arthas bicker with a smile, as anyone could tell that Arthas was just trying to look out for Orion, worried about any potential losses.

Hulk: "I can't promise too much, but I can at least provide room and board!"

Leonidas: "See? Hulk's a real pal!"

Alexander: "I've also got a group of subordinates who need the Purification Tower. I'll send them over soon."

Hulk: "No problem. I'll take good care of them!"

Just as Orion agreed to help Alexander, Kraken also spoke up.

Kraken: "I've got some subordinates who need purification too!"

Kraken: "Lately, for some reason, the seaweed-like slime molds in the ocean have been spreading spores everywhere. Even incidental contact can lead to parasitic infection."

Hulk: "No problem. But can your people stay out of the water long enough?"

To Orion, that was a real concern regarding Kraken's subordinates. However, Leonidas didn't see it as any issue whatsoever.

Leonidas: "That's easy enough—let Squiddy (Kraken) be first in line for purification!"

Kraken: "I feel like half the ocean is already controlled by these fungal creatures!"

Kraken: "Even if the fungal creatures on land are eradicated, dealing with them underwater will still be a huge headache."

Everyone fell silent at Kraken's words. Even Orion frowned.

On land, things were manageable, thanks to arch lords like Alexander, Leonidas, and Arthas. Their armies were immense, ready to take on any threat.

But as for the ocean, that was trickier. Obviously, Kraken alone could never clear out all the fungal creatures inhabiting the seas—unless Kraken could ascend to arch lord in a short time, which seemed very unlikely.

Just as no one had any immediate solution, the Deputy Commander spoke up.

Chapter 495: He's really dead

Edward: "I've told you before: resisting fungal creatures will become a routine matter."

Edward: "If we manage to raise the realm formation successfully, the fungal creatures' supply lines will be cut off, and we'll enter a protracted phase of clearing out the slime molds."

Edward: "At that point, the fungal creatures in the deep seas will cease to be a threat. Instead, they'll become livestock for us to slaughter—a continually renewable resource."

Deputy Commander paused for a moment, seemingly giving everyone time to absorb that information.

Edward: "However, if the realm formation cannot be successfully completed, forget the deep seas—the continent we occupy will be devoured bit by bit."

Edward: "Then, unless the commander awakens from his slumber, we'll be stuck in a battle of attrition with no end in sight."

Edward: "If no one can hold out, we'll have no choice but to abandon this place and give up the Alliance's base of operations."

Edward: "the core of the realm formation hinges on the World Tree in the central region, guarded by the commander's personal retinue."

Edward: "No matter how viciously the fungal creatures come at us this time, we must hold the line. We cannot allow the slime molds layer to invade the World Tree in the central region."

Deputy Commander Edward's remarks about the realm formation were charged with gravity, rallying every member of the Champions Alliance to unite and resist the slime molds together.

Leonidas: "I'll stand firm to the very end!"

Arthas: "I won't give up!"

Alexander: "I'll kill every last enemy!"

Kraken: "I'll spread my tentacles across every stretch of the deep sea!"

Truly, as Orion watched his allies respond to Deputy Commander Edward, he suddenly sensed that perhaps he, too, should offer some words of his own. And so, Orion issued his own declaration.

Hulk: "Time to go to war!"

Hulk: "WAAAGH!"

...

Blackstone City, underground fissure.

Lilith, Rendall, and Lorelia stood at the edge of a bottomless abyss, peering into the darkness before them.

Moments later, Lorelia's exclamation rang out in delight.

"He's dead! He's really dead!"

Rendall wheeled around, fixing his gaze on Lorelia, clearly impatient.

"Lorelia, who died? Hurry, say it!"

Lorelia looked up, meeting both Lilith's and Rendall's anxious eyes.

"Mistress, Elder Rendall—it's the enemy's will projection that was killed."

"That one... that one..."

Lorelia appeared uncertain of how to address Lumi.

"It was the Warden!"

Lilith guessed Lorelia's difficulty and gave her a hint. Orion had already communicated with Lilith through will projection, informing her that currently there were only two Wardens of the Stoneheart Horde: Soraya and Lumi.

"That Warden simply grabbed and squeezed—then the enemy's will projection was snuffed out."

Through the visual sharing of her cave spiders, Lorelia had witnessed the entire battle. As she recounted the story, she extended her small hand, mimicking Lumi's motion of grasping and squeezing the air, as though she had been the one to finish off the enemy.

Lilith fell silent.

Rendall also remained silent.

A long while later, Lilith spoke softly.

"Arch Elder, with Lumi here, the underworld is perfectly safe."

"Let's head back. Guarding Blackstone City is our real mission."

Rendall nodded and followed quietly behind Lilith. In truth, after learning the underworld was safe, both Lilith and Rendall felt a sudden emptiness once their initial relief had subsided.

"Am I really growing old?"

"Orion's subordinates are advancing to Legendary level one after another—what about me?"

If Orion's lightning-fast progress was considered by Rendall and others as an unrepeatable legend, something that stemmed from the favor of the Titan God and Orion's extraordinary talent, then the fact that Lumi had successfully ascended to Legendary level and appeared at Blackstone City to help them through hard times was an even greater shock to Rendall.

Lumi's advancement felt like a direct message: You're not working hard enough—you've just been surpassed by someone younger.

At least, that was how it seemed on the surface.

Rendall felt a wave of disappointment, as though he had aged overnight.

Lilith, Orion's first wife, understood a similar pressure—both Lumi and Soraya were stronger than she was, and the weight of that realization hit her harder than ever. Fortunately, Lilith was carrying a child; that life she nurtured became the support she could rely on.

"For our child, I have to grow stronger!"

Up on the city walls, Lilith gazed into the darkness beyond, her expression growing resolute.

Farther south, at Stoneheart City.

Delilah, Lilith's twin sister, sensed Lilith's thoughts. In that moment, Delilah too stood on the battlements, watching the warriors battling dark creatures outside the city and the knight Godfrey, who was cutting a path through the monster horde again and again.

"I expected this, but I never imagined it would happen so soon!"

"If Lumi's shown up at Blackstone City, that means she must have returned to the icefield, obtained the Lord's Stone, and ascended to Legendary level."

"So, what about Soraya? Where did Orion take her?"

"The scorpion tribe is hidden in that Golden Pearl desert—staying out of conflicts and following the rules."

Compared to Lilith, Delilah held the real power of daily management for the Stoneheart Horde, and thus she had far broader access to information.

"My dear little sister... Being the Giant King's wife certainly isn't easy!"

"Before, everyone was under pressure because of heirs."

"Now, two Legendary-level women have emerged."

"If they're not after any status, fine. But if they are, your life might get a whole lot tougher."

Delilah's voice was soft, laced with both sarcasm and a wry smile.

Legendary level—so far beyond any Alpha-level. Even with Delilah controlling the reins of Stoneheart Horde, should she be confronted by someone of Legendary level, she would have to step aside. Any scheme or maneuver would appear pitifully feeble before that kind of power.

"A Legendary level... a lord's title..."

If Lilith possessed an inward, quiet resilience, then Delilah embodied an openly assertive boldness.

Aside from Orion, the Stoneheart Horde had now produced two more Legendary-level powerhouses at once. To Delilah, that was a sign of competition. What they could achieve, she believed she could match, too.

Hence, Delilah felt an intense desire to reach Legendary level herself—a dream that eclipsed all else. In the face of that desire, everything else had to yield.

Chapter 496: Kill them all

Valkorath Realm, Bone City.

In the blink of an eye, half a month had passed.

Arthas stood atop the throne, a cryptic emotion brewing in his deep-set eyes.

Just moments ago, Arthas sensed a newly born presence—the aura of an Arch Lord. Unexpectedly, it came from the region where the slime molds' main nest was located.

Arthas let out a quiet sigh and shared this news.

Arthas: "There's a new Arch Lord aura in the northern region!"

Alexander: "That soon? Did that Broodmother recover already and spawn a new Broodmother counterpart?"

Arthas: "It appears so!"

Previously, Alexander heavily injured the slime molds' Broodmother, and no one expected it to recover so quickly.

Leonidas: "I'm baffled. Can the slime molds really produce Arch Lord-level beings that easily?"

Leonidas: "Don't they have to condense a body of faith?"

Edward: "Under normal circumstances, when a Broodmother spawns an Arch Lord counterpart, it has a backup body ready."

Edward: "That slime molds Broodmother probably hasn't fully recovered, but for its own safety, it chose to nurture a new counterpart first."

Edward: "The speed of this new Arch Lord's emergence is likely connected to their control over vast stretches of sea."

Deputy Commander Edward was a Demigod-level being. He was also partly responsible for attracting the slime molds in the first place, so naturally, he knew more.

Leonidas: "We're at a critical juncture. Are we still planning to activate the Realm Formation?"

Edward: "Nothing can stop me from activate the Realm Formation."

Arthas: "We'll need to be on guard. Once the Realm Formation appears, every slime molds Broodmother might leave the main nest."

Alexander: "It's bound to happen sooner or later. You all have been holding back for so long; I'm sure you're itching for a good fight. Let's take them head-on."

Leonidas: "Yeah, fuck them! Kill them all!"

Edward: "We'll raise the Realm Formation within the next two days. No one on the rotation gets any rest—ramp up the offense, give it everything you've got."

Soraya City. With only a minimal garrison left behind, the Stoneheart Horde had all but emptied out. Orion and Vexis led large numbers of small scorpions and undead troops to the front lines, relieving the undead forces stationed there.

Having received advance notice about the imminent activation of the Realm Formation, the entire battlefield was pressing in hard. Not just in the north, but in the other three regions as well, efforts were redoubled these past few days, restricting the fungal creatures' mobility.

The goal was to ensure that once the Realm Formation rose, the battlelines would have more defensive room, slowing any slime mold invasion.

At this critical moment, Orion also received Arthas's instructions.

"If the front lines can't hold, do not force yourselves."

"Fall back to Soraya City; rely on its walls and arrow towers to defend."

"Wait for the right opportunity to cut off the slime molds layer that's invading our rear."

Orion knew perfectly well that if the slime molds launched an all-out attack, the front lines would be forced into a fighting retreat. The defensive area was enormous, and even with masses of skeleton warriors and undead support, not every point could be covered.

For a stronger overall defense, the circle of conflict had to shrink. Shrinking that circle meant fighting and retreating simultaneously.

"I understand."

Orion saw the ongoing discussion among Arthas, Alexander, Leonidas, and the Deputy Commander in the public channel. A newly appeared Arch Lord in the northern region was definitely no good news.

Orion was indeed powerful—capable of holding his own against an Arch Lord—but that didn't mean he would choose a direct confrontation with such a formidable enemy.

This was war: be brave when necessary and never cower, but also never make pointless sacrifices when retreat is the wiser option.

Exiting the Survivor's Platform, Orion refocused on the battlefield, his gaze settling on Gustalon.

At the front lines, under the support of massive black scorpions and scorpion soldiers—stirred up a vast cloud of sandstorms.

Gustalon became a raging wind, concealed within these sandstorms, relentlessly reaping any slime molds mutants caught within.

Ghostlike in his assassination methods, Gustalon posed a tremendous threat to the fungal creatures.

During one of the earlier rotations, five slime molds mutants ambushed him. They nearly succeeded in trapping him on the battlefield. After that painful lesson, Gustalon learned to stay hidden in the sandstorms, never revealing himself easily.

On the battlefield, Gustalon fought more fiercely than ever. Compared to the free-spirited Gustalon who once loved flowers, he seemed like a completely different being now.

Experience, emotion, power, and status—they can all alter someone's temperament. Clearly, Gustalon had been changed by his time in the Valkorath Realm.

Another factor that influenced Gustalon was Soraya.

Lumi's advancement to Legendary rank in Blackstone City fueled Lilith, Delilah, Rendall, Lorelia, and others with motivation.

Meanwhile, Soraya's step into Legendary status had an impact on Gustalon, Onyx, Earthshaker, Gronthar, Dirtclaw, Drakthul, Gormathar, Thunderclaw, and the other central members of the Stoneheart Horde.

Gustalon, being an elemental lifeform, had inherent advantages. Among these Alpha-level beings, he was one of the strongest. Soraya's promotion offered him hope that he too could reach Legendary rank.

"I need battle achievements."

"I need a Lord's Stone."

"As long as I demonstrate loyalty and accumulate enough victories, I can exchange them with Orion for Legendary-level life essence."

"As a child of the wind, I can certainly ascend to Legendary rank."

That was Gustalon's thinking—and the reason he continued his endless slaughter on the battlefield. To him, battle achievements were now one and the same as Legendary-level life essence.

Indeed, Gustalon had caught Orion's attention.

"After this war, it'll be time to grant some territory to Gustalon and Xalathar."

"That would give the Stoneheart Horde two more Wardens."

"With Legendary-level warriors stationed in those territories, I can safely start interrealm wars."

Orion shook off those thoughts and turned his gaze to Onyx, Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Dirtclaw. These Alpha-level fighters had all been personally groomed by Orion.

Without the kind of treatment Soraya received, they couldn't possibly reach Legendary rank in such a short span.

Even Soraya, who needed the advantage of being a Broodmother along with an unlimited supply of life essence from Arch Lord Arthas, struggled to advance.

Meanwhile, Lumi and Gustalon were elemental lifeforms, and Onyx and the others simply couldn't compare to that.

Background, talent, strength... none of it was equal, and such comparisons could be disheartening.

Chapter 497: Death is the fate of the weak

"Orion, my master has given us an order. We should wait for the right moment and act accordingly."

From her position at the rear, Vexis spoke up, fulfilling her responsibilities as an adjutant by reminding Orion.

"Before those slime molds beings start to fight back, let's kill as many of their mutants as we can."

Orion made his intent clear. Right after speaking, he soared into the air and launched an attack on the Alpha-level slime molds mutants he had sensed.

Spears rained down one after another, striking relentlessly. The slaughter of the weak by the strong seemed to require no justification.

Death is the fate of the weak.

This situation, however, endured for less than two hours.

In the area Orion guarded, after a round of carnage, the slime molds broodmother dispatched a Legendary-level fungal creature toward him.

That slime mold dragon was a peak Legendary-level being.

The slime mold dragon emerged from the slime molds layer, its flesh wings covered in fungal growth. Its massive form nearly blocked out the sun.

Then, a roar tore through the sky and earth.

Following that roar, the fallen slime molds mutants unexpectedly rose from the ground, even without any life essence controlling them, and charged at the Stoneheart Horde's troops.

"This is bad—this is the slime mold dragon's ghoul summoning!"

An alarmed cry came from somewhere behind the Stoneheart Horde. It was lich Vexis.

"Orion, we have to kill this slime mold dragon quickly, or it'll compete with me for the corpses."

"When that happens, our troops will be overrun by a large number of ghouls."

Vexis's voice carried a note of urgency. While cautioning Orion, she was already activating the formation for a continuous undead summoning.

Vexis's aim was clear: she intended to convert all the corpses on the battlefield into undead before the slime mold dragon could claim them.

In truth, Orion didn't wait for her reminder—he turned into a bolt of lightning and charged straight at the slime mold dragon.

The slime mold dragon, its head encrusted with slime molds, raised it slightly. A pair of pupil-less eyes locked onto Orion.

Although the slime mold dragon lacked true eyes, the fungal creatures covering it served as its vision.

Whoosh!

A dark green stinger, sharp like a fang, suddenly shot out of the slime mold dragon's mouth, hurtling toward Orion like a cannonball.

This was the creature's bone-spike attack, now enhanced by the fungal creatures to deliver a venomous sting.

One could guess from its dark green sheen that it was laced with deadly poison.

Orion shifted in midair just in time. Triggering Instant Impact, he appeared behind the slime mold dragon's head.

Yet to Orion's surprise, there was another huge maw growing at the rear of the slime mold dragon's head, and it opened wide to attack.

It was clearly modified in some special way to make Orion its prime target.

Splatter!

A large mass of fluid, reminiscent of stomach acid, spewed forth, threatening to melt Orion on the spot with its corrosive fumes.

This was another of the slime mold dragon's attack methods: corrosive breath.

Orion reacted at once, activating Battle Will Surge. Centered on him, a rippling spherical field appeared, isolating the acid-laced fluid in midair, preventing it from reaching him.

Roar!

With another battle cry, Orion pushed Battle Will Surge outward, shifting it from defense to offense. A formless shock wave spread out and slammed into the slime mold dragon.

Because of the energy spent on defense, the attack's power had decreased considerably. Still, it forced the slime mold dragon to stagger and lose altitude, tumbling toward the slime molds layer below.

At the same time, as Battle Will Surge fanned out, it rattled countless slime molds mutants in the layer below.

A moment later, a hidden upper Legendary-level living-flesh undead lurking in the slime molds layer was also exposed by the surge.

The living-flesh undead dashed out of the slime molds layer and rushed swiftly toward the rear lines of the Stoneheart Horde. Its target was lich Vexis, who was presiding over the summoning ritual.

"Damn it!"

Sensing the living-flesh undead closing in, Orion realized the danger. He was about to turn and intercept it when the slime mold dragon, still not fully submerged into the slime molds layer, steadied itself. It raised its head and let out a thunderous howl at Orion.

A black energy began gathering in the slime mold dragon's maw as that roar echoed through the battlefield.

Simultaneously, Orion felt a terrorizing sense of being locked in place.

The surrounding space seemed to close in on him. Even the simplest movement felt sluggish.

It was a paralyzing illusion that left Orion no chance to dodge or flee.

Orion didn't know exactly what ability the slime mold dragon had used, but he knew it was already too late to escape.

Thus, he summoned Battle Will Surge once more. Slowly lifting his trident, he activated Titan Form and charged head-on at the slime mold dragon.

In the next moment, a beam of black energy pierced upward like a column of light, while Orion, like a warrior chasing after the light, dove with his trident poised.

The black beam tore through the air; the trident plummeted downward, crackling and glowing with lightning, blood, and Abyssal energy. They collided in a thunderous exchange of force, again and again.

Soon enough, the entire battlefield was lit up in a chaotic interplay of brilliance and darkness. Under the impact, space itself seemed on the verge of collapse.

When the glow eventually faded and the energy dissipated, the figure left hovering in the air was the Giant King Orion, gripping his trident.

Orion retrieved life essence and some survivor's chest that had dropped. With a single lightning-quick movement, a deafening crack of thunder followed.

When Orion reappeared, he was already behind the living-flesh undead. Driving his trident through its skull, he ended it on the spot.

"Are you all right?"

Orion's voice was somewhat cold from the extreme clash and bloodshed.

"Lord Orion, you arrived just in time. I'm unharmed."

The living-flesh undead had been on par with lich Vexis, holding upper Legendary-level power. Its main objective was not to kill Vexis, but to interrupt her summoning formation and stall her so the slime mold dragon could finish Orion off.

None of them had expected this opportunity would turn into Orion's chance to defeat the slime mold dragon instead.

"Lord Orion, your strength surpasses anything in the usual bounds of the Legendary level."

"In most scenarios, even a peak Legendary-level fighter would be killed outright by the slime mold dragon's Dragon Howl Devourer Wave."

Gazing at Orion, Vexis's eyes gleamed with awe.

Orion was still at peak Legendary level, yet already possessed power on par with an arch lord. Faced with someone like this, Vexis could only show the utmost respect.

"You called that last move Dragon Howl Devourer Wave?"

"Yes, Orion. It was originally a signature attack of the Bone Dragon."

"You seem to know a lot about it. Do you happen to be acquainted with that slime mold dragon?"

Chapter 498: You realized it too late

Vexis nodded, her expression somewhat solemn.

"That slime mold dragon you defeated just now was actually my companion. It used to be a skeletal dragon; when we first came to the Valkorath Realm, we had no experience fighting fungal creatures and it was converted by them."

"That skeletal dragon was once the strongest Legendary level being under my master. For you to slay it means you've already surpassed the Legendary level."

Orion nodded, fully agreeing with Vexis's assessment. That skeletal dragon had indeed been special.

In particular, that move named Dragon Howl Devourer Wave wasn't just a locking attack—it could seal off part of the surrounding space. In the earlier clash, the new skill Orion learned, Battle Will Surge, had performed admirably.

Even so, once Battle Will Surge was broken, the layer of ice armor on Orion was destroyed again. Only when his dragonscale armor emerged did it finally withstand the lingering power of Dragon Howl Devourer Wave.

"Let's keep going!"

Since Vexis was unharmed, the battle had to continue, and there was no one else to substitute for them this time.

Orion turned and flew back to the battlefield above, releasing his senses to search for any possible Legendary level enemies.

Another day and night passed. The slime molds broodmother no longer sent any additional Legendary level combatants into Orion's defensive zone.

At dawn, the night receded.

A trace of orangeish-red light appeared on the horizon, and as time went by, that glow spread across the sky like a curtain.

Sunlight poured down, spanning across the heavens and earth. The temperature rose, and a mist slowly rose up from the ground. Along with it, the massive realm formation in the central region began to ascend.

Rumble!

When the realm formation rose, it sounded like thunder, or a tidal surge, or perhaps a resonance echoing between heaven and earth.

A pillar of light large enough to fill half the sky shot upward. In that vague luminescence, one could just make out the figure of an ancient World Tree standing tall within.

Dense runes shimmered across the pillar of light, and even at a great distance, Orion could feel the surging torrent of arcane energy.

In the next moment, the earth trembled, the sea churned, and colossal waves began rolling in one after another.

Countless magical elements were activated, releasing the dormant power inside that immense magical formation. At daybreak, the Valkorath Realm was bathed in a dazzling glow.

All at once, it felt as though the very air had solidified, and the entire world was briefly sublimated.

Yet at that pivotal moment, two enormous, indistinct figures appeared across the whole sky above.

And then, the booming of thunder roared.

Along with that thunder, golden pulses of light surged out from the central region and rose into the heavens.

Gradually, a faint golden magical formation enveloped the Valkorath Realm completely.

Raising his head, Orion gazed at this awe-inspiring spectacle in a brief moment of daze.

Mysterious energy swirled across the sky. Within the golden magical formation, golden runes gathered, flowing like rivers through the grand cosmos of magic.

Everyone looking up at the sky felt not only astonishment, but also a nameless fear and apprehension.

"The realm formation has been activated!"

"WAAAGH!"

After a soft exclamation, Orion let out a thunderous bellow.

It was the roar of the Giant King, carrying a fearsome intimidation.

The Stoneheart Horde warriors who had gone momentarily blank, and the small scorpions on the front lines, shook themselves back to awareness.

"Kill them all!"

The fighting resumed. The battlefield's slaughter mechanism started turning once more.

At this point, Orion could not afford to dwell on the strange phenomena in the heavens.

High above that endless sky, two colossal figures collided, contending over faith and conversing with one another.

"Realm formation—so that was your plan."

"You realized it too late."

"You revealed this realm to me in hopes of drawing my people inside, trapping them here so that you could turn them into sustenance, continually extracting their life essence."

"Slime molds are notoriously difficult to handle, but the life essence they hold is indeed quite pure."

"That realm formation was not fully established. You're celebrating prematurely."

Beneath those majestic, divine voices was a confrontation of two overwhelmingly powerful existences.

Above the firmament, divine brilliance flashed, runes spiraled, and countless phantasms formed by belief were locked in killing, prayer, and sacrifice...

Down below, the fungal creatures—already beaten back—seemed suddenly to receive some new command.

In an instant, the slime molds layer heaved and surged like a storm-tossed sea, rolling toward the defensive lines. Endless slime molds mutants, like fish and shrimp leaping from churning waters, burst out of the slime molds layer and joined the fray.

Battle escalated at once.

In every direction, fight zones erupted in renewed ferocity.

"Lady Vexis, don't stop the formation summoning!"

Orion's voice rang out from afar. Even though he had brought over a million small scorpions and over a million undead, the fungal creatures' desperate counterattack was starting to wear down the Stoneheart Horde.

To the north, at the slime molds main nest.

At that moment, broodmother Gloob extended her senses. Through the unique fungal neural links, she connected with broodmothers Blobby, Zigzag, and Wobble on the other three fronts.

"Our great Queen has commanded us to launch a full assault and destroy the realm formation core in the center of the continent."

"Hold back the arch lord-level enemies in other areas so that broodmother counterpart can begin its invasion."

"There is a super-tier being in the northern sector. One Vine Splitters unit must assist broodmother counterpart in cutting down the foe."

"..."

Fungal creatures were fully activated at this point, and their information was shared as one.

The entire continent, battered by the raging slime molds layer, was like an island barely above the waves, on the verge of being submerged.

At Bone City, on the ramparts.

Arthas stood at the foremost edge, as immovable as a statue, constantly locking onto the broodmother's presence.

Behind him, a large assembly of necromancers joined forces to cast a massive summoning spell over the area.

At the frontline, black mist began drifting and black rain started to fall.

Wherever that rain touched, all the fallen small scorpions and fungal creatures rose once again, returning to the battle.

To the south, atop a mountain peak.

Leonidas stood at the summit, gazing toward the horizon with deep, unblinking eyes.

From within the mountains, countless beasts thundered forth: those running on land, those burrowing into the earth, and those soaring through the skies. The roars of creatures of all sizes echoed, shaking the land, trampling countless slime molds mutants to death.

Within the beast horde, the skeleton general Rumbold—familiar to Orion—raised his sword again and again, converting the fallen beasts into undead minions to keep them in the fight.

Similar scenes played out in both the west and the east.

Back at the frontline, even Orion had joined in hunting down the slime molds mutants.

In only a brief moment, the numbers of Alpha-level slime molds mutants that emerged from the slime molds layer were several times that of Orion's forces.

His subordinates were forced into a defensive posture almost immediately.

Chapter 499: Retreat

In an instant, the battle surged into a fever pitch.

Amid this war of nothing but slaughter and death, Vexis's urgent voice sounded in Orion's ear.

"Lord Orion, my master has already issued a retreat order. When should we leave this place?"

Zzzzzt!

The trident in Orion's hand swept through the air in a semicircle. Lightning power erupted, clearing out the slime molds layer within a radius of about 2,000 ft.

Vexis's reminder had definitely reached Orion's ears. However, in these circumstances, there was no way to retreat in an orderly manner.

"Have the undead hold the line in front. Let the horde's bloodline warriors and the small scorpions retreat first."

"As you command!"

On the battlefield, Onyx and Earthshaker stuck together, watching each other's backs.

Suddenly, the distinctive horn of the Stoneheart Horde sounded. At the same time, the lich Vexis's voice announcing the retreat reached their ears.

Onyx raised his great axe high, cleaving the skull of a nearby Alpha-level slime molds skeleton in two.

With a single gesture, Onyx pulled the life essence into his palm.

"Little Bull, get ready to fall back!"

Only after finishing this sequence of attacks did Onyx shout at Earthshaker, who was still locked in combat with a four-legged beast.

Earthshaker's Blood Sharing was linked with Onyx, Gronthar, Dirtclaw, and the others, making him fight like a mad bull charging into the mutated slime molds. His body was frequently injured in battle.

Earthshaker pushed himself hard, eager to reach the Alpha-level peak. He believed that once he attained that rank, his master—the Giant King and lord of the Stoneheart Horde—would surely help him advance to the Legendary level he dreamed of.

He trusted that his master would make his dream come true.

"Moo!"

In a frenzied bull-like state, Earthshaker forcibly suppressed the raging killing intent in his heart. He swung the totem pole replica in his hands, knocking aside the surrounding slime molds mutants. He quickly joined Onyx's side.

Riding on his Dark Armored Beetle, Onyx charged forward to clear a path while Earthshaker covered the rear. In no time, they both withdrew from the front lines.

Elsewhere, Gronthar and Dirtclaw also received the signal.

Dirtclaw transformed into a Hellhound, biting down on a slime molds parasitic creature that resembled a brown bear. He tried to crush its skull.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The sound of bones shattering rang out. The bear-like slime molds parasitic creature's head was destroyed, and it died on the spot.

Dirtclaw swallowed the creature's life essence in a single gulp.

In truth, Dirtclaw had his own little scheme. Life essence devoured on the battlefield wouldn't have to be turned over to the horde. Desperate to grow stronger—desperate to become a Legendary-level being—he was willing to do whatever it took.

"Dirtclaw, let's retreat. If we don't leave now, the mutated slime molds will surround us."

Gronthar's voice echoed nearby. Dirtclaw let out a howl, then bounded over to Gronthar in just a few leaps.

"Hurry, hop on my back!"

Gronthar, without quibbling, did exactly as he was used to doing in these joint maneuvers. He was well-practiced at this.

The massive figure of Gronthar leapt onto the Hellhound's back and raised his huge axe against the surrounding slime molds mutants.

Even carrying a rider larger than himself, Hellhound-form Dirtclaw seemed unburdened. His four limbs gripped the ground, then he pushed off with force, racing toward the rear of the battlefield.

Not far away, Drakthul, Gormathar, and others also began to retreat.

Orion scanned the battlefield, keeping an eye on each of his important subordinates. Only when all of his Alpha-level followers had left the front lines did he finally exhale in relief.

"Wait, someone's missing!"

"Where's Gustalon?"

Orion's face darkened. The subordinate who should have had the easiest time retreating was nowhere to be found.

He released his senses. Before long, Orion pinpointed Gustalon's presence within a stretch of slime molds layer.

Gustalon was trapped. He had been greedy for credit, hunting down a parasitic creature in an attempt to secure more life essence, only for other slime molds parasitic creatures to swarm in and surround him.

Turning into a bolt of lightning, Orion hurled himself into the slime molds layer where Gustalon was trapped.

Zzzzzt!

A burst of electricity crackled, and the slime molds layer exploded. Orion held several strands of Alpha-level life essence in hand, rescuing Gustalon.

"Withdraw immediately!"

"You go first—hurry back and tell Soraya to activate the city's defenses. Prepare for a siege."

Narrowly escaping death, Gustalon gratefully looked towards Orion, then turned himself into a tornado-like gust of wind and swept away into the distance.

The fighting was fierce, and the retreat was rushed. The situation kept shifting, and the battlefield was shrinking bit by bit.

Soaring into the air, Orion surveyed the entire battlefield. The scale of the conflict here was enormous, and it was brutally merciless. Killing and sacrifice took place every second.

Right then, several vines lashed out of the slime molds layer, shooting toward Orion.

"Vine Splitters!"

These were beings at the peak of Legendary level. Transcendent power surged through Orion's body. He rapidly formed an Eightfold Spear Barrage and hurled it at the incoming vines.

But even as Orion fought off the Vine Splitters above, more vines shot up from directly below, whipping toward him from the slime molds layer.

Orion did not flinch. Triggering his Battle Will Surge, he formed a spherical wave barrier around himself, blocking the strikes.

Crack! Crack!

The vines slammed against the wave barrier, popping and snapping like lightning strikes against glass.

"Lord Orion, we must retreat! We can't fight here for long."

Orion had been itching to test his mettle against the Vine Splitters, but Vexis's reminder stopped him.

He hesitated a moment, glanced at the attacking Vine Splitters, then resolutely turned into lightning, withdrawing to the rear of the battlefield.

Only after putting significant distance between himself and the slime molds layer did Orion shake off that feeling of being targeted by a hunter.

"Lord Orion, the realm formation has been activated. Who knows what major changes it might bring?"

"For now, it's best to rely on Soraya City's defensive systems to stabilize the situation."

"And we should continue hatching those small scorpions without delay."

Orion nodded. Under these circumstances, it was difficult to rely on Arthas or any other allies. The arch lords of the Champions Alliance were almost certainly occupied defending against the slime molds broodmother emerging from the main nest.

Thus, Orion could depend only on himself, along with Soraya City and the scorpion tribe incessantly spawning small scorpions.

"Let's go!"

Vexis nodded. Controlling the remaining skeleton warriors and undead scorpions, she directed a fighting retreat.

Orion guarded Vexis closely, preventing the fungal creatures from mounting a deadly ambush against her.

Boom! Rumble!

In that moment, thunder rolled across the sky. Jagged forks of lightning streaked overhead like the sky's own branching veins, flashing repeatedly.

Then came a violent upheaval of heaven and earth. Two towering silhouettes, outside the realm formation, seemed to clash once more in a mighty, cataclysmic struggle.

Chapter 500: Dying is no big deal

It felt like the end of the world—an apocalyptic scene of collapsing skies and crumbling earth. The frenzied advance of the slime molds swept through Soraya City like a massive tidal wave, filling the air with a pervasive sense of dread.

At this very moment, Orion was standing on the city wall, flanked by Vexis on one side and Soraya on the other.

"For us, this city is the final barrier—our strongest line of defense."

The one speaking was Soraya. Wherever her gaze fell, whether on the city walls or deep beneath the ground outside, her small scorpions were packed in dense formations. Facing the onslaught of the slime molds layer, which surged like a roaring tide, even her voice quivered slightly. This kind of colossal battle was something she had never witnessed before.

"Head back to the Nest. That's where you truly belong in this fight. As long as the small scorpions aren't wiped out, you and Vexis will remain our greatest hope."

Orion spoke calmly, exuding a quiet confidence. The wave of slime molds layer, sweeping in like a tsunami, seemed no different from any ordinary foe as far as he was concerned. That assessment wasn't far from reality.

From the moment Deputy Commander Edward decided to raise the realm formation, the Champions Alliance had expected this kind of conflict.

Demigod-level enemies would be held off by the Deputy Commander; several arch lords would occupy the slime molds broodmother.

That left only the broodmother counterpart as a threat to Orion—and even then, with Arthas already engaged at the front, the broodmother counterpart wouldn't necessarily be able to target Orion.

"Orion is right. Ensuring our troops keep pouring into the battle line is the only way to maintain our advantage in defending the city."

Lich Vexis, who had seen her share of massive battles, spoke with steady composure. What was more, she had already created another clone. For Vexis, death was hardly a terrifying prospect.

"I understand!"

In this crucial moment, Soraya managed to remain calm as well. After replying, she whipped away in a gust of sand and disappeared back into the sand scorpions' main nest.

"I'm placing command of Soraya City in your hands for now. With Soraya City's secret technique barrier, even an Arch Lord might have trouble killing you instantly.

"My request is that you stabilize the situation and keep summoning undead beings. Can you manage that?"

As Soraya returned to the main nest, Orion turned his back to Vexis, issuing final instructions.

"Lord Orion, rest assured. I've been through fights of this scale."

Orion did not add anything more. Instead, he fixed his gaze on the approaching slime molds layer, an ever-intensifying resolve flickering in his eyes.

Just then, meteors suddenly appeared beyond the runic barrier overhead. Countless flaming meteors rained down like divine punishment, crashing again and again onto the realm formation.

Within that formation, the runes shone like stars, illuminating Valkorath Realm. Colors interlaced and spread, making the entire realm look like something out of a dream.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A deep, bone-shaking rumble resounded as the meteors slammed into the realm formation's outer shell, causing the protective layer around Valkorath Realm to tremble violently.

However, the barrier did not shatter. It blocked every single meteor, keeping them at bay in outer space. Valkorath Realm, on the whole, remained intact.

But back in Soraya City, the battle had already ignited.

"For the horde—fight, fight!"

"For life essence—move out!"

"They can't scare us!"

"Brothers, I'm going to hang their heads on Soraya City's walls!"

"..."

Atop the battlements, no one was shouting louder than Dirtclaw, who had transformed into a Hellhound. Standing on the wall was like being on his home turf, and his wolf-like howling inspired confidence in his companions.

"Hahaha... This feels just like facing dark creatures back in Blackstone City!"

Onyx let out a hearty laugh, catching the attention of Earthshaker, Gronthar, Drakthul, and the others.

"From where I stand, these fungal creatures are just an upgraded version of dark creatures—nothing to fear. Besides, even if we die on a battlefield like this, that would be an honor."

Dying in combat was not something that filled them with despair. To them, it was a source of pride.

"The prophet speaks true. Dying is no big deal!"

Earthshaker raised his totem pole high, a fierce resolve surging within him. Living with the possibility of death was the path they had chosen.

"Giants have never feared battle!"

The giant Drakthul shouted too. As a member of the Giant Tribe, he could never afford to shame Orion, the king of the giants, by shrinking from combat.

Clack, clack, clack!

That was the sound of skeleton warriors lifting their weapons.

Ah-haha!

That strange noise came from zombies, their rotting throats twitching.

Ssshhh!

That was the echo of countless small scorpions swishing their tails in unison, an eerie hiss that heralded death.

Then came the roaring collision of the slime molds layer crashing in. The city's grand defensive fight had begun.

Orion soared into the sky, surveying the battlefield from above. In a short time, wars had broken out along all four walls of Soraya City. The sprawling slime molds layer wasn't letting the city's barriers deter it from pushing deeper into the central region.

Looking upward, Orion couldn't hide the flicker of concern passing through his eyes. The commander's elite guard was said to be defending the central region, rumored to be unbelievably strong.

Even so, letting so many slime molds breach those areas could overwhelm them.

Before he could finish this thought, bolts and wind blades flying at the city walls demanded his immediate attention.

As a horde of slime molds mutants burst from the layer, arrow towers bristling on the battlements opened fire on their own. The hiss of bolts piercing flesh, the shriek of wind blades slicing into the mutant slime molds, and the blasts of explosions piled up into a cacophony that drowned out even the bloodline warriors' war cries.

Wielding a trident and carrying a quiver of spears on his back, Orion scanned for any Legendary-level slime molds mutants. Occasionally, he hurled a spear to rescue comrades in peril. The city's defense had fallen into a tense stalemate—and an endurance test for everyone involved.

Meanwhile, in the bottomless abyss of the underworld, nearly a million Dark Worms had been slaughtered over the span of half a month, with Lumi taking part. The underworld was now engulfed in a heavy stench of blood and death.

Though the cross-realm teleportation array remained defended, Clymene and the others had fallen into a peculiar situation. Before, Grendel had been seriously injured, his soul fire nearly extinguished. Clymene, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona had all delved into Grendel's body, trying to use their own soul flames to bring him back from the brink.

Now, Grendel's soul fire was significantly stronger, but he and his six rescuers—Clymene, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona—still had not awakened.

"They've fallen into a strange condition. I'm not sure when they'll wake up."

Lumi cast a glance over everyone and calmly explained her findings. To be honest, Lumi wasn't entirely sure herself who she was speaking to. None of the Stoneheart Horde members present were people she knew well.

Still, she spoke those words more as a gesture of comfort than anything else.