

## **Titan King 521**

Chapter 521: Your gift is very precious

"This counts as a gift, a token between friends!"

Orion, worried that Scarecrow might not accept, made a special point of clarifying.

After Scarecrow confirmed the transaction, he sent his reply.

"Your gift is very precious. I really like it!"

"You bought so many seed. Will you still need to purchase food in the future?"

As a friend, Scarecrow had concerns and didn't hold back, asking directly.

"Yes, definitely. There's a huge shortage."

"The reason I'm buying seed is because the food deficit is too large."

"..."

Scarecrow responded to Orion with a string of ellipses.

"Do you have a lot of food over there?"

Orion tentatively asked this question because he wanted Scarecrow to serve as a transit hub to acquire more food for him.

Scarecrow immediately grasped Orion's intention.

"You want me to help you buy food from others?"

"Yes!"

Orion was straightforward and admitted it right away.

"That's possible, but the price will be 30% higher than what I personally sell you."

"Really? It can actually be purchased?"

Orion was stunned; he hadn't expected this spur-of-the-moment idea to truly yield food.

In fact, Scarecrow had already encountered thoughts like Orion's before, but other people simply couldn't accept that price.

Especially when buying large quantities of food, an increase of 30% is a colossal figure.

"Can you handle the price?"

"Yes!"

"Do you have a limit on quantity?"

"No, the more the better!"

"All right, then you just wait. Once there's any news, I'll directly initiate a delayed trade with you."

"Great, thanks a lot!"

This really was an unexpected gain!

Food had become a major headache for Orion. Without anyone's support, the two million small scorpions hatched by Soraya consumed a practically immeasurable quantity of food.

Being able to purchase food from Scarecrow made Orion very excited.

As for whether it was overpriced, Orion didn't think so. In his view, if Scarecrow was helping him buy food, the price couldn't possibly stay the same. It could go up or down.

Scarecrow would earn some profit from it; Orion believed that was only fair.

Finishing the pleasant conversation with Scarecrow, Orion turned his attention to Aerin.

If Orion remembered correctly, Aerin had mentioned she was a Wood Elf.

Since she was an Elf, she'd surely be good at restoring soil fertility and collecting seed.

"Elf Aerin, it's time for you to show what you can do!"

In order to advance to Alpha-level, Aerin had signed quite a few agreements with Orion.

One of them stated that, as long as it was within her power, she would help Orion unconditionally.

"What do you want from me this time?"

Orion lifted the corners of his mouth slightly, speaking in a calm tone.

"This time, I want something quite simple. I need a reasonably practical way to improve soil quality."

"I also need a large number of plant seed—any type will do."

"As a Wood Elf, this should be easy for you, right?"

Orion waited in vain for a response; Aerin fell into silence.

In an unknown realm, the Forest of Nature.

Inside a newly built, massive treehouse, Aerin was deep in thought.

Aerin was no fool. She naturally had her own ideas about Orion's request.

Having dealt with Orion for so long, she had her own judgment of everything he said and did.

"Improve soil quality... plant seed..."

"Could it be that the world where Hulk is located is a wasteland? No food, no fruits, and he's missing all the basic supplies?"

Aerin's beautiful eyes grew brighter. In that moment, she felt she had found Orion's weak spot.

"Hulk needs food and magical plants, but I sure don't lack those!"

"Aerin, you must use this opportunity to gain as much profit as possible."

However, just as Aerin was imagining how to exchange these items with Orion for more resources, a message from Orion arrived.

"I've recently gotten hold of some resources for advancing to Legendary level. If you want to remain at Alpha-level forever, then by all means, refuse my request."

Crack!

The moment she saw this message, Aerin's eyes widened.

"Oh my god, sweet, what do you want?"

"Pardon me, could you say that again? I got so excited when you contacted me that I completely forgot what you just said."

In the Valkorath Realm, Soraya City, upon the throne.

A slight look of satisfaction appeared on Orion's face.

"I've recently come into possession of a stretch of dead lands—there's nothing there at all."

"I need a method to restore vitality to the soil, and also a lot of seed."

"I recall you once telling me that Wood Elves have a special habit of collecting plant seed."

"Furthermore, now that you've advanced to Alpha-level, let me see your newly developed alchemical potions. As I recall, I have the first right of purchase."

Honestly, on the other end, Aerin felt a bit aggrieved. She realized that Orion basically knew all about her good stuff, except for the precise shape of her vagina.

"Hulk, can you describe your soil's looseness, fertility, acidity, and alkalinity levels?"

"Different soil conditions need different improvement methods!"

Aerin's reply was swift, but Orion couldn't respond.

"I already told you—it's dead lands, absolutely nothing there."

"A piece of soil transformed by deathly energy!"

Orion simply tossed the question back to her.

On the other side, when Aerin saw Orion's first statement, she almost jumped out of her seat. Not until reading the second sentence did she finally come to her senses.



"So it really is dead lands!"

"That's actually easier. Starting from scratch is a breeze."

"I'll recommend a plan for you to try first. If it doesn't work, we'll think of something else."

Aerin got straight to the point this time.

"Step one: Spread a large amount of red poisonous mushrooms. These mushrooms are inedible and highly toxic."

"But they're extremely resilient. They can convert any energy for their own use and loosen the soil."

Orion nodded, finding Aerin's idea promising.

"Step two: Once the soil is softened, plant Hawkweed Grass."

"With the red poisonous mushrooms as a foundation, Hawkweed Grass can survive. It's basically a type of dandelion and has no real use."

"But it spreads quickly, has a short life cycle, dies just as fast, and when it rots, it can rapidly improve soil quality."

By now, Orion was quite interested.

"Step three is to raise Lantern Bugs—a type of faerie insect."

"Besides providing light, Lantern Bugs can gather trace amounts of magical energy and release them, improving air quality."

"I highly recommend them, because with these creatures around, the night will no longer be dark."

Chapter 522: Do you want a boy or a girl?

"What a beautiful place!"

A gentle breeze fills the air, drifting across the silent land. Gustalon looks out at the terrain before him, a deep and genuine love welling up from within.

This is Gustalon's territory, located east of Soraya City, on the far eastern edge of the Moonveil Plains.

Three days ago, Orion awarded Gustalon this piece of land in front of everyone, and bestowed upon him a Legendary-level life essence.

By all rights, Gustalon's battle achievements alone did not merit receiving such a resource. But Gustalon was smart: he offered up all the extra Alpha-level resources he possessed, gathering enough battle achievements to secure it.

"Orion was right. There's no such thing as true freedom under the heavens," Gustalon murmured. "But here in my own territory, I can be absolutely free!"

Pursuing freedom has always been Gustalon's dream. In the past, he thought freedom was everywhere. Now he realizes that only the freedom you can hold in your hands is genuine.

Whoosh!

Overjoyed, Gustalon lets out a breath and scatters the red poisonous mushrooms and hawkweed grasseed he had been holding. At the same time he was granted this territory, Gustalon also received an assignment to plant seeds. It's exactly the kind of thing he enjoys doing.

"Maybe next year... or maybe it'll only take three months... and plants will start to grow here."

"This is my territory. I want to plant countless flowers here. When they bloom, I'll summon the breeze, carrying petals on the wind—carrying their sweet fragrance..."

...

Meanwhile, in the main plaza of Soraya City, all five major armies that Orion brought—except for the undead and small scorpions still stationed on the front lines—are gathered.

On the high platform flies the banner of the Stoneheart Horde. It bears the depiction of a giant's silhouette. Standing beneath it, Orion surveys the five armies.

Compared to when they first arrived in the Valkorath Realm, each army is down more than 30% of its original force. However, the remaining bloodline warriors are all battle-hardened elites, brimming with morale from their experiences on the field.

In the recent battles against the fungal creatures, many bloodline warriors jumped an entire rank, achieving significant growth.

"I know you've all gained a great deal and can't wait to share it with your families and friends," Orion says. "But I must remind everyone that the Horde's regulations are strict. Anything involving core secrets is off-limits in conversation."

"Now, let's go home and rotate in the next group of our people!"

Before tearing open a large teleportation scroll, Orion again cautions his soldiers.

...

Blackstone City is in a joyous mood. Spring rains have already fallen, and the Stoneheart Horde has safely passed another year. Whether in the inner city or the outer city, sunlit skies and lively spirits prevail.

People who spent the entire winter cooped up inside under curfew are now free to leave their homes and feel the warmth of spring.

In the military camp, Rendall, waiting for his unit to assemble for a hunting expedition, suddenly senses something.

"Follow the plan and wait for me outside the city. I'll be there shortly."

In the blink of an eye, Rendall hurries toward the Moonshadow Valley. By the time he arrives, Lilith, Lorelia, and Rayden are already there, all gathered around Orion and his group.

"Lord, you have returned!" Rendall calls, finally letting the worry in his heart melt away.

"Arch Elder!"

"Rendall, long time no see!"

"...!"

Before Orion can speak, Onyx, Earthshaker, Dirtclaw, and the others—who are well-acquainted with Rendall—come forward, greeting him all at once.

Their time in the Valkorath Realm was spent in constant battles, leaving little chance for relaxation. Now back in Blackstone City, seeing old friends fires them up. They can't wait to find someone they know and pour out their stories.

"You guys..." Rendall says wide-eyed, clearly astonished by the aura Onyx, Earthshaker, Dirtclaw, and the others are emitting.

Evidently, he is stunned by how powerful they've become. Even Gronthar, the weakest among them, has already reached mid-Alpha strength. More importantly, Rendall detects an entire group of unfamiliar Alpha-level fighters behind them.

Apart from the newly advanced Taran, Brontes, Steropes, Erythros, Thalion, and Torvald, Orion has brought back ten Alpha-level scorpion soldiers, to be stationed at Blackstone City and Stoneheart City for emergencies.

With more of the Horde's upper ranks rotating to the Valkorath Realm to gain experience, the Horde will inevitably face a shortage of capable leaders.

"Take three days off, then report to your respective camps!" Orion commands, then, ignoring Rendall and the others, slips an arm around Lilith's shoulder and heads toward the Horde Hall.

Inside the inner keep, in the main bedchamber, Orion and Lilith lie together in the aftermath of an intense lovemaking session. Orion's large hand caresses her belly with gentle strokes.

"You were really going for it just now. Weren't you worried about hurting the little one with those big movements?"

In fact, the moment Orion teleported to Moonshadow Valley, he sensed the child growing inside Lilith. It was something he could feel through his bloodline—a feeling entirely new and both close yet unfamiliar.

Upon seeing Lilith's rounded belly, Orion realized just how strong his emotions were. He was excited, but also nervous.

For an instant, he wanted to wrap Lilith in cotton wool, terrified she might catch some injury or illness. He'd never felt this way, even when Violet was pregnant.

"I can tell that this little one still has a long way to go before it's born," says Lilith, her cheeks still flushed from their lovemaking. She rests a hand on her belly as well, her eyes brimming with hope. "Honey, do you want a boy or a girl?"

Orion smiles faintly, without answering. In truth, the moment he sensed that bloodline, he already knew the child's gender.

"It's a boy. So I'm going to have a son?" Orion ponders silently. Without realizing it, he has developed another deep bond in this new world.

Outside, in the city's outer districts, roads crisscross and crowds bustle. While there aren't street vendors on every corner, there are plenty of playful younglings.

Giant children, succubus children, gnoll pups, troll youths, bearmen cubs, buffalofolk kids... this diverse mix of younglings creates a different kind of vibrant clamor in Blackstone City.

Chapter 523: Who would be next?

This day was destined to be eventful.

Many imposing and powerful bloodline warriors emerged from the inner city. Among them were the brothers Steropes and Brontes. Both of them were Thunderstorm Bearmen who were no longer slaves in cannon fodder troops, but now members of the Stoneheart Horde council.

"It's been so long since we came home. The outer city has changed a lot!"

It was Brontes who spoke. He still remembered the first time they showed up in the outer city of Blackstone City to visit his sister-in-law and nephew. Back then, they were all huddled in a simple shack. A few years had passed since then, and the outer city had been rebuilt. The old shanties were gone, replaced by rows of sturdy homes made of large wooden beams and stone.

"It's definitely changed a lot!"



"The streets weren't nearly this busy back then!"

Steropes looked at the youngling playing around with wooden weapons near the street corner. It made him miss his own family even more.

Bang, bang, bang!

Steropes and Brontes soon arrived at the door to their home and knocked firmly. This time, no one stood behind the door, cautious and wary. Of course, there was also no immediate response.

Before long, the door creaked open. A little bear cub poked his head out, taking a good look at Steropes and Brontes. With a whoosh, the little head shrank back inside.

"Mom, the guys outside look real familiar!"

Outside, hearing that soft, childish voice, Steropes and Brontes exchanged glances and then burst into hearty laughter.

"Steropes, your younger son doesn't even recognize us anymore!"

A short while later, a Bearwoman wearing a fur apron stepped out. The moment she saw Steropes and Brontes still chuckling, she let out a loud cry of delight.

"Oh my god, you're back!"

Steropes and Brontes entered the house. Steropes scooped up the bear cub following behind the Bearwoman and said seriously, "Take a good look. I'm your father, and this is your uncle!"

"..."

After that, the family spent a cheerful time together. The Bearwoman brought out what food and meat they had, preparing a big meal. Not long after, Vulkan, who had been out playing, returned home. Upon seeing his father, he could hardly contain his excitement.

Brontes patted Vulkan on the shoulder and said to Steropes, "Vulkan has grown stronger. It's time we taught him a few skills."

"In two more years, let him try out for the youth camp. That's where he really needs to be."

Steropes nodded in agreement. This was precisely why he had come back. Now that the two brothers had advanced to Alpha-level, they had access to far broader experiences and resources in the horde. Naturally, they didn't want their next generation to live in mediocrity.

That night, after making love with his wife, Steropes spoke quietly with her in their room.

"Honey, now that Brontes is back, maybe we should think of finding him a good match."

"All right, but Brontes is on the council now. It wouldn't be suitable for him to marry a Bearwoman of low status and weak bloodline."

"Right... I almost forgot, Brontes is an elder now."

"I'll look for a chance to visit the Dirtclaw family in a couple of days. He's close with the Elder of Stewardship. Maybe through that elder's connections, we can find a suitable woman for Brontes in the horde."

"That sounds good!"

"..."

Elsewhere in the outer city, and in stark contrast to Steropes, Dirtclaw was living far more indulgently. He spent the entire night in a den of women. Although he could get erect repeatedly, his staying power left much to be desired. Each time they had sex, he lasted at most three minutes before finishing.

Strangely enough, this was also something of an advantage for Dirtclaw. After all, he had nearly a hundred female gnoll lovers. He kept himself busy throughout the night and managed to have sex with them all, leaving his semen in every one of them.

The next morning, Dirtclaw gathered all the offspring who remained in Blackstone City with an unhappy expression on his face. Among his hundred-plus descendants, not a single one met his standards.

In other words, none of them had real talent. This troubled Dirtclaw deeply. He was now a noble Hellhound, yet not one of his offspring showed a superior bloodline. It was something he simply couldn't accept.

"Sigh, forget it. I'll wait until I'm back in Stoneheart City. My concubines there have also given birth to some youngling. Maybe I'll have better luck."

Meanwhile, in the inner city, Rendall had been unable to sleep the night before. So he went looking for Onyx.

Rockwell had gone to Thunderwood Forest, and with the dark beast tides subsiding, he was hurrying back to Blackstone City. While Rockwell was away, Onyx had no one to confide in. So the two of them stayed up the entire night chatting.

"Soraya actually became a Legendary level being?"

Hearing this from Onyx, Rendall was so astonished he halted mid-drink, his goblet nearly slipping from his grasp. It was hard to believe. The horde had recently gained two legendary-level powerhouses—Lumi first, and then Soraya. So who would be next?

"Arch Elder, the look of surprise on your face tells me you're not content with this."

Onyx stretched out a finger and pointed it at Rendall's chest.

"Arch Elder, if you don't make progress, you'll fall behind. People will forget you bit by bit. Don't you want to see the day our Stoneheart Horde becomes the ruler of this world—witness it for yourself?"

By this time, Onyx's strength was already approaching the peak of Alpha-level. He believed it wouldn't be long before he qualified to push for Legendary level, becoming the strongest obsidian golem ever recorded in their lineage.

Onyx was as ambitious as he was focused. The confidence in his words carried tremendous weight, stirring those who listened.

Rendall eyed Onyx—a being who had reached Alpha-level later than him, yet was now pulling ahead. An emotion called unwillingness surfaced in Rendall's heart, making him feel stifled.

"Arch Elder, the Stoneheart Horde isn't just Blackstone City. There's also Stoneheart City, Soraya City, Buffalofolk City, Obsidian City, Delilah City, Lilith City..."

"In the future, there might be Lumi City, Gnoll City, Stormrage City..."

Onyx, being a longtime friend, genuinely did not want to see Rendall slip into a retired, complacent life. With Orion—wise and grand—in charge, Onyx felt they should strive to make the most of their potential before time ran out, to fight and climb to greater power.

There was only so much he could say. Watching Rendall lapse into thought, Onyx closed his own eyes, slowly entering a state of cultivation.

In Valkorath Realm, Onyx had gained a substantial amount of life essence. His plan was to use his rotation period to consume that resource, further advancing his power.

That way, Onyx could devote himself fully to battles for the horde, earning enough battle achievements to exchange for Legendary level resources.

...

Around midday, Orion emerged from the Horde Hall accompanied by Lilith.

The Legendary level aura of Orion flickered momentarily across Blackstone City, causing everyone to salute in the direction of the Horde Hall.

(\*Orion possesses the strength of an arch lord, but his current level remains at the Legendary level\*)

Ascending the city walls, Orion cast his gaze over the citizens of Blackstone City as he inspected and surveyed the entire area.

Chapter 524: No treasure matters more than embracing you

"Have the Blackstone Code and Stoneheart Coins taken root in Blackstone City?"

As Orion felt the faith energy gathering around him, he began to concern himself with the horde's daily affairs.

"Every morning, a dedicated team explains the Code in the main square of Blackstone City, then they share the heroic deeds within the horde," Lilith said, summarizing the key points. "The Code is spreading by word of mouth from the inner city to the outskirts, and everyone is becoming more orderly."

"As for Stoneheart Coins, all trades in Blackstone City are now handled entirely in them."

Orion nodded. Some things couldn't just be talked about casually, nor accomplished in a single day; it would take a gradual, step-by-step transformation.

"To build a faction, the three most vital elements are faith, medicine, and the law," Orion said. "Faith governs the soul, medicine heals the body, and law structures society. I will create a faith of our own, the horde will develop more sorceries and potions, and all of you will enforce the Code at the highest level. The Stoneheart Horde still has a long road ahead. The fire of civilization needs a constant supply of new fuel!"

For reasons he couldn't quite pinpoint, Orion found himself talking more than usual—almost rambling.

Deep down, he wanted the Stoneheart Horde to flourish. Perhaps, after learning he had a son, Orion felt driven to create a better world to live in.

Traveling onward, Orion and Lilith chatted without reserve. Only when they reached the underground fissure did Orion finally fall silent.

"Master, Lorelia has missed you so much!"

Orion held out a finger to stop Lorelia from throwing herself into his arms, then gently flicked her forehead.

"You've grown up. You're the queen of the cave-spider race—carry yourself with dignity."

Pulling his hand back, Orion noticed Lorelia's slightly aggrieved expression and tossed her a storage pouch. It contained a large supply of life essence.

"In defending the teleportation array, we lost many of our smaller spiders. The cave-spider clan is badly understrength as a result."

Lorelia received the pouch and immediately began examining its contents. Seeing her busy, Orion decided not to disturb her any longer. With the life essences in hand, she would have her hands full in the coming days.

Orion continued on and led Lilith toward the bottomless abyss.



"I'm going down to take a look. Head back first," he said.

Arriving at the edge of the bottomless abyss, Orion glanced at the darkness before him, then leaped into it.

The underworld remained calm and intact. Even so, small scorpions guarded the cross-realm teleportation array in a tight formation. Perched atop the arrow tower, Lumi resembled a statuesque ice goddess, standing firm. Unfortunately, Clymene and the others had yet to awaken.

Suddenly, Lumi turned her head toward the passage, sensing a familiar presence.

An hour later, amid rumbling thunder, Orion appeared at Lumi's side.

"My lord!"

"It's Orion!"

"..."

The giants who had become Skeletal Knights looked on from around them, cheering when they spotted Orion beside Lumi.

"You've all worked hard!"

Orion raised his right hand, calming the excited crowd.

"And you've been working hard, too," he said, pulling Lumi into an embrace.

Lumi looked up, her voice as beautiful as ever.

"What kind of world lies beyond that teleportation array? It looks like you've grown even stronger!"

Orion studied the array carefully, saw nothing amiss, then answered Lumi.

"This cross-realm teleportation array leads to the Emerald Dream Realm, the place where those dark creatures live. Are you that curious about the Emerald Dream Realm?"

Lumi never lied; she nodded lightly in acknowledgment.

"You'll get your chance soon enough!"

With that, Orion released Lumi, jumped down from the arrow tower, and headed to a nearby stone house. Within it lay Grendel, as well as Clymene, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Desdemona.

Upon entering, he noticed the simple stone bed where Grendel rested. Orion could sense that Grendel's soul-flame had recovered, but for some reason, none of them had regained consciousness yet. To be honest, Orion wasn't sure why this strange condition persisted.

Still, he knew his sister Clymene and the Skeletal Knights were severely wounded—both in body and soul. With proper treatment or supplies, Clymene could bounce back.

Orion flipped his hand, produced a Rebirth Stone, and placed it on Grendel's body.

Almost immediately, a strange phenomenon occurred. Grendel's bones spread out, wrapping the Rebirth Stone within. However, that wasn't enough; Orion noticed no sign that his sister was waking.

Thinking for a moment, Orion placed another Rebirth Stone on Grendel. Once again, it was drawn in, absorbed. Yet no one rose.

Wasting no time, Orion produced Rebirth Stones one after another. Only upon absorbing the seventh stone did Grendel finally show signs of response. Grendel's skeletal frame seemed to come alive, growing wildly like vines until the dense bones filled the entire room.

Orion watched this startling sight for a moment, then turned and exited the stone house.

"Will they come around?" Lumi asked, stepping over to Orion. Through their conversation, she had learned that Orion's sister was also injured. As Orion's partner, she felt naturally curious about Clymene.

"Let's just wait and see," came Orion's reply. Truth be told, he wasn't entirely certain, but if the Rebirth Stone could help, he figured it wouldn't end badly.

Three days later, the steadily expanding bones burst through the stone house, condensing into a giant sphere. Two more days passed, and the bones began to withdraw, revealing seven figures within: Clymene, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, and Desdemona.

"You shouldn't waste something so valuable on us—it's just not worth it!"

Orion stepped forward and embraced Clymene.

"No treasure matters more than embracing you, Sister."

Clymene extended her hand, patted Orion's shoulder, then kissed him on the forehead.

"You've grown stronger again!"

Orion let out a hearty laugh, openly releasing the aura of his peak Legendary power.

"Sister— the lord on the other side of that cross-realm teleportation array won't be around much longer."

Before Orion could say more, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, and Desdemona all knelt behind Clymene.

"We thank the Giant King for giving us new life. Your glory illuminates the Stoneheart Horde!"

"Wherever your blade directs us, we shall march and conquer!"

Chapter 525: I can help you

"Stand up, all of you. There's no need for that!"

Orion spoke up to soothe everyone, then handed a Bagbird pouch to Clymene. Inside the Bagbird pouch were a number of spirit crystals and several Rebirth Stones.

When Clymene saw the contents of the pouch, she was astonished. She looked up at Orion in disbelief.

"These things will be very helpful to you. I hope you won't refuse them!"

At last, Clymene nodded and accepted the supplies.

Orion checked the cross-realm teleportation array once more, then turned to Lumi.

"It looks like you'll need to stand guard here for a while."

Lumi nodded. She had always preferred peace and quiet; staying here was no different from staying in the snowy mountains.

"Where are you going?"

She had only just met Orion, and from the way he spoke, he was already leaving. Lumi felt a pang of regret because Orion's stay this time was all too brief, and he showed no intention of making love to her.

"I'm going south. The situation there is more complicated, and if I don't show my face often, enemies will start to eye my territory."

Lumi nodded; lords in the south tended to be stronger than those in the north, so they needed to be kept in check.

"I can help you."

After a moment's pause, Lumi's cool voice broke the silence, catching Orion off guard as he continued inspecting the cross-realm teleportation array.

"You have something more important to do."

Orion produced two chilled boxes and handed them to Lumi.

"What's inside will help you advance your power even further."

Naturally, the item capable of pushing someone at Legendary level to greater heights was Legendary-level life essence.

Orion's idea was simple: he wanted Lumi to progress directly from lower Legendary level to middle Legendary level.

There were two reasons behind it. First, it would make Lumi stronger, and second, it would help prepare her for entering the Emerald Dream Realm in the future.

At middle Legendary level, combined with an elemental being's innate advantages, Lumi should be significantly more resilient than other Legendary-level individuals.

...

In the south, within Stoneheart City.

Even though Orion had granted Delilah the right to work in the castle, she still preferred her mysterious tavern. After all, the castle belonged to Lilith, and Delilah made that distinction quite clear.

"Your Majesty, here is all the information you requested."

On the second floor of the tavern, a succubus maidservant reverently handed Delilah a compiled report. Dressed in nearly transparent gauze, Delilah's enticing figure was faintly visible as she retracted her gaze from the view of Stoneheart City, then took the booklet and began to read it leisurely.

"Did you send over the share of resources meant for the castle?"

Before opening the booklet, Delilah asked this question in a casual tone.

"Yes, I delivered it myself to that very important person."

"How did she respond?"



"She was quite calm about it, but asked me to convey her gratitude to you."

"Gratitude? That's exactly what she's owed."

Delilah raised her head and looked toward the castle. The "very important person" the maidservant spoke of was Kitsune Sylvana.

During the dark beast tides, Delilah had been stationed on the walls all day, entrusting every matter inside the city to Sylvana. Sylvana turned out to be quite capable and handled everything neatly, which made Delilah hold her in higher regard.

"She does have skill. No wonder Orion arranged for her to assist me."

Retracting her gaze, Delilah turned her attention back to the booklet in her hands. It held two parts of gathered information. The first part recorded the Stoneheart Horde's expenditures and losses from the dark beast tides defensive battle, as well as the battle achievements of the leading bloodline warriors.

An eye-catching name appeared here:

Godfrey, the human knight.

"Godfrey... He's brave, and his achievements are rather impressive. While we can't grant him any dark source crystal, we can reward him with something else."

"Go to the Flame-Tiger beast pens and select a tiger cub. Give it as a reward to the human knight who performed outstandingly in the defensive battle."

"I want every outsider to know that our Stoneheart Horde is generous!"

After issuing this command, Delilah continued reading. The rest concerned the horde's bloodline warriors, who had their own dedicated reward systems, so they didn't need special mention.

Before long, Delilah reached the second part of the booklet, which detailed recent developments in Stoneheart City.

"At daybreak, the caravan stationed at the southern branch of the Golden Apple Chamber of Commerce loaded 120 carts of goods and left Stoneheart City."

"The Blood Elf shop to the south of the city announced that dark source crystals can be exchanged for enchanted weapons."

"A human mercenary team is seeking anyone familiar with the route to the former Beastfolk territory and Orc territory; any race is acceptable."

" ... "

As Delilah reviewed these items, she tried to pick out anything of real value. She was especially interested in the humans.

Orion had told her once that humans usually act in pursuit of profit. In other words, their actions revolve around maximizing benefit.

"120 carts of supplies... Beastfolk and Orc..."

"That means the goods those humans require must be among the items taken out of the city."

"So what exactly do those human mercenaries plan to do once they reach the Beastfolk territory?"

"..."

Deep in thought, Delilah found there were some questions she couldn't answer, yet at the same time, there were things that made perfect sense—and amazed her. Regardless, in the process of governing this territory, Delilah was pondering new ideas and growing in the role.

...

Blackstone City.

With plenty of dark source crystals in hand, Orion bade farewell to Lumi and Clymene, departing the underworld. Most of the Dark Worm corpses had already served as food for his little spider minions.

Having returned to the surface world, Orion didn't linger. He set off alone for the north. From north to south, Orion was touring his domain. Along the way, he unleashed his aura to make his presence felt.

In the northern ice plains, even the Mammoth Lord Drakmar sensed Orion's aura and kept its distance rather than greet him directly.

Next came the Desolate Plains, where Ironhoof waved at Orion from afar. After that, he arrived at the Thunderwood Forest, where he met Slagor.

"Honorable Lord, Slagor is truly honored to meet you here!"

Outside the Thunderpeak Mountain Eagle Nest, Orion sized up Slagor. The fellow had finally made some progress—now at mid Alpha-level.

Perhaps if he went to trial in the Valkorath Realm, he might break through to peak Alpha-level.

A being like Slagor, who could ascend to Alpha-level on his own, clearly possessed above-average talent.

"Prepare yourself. Someone will be sent here soon to replace you."

"Make your way back to Blackstone City when you're ready—I have a task for you."

Hearing that Orion himself had a mission in mind for him, Slagor felt a surge of excitement he could hardly contain.

Chapter 526: Serpent Isle

Slagor was so delighted because Orion's stance indicated that Slagor was not being sidelined. He was still on Orion's radar, still very much in the center of power.

During this time, Slagor had been in charge of guarding Thunderpeak Mountain. Although life there was peaceful and resources were plentiful, whenever he thought about the future, Slagor always felt he was being pushed aside.

"For the sake of the Stoneheart Horde, Slagor is ready to follow you to the death!"

Slagor proclaimed his loyalty loudly, but he heard no response from Orion—only a burst of thunder. By the time he looked up, Orion was already gone.

Watching the direction from which Orion vanished, Slagor fell into deep thought. He recalled the giant who had invaded the south with him in the past, only to realize he had long since been outpaced.

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In the southern border area of the Thunderwood Forest, Orion's aura had appeared, startling the neighboring Goblins. They finally breathed a sigh of relief only after Orion reined in his aura.

"Pass on this order: No one is allowed to go hunting in the northern regions or approach the border of the Thunderwood Forest."

In some underground chamber, a stern voice issued this command, and it spread among the tribe within moments.

Meanwhile, Orion continued west, eventually reaching Lysinthia City.

Lysinthia City's walls were fully intact. With the support of the Twilight Viper, Clawpincher, Tidecrab Shield Warriors, and numerous plague crows, Lysinthia had no difficulty defending her city.

A roll of thunder sounded. Even before Lysinthia could turn her head, Orion's large hand was already around her slim waist.

"Not bad. You've gotten stronger."

"Oh my god, it's my dearest master! I've been missing you so much!"

As soon as she saw Orion, Lysinthia threw herself into his arms, her body clinging to him.

Breathing in Lysinthia's scent, Orion smiled and carried her into the central castle of Lysinthia City.

A moment later, the clothes on Lysinthia's body were torn apart by Orion. She spread her legs wide, displaying her vagina for Orion to admire. Naturally, Orion did not refuse such an invitation; he took off his pants and thrust his cock directly into her...

---

Half a day later, Orion and Lysinthia reappeared on the city walls.

"Master, the city walls here have all been built. Aside from the castle, we've also constructed many tunnels underground."

"We've placed the Tidecrab Nest in the passageways."

In fact, along with the Tidecrab, there were swamp crocodiles and giant swamp pythons, also housed in nests below the surface. Lysinthia City's underground expanse was extensive, and it was even safer and more magnificent than the area above ground.

"Take me to the forbidden zone in the castle. Lysinthia City needs a bit of an upgrade."

Lysinthia nodded and led Orion into the depths of the castle.

There, Orion placed a Lord's Stone without any particular attribute. Afterward, the central castle and the arrow towers along the walls were all enhanced.

As the Stoneheart Horde's coastal city, Lysinthia City would play a vital role in the future. One could even say it would become the first port city in the Horde's grand plan. So Orion did not hesitate to merge a Lord's Stone here, as well as several arrow towers.

When things settled in the Valkorath Realm, Orion intended to get more Sea Tribe forces from the Kraken. Starting with Mist Bay, he would gradually explore outward.

Orion had visited Dragon Territory once and knew of a long-distance intercontinental teleportation array there. That array had originally been enormous, but was destroyed thousands of years ago. It was only two years prior that it was partly repaired by a group of brilliant human mages—and even then, it could only teleport around a dozen people at a time.

That meant relying on the array to maintain communication and commerce between continents wasn't practical. Opening sea routes, finding new places to trade, and launching new maritime routes would be the best course.



However, such endeavors were still beyond the Stoneheart Horde's current capacity, because it involved not only a naval force and merchant fleets but also the various sea races inhabiting the waters.

Nevertheless, Orion had to prepare early and set the right course for everyone's future. Otherwise, if they waited until the moment they needed to act, the Stoneheart Horde would lack the resources and would only run into setbacks and regrets.

---

Stepping out of the castle, arriving at the city walls, and following along the row of arrow towers, Orion and Lysinthia halted at the wall closest to the sea.

"Master, my race originally comes from out there!"

Under Orion's surprised gaze, Lysinthia raised her delicate hand and pointed toward the vast ocean. Orion turned, his expression growing serious as he studied her.

Perhaps because they had just made love, Lysinthia's face still looked slightly flushed with sensual allure.

"Our branch of the serpentfolk clan has ancestors who came from the sea."

"It's said if you ride a sea serpent and drift for three years in that direction, you'll come across a great island."

"We call it Serpent Isle, and it's home to many serpentfolk."

Once, inside Orion's tent, Lysinthia had told him of her homeland. Back then, Orion had assumed she came from the other side of the desert. It surprised him to hear her mention it again now, pointing out to sea.

A Serpent Isle stood somewhere in the boundless ocean. By extension, if there was a Serpent Isle, there could be many other islands out there—some might be uninhabited, while others could hold mysterious races.

"How big is that island?"

Orion asked casually, clearly intrigued.

"I'm not sure. It's apparently huge. My ancestor's serpentfolk clan only lived in one corner of the island."

"From the tales I've been told, it should be a very large place."

Orion fixed his gaze on the ocean. The horizon was blanketed in mist, making it impossible to see how far the water stretched.

"One day, I'll take you back to see it."

After a while, Orion spoke softly.

"Yes!"

Lysinthia murmured in agreement, resting against Orion's arm. She also gazed out at the sea.

Before nightfall, Orion gently patted Lysinthia.

"Leave Clawpincher in charge here. Get ready, bring Twilight Viper, and head back to Blackstone City to await orders."

Lysinthia nodded. She would gladly accept any mission Orion gave her.

"Master! Greetings!"

Not far away, Clawpincher and Twilight Viper emerged at the surface of the water. Clawpincher saluted, slapping one pincer against the other in his unique way. Twilight Viper lay flat on the ground, showing submission to Orion.

"How goes it? Have you scouted out the entirety of Mist Bay?"

Nodding, Clawpincher turned, pointing toward the far depths of the bay as he spoke in his deep voice.

"In accordance with your command, Master, we have now explored the entire Mist Bay."

"There were many sea beasts lurking deep in the bay; we cleared them all out."

"So far, we haven't found any trace of the Sea Tribe here!"

Orion nodded. Mist Bay now belonged to the Stoneheart Horde, and he had no intention of letting any other race gain a foothold—not even the Sea Tribe.

"Next, I want you to guard the bay's entry and exit. Don't let any Sea Tribe inside."

"As you wish!"

Chapter 527 527: You're incredibly lucky

Deep within a forest, near the boundary between the ogres' domain and the Stoneheart Horde territory.

"Master, once we pass through here, we'll reach the giants' territory."

Wyatt, having once served as the commander of a slave-hunting group, possessed extensive wilderness survival skills. For any route he had traveled before, he could hardly ever forget it.

Torin had been here once, back when they followed the kingdom's envoy.

Now, behind Torin, apart from Mike and Wyatt, there were only the original veteran members of the Mercenary Corps and the former slave-hunting group.

"Wyatt, reorganize the slave-hunting group after we get back."

Staring at the forest ahead, Torin's gaze grew ever more ruthless and cold.

Although no ogres had come to harass them on the way, they had encountered quite a few ferocious beasts.

"Master, is our target still those Blood Elf individuals?"

Wyatt's eyes brightened. He was all too happy to return to his old line of work.

Before, in order to manage Soaring Bird City properly and protect his noble reputation, Torin had Wyatt disband the slave-hunting group.

Now that Soaring Bird City no longer belonged to Torin, he had nothing holding him back. He would embrace any means that would help him rise again.

"Not just the Blood Elf. I also want those damned mercenaries."

"But the kingdom forbids capturing free mercenaries."

"They're off-limits in human lands. But in the ogres' territory, the giants' territory, or in Blood Elf territory—is it forbidden there?"

Torin turned his head, fixing Wyatt with a vicious glare.

"This..."

"Isn't it perfectly normal for ogres to eat humans?"

Torin's voice was icy. Wyatt raised his head, carefully noting Torin's commanding presence at the front. He grew more cautious in his demeanor.

Mike, standing nearby, shook his head with a silent sigh.

Losing Soaring Bird City was like losing their chance to climb the social ladder. Both Mike and Wyatt were quite frustrated.

...

Blackstone City, Horde Hall.

Orion had patrolled the territory from north to south. Even traveling with transcendent power, it took him nearly a month.

Sweeping his gaze across the spirited Onyx, Earthshaker, Gronthar, Dirtclaw, Drakthul, Gormathar, Thunderclaw, and the others, Orion revealed a satisfied expression.

"Prophet, you'll remain in Blackstone City. I'll have Gormathar assist you."

Onyx and Gormathar stood to accept their orders, taking the place of Rendall and Lilith, who had already received the news.

"Gronthar, head to Thunderpeak Mountain to relieve Rockwell and Slagor."

Delighted by the prospect of staying in the north, where many of his kin lived, Gronthar's eyes gleamed.

"As you wish!"

"Earthshaker, go to Mist Bay and coordinate with Clawpincher to hold Lysinthia City."

Earthshaker stood to accept the order, ready for the rotation.

"Everyone else, prepare to head back to Stoneheart City with me."

After the group left the Horde Hall, Orion had Onyx remain behind for a private directive. "Prophet, I left five scorpion soldiers at the Moonshadow Valley camp. If there's an emergency, I authorized you to call on them."

Onyx nodded, eyes lighting up at Orion's arrangement. He was openly impressed by the plan.

Another day passed.

To the south, in Stoneheart City.



Beneath the castle, a small teleportation array began pulsing, stirring as wave after wave of people arrived. Delilah sensed the activity.

Recognizing a familiar aura, Delilah's face lit up with excitement as she hurried away from the mysterious tavern.

On the first floor of the tavern, the human knight Godfrey gazed in the direction of the castle. He, too, sensed the surge of energy.

However, the castle was a restricted zone, and he had no right to enter that area.

At that moment, Godfrey looked away from the castle, turning his attention to Delilah, who was rushing downstairs. Narrowing his eyes slightly, he watched her until she and her guards disappeared from view. Then Godfrey refocused, lost in thought.

A whining sound emerged—at his feet was a Flame-Tiger cub, about the size of a housecat, giving a small growl as it tugged on Godfrey's pant leg, demanding food.

Clearing his mind of unfounded worries, Godfrey scooped up the Flame-Tiger cub, grabbed a small pitcher of beast milk, and fed it gently and carefully.

The Flame-Tiger was no ordinary beast-blood mount from the human kingdom. It was a true beast—once grown, it would possess the power of a hero-level being. If raised properly, it might even advance to alpha-level.

Without question, the Stoneheart Horde had astonished Godfrey by granting him a Flame-Tiger cub. He had never imagined such generosity.

"This really is a Flame-Tiger, Godfrey. You're incredibly lucky!"

"Then again, considering all you accomplished on the battlefield, it's not surprising the Elder of Stewardship rewarded you with a Flame-Tiger."

"You know there are only a handful of giants in Stoneheart City who have one."

The speaker was Godfrey's giant friend, Brundar. He looked on enviously at Godfrey and the cub.

"But your battle achievements aren't small either. Can't you exchange for one yourself?"

Godfrey could certainly sense Brundar's envy.

"There are so few Flame-Tigers that the horde hasn't opened them for exchange yet," Brundar said. "But I've already decided—I'll exchange for a Raptor. When the time comes, I'll ride my Raptor, you'll ride your Flame-Tiger, and we can keep fighting side by side."

Godfrey simply nodded in acknowledgment, gazing absentmindedly at the street outside the tavern.

Meanwhile, in the castle's underground plaza.

"Honored Mistress, your lowly slave Dirtclaw greets you! Your beauty is like the rising sun, the most gorgeous flower on this continent."

Delilah's lips curved into a smile, her eyebrows arching happily. She was clearly in an excellent mood. Dirtclaw was, after all, her slave, and they had always shared a harmonious relationship.

Dirtclaw was deeply respectful to Delilah, and Delilah was equally considerate toward Dirtclaw. Over time, they had established a certain sense of mutual understanding.

"Stand up. Your loyalty is impeccable."

"Dirtclaw, I can see you've grown stronger again. I'm happy for you!"

Delilah extended a hand, lightly stroking the top of Dirtclaw's head. He stood up gleefully, ignoring the puzzled looks from his companions.

"Mistress, Orion is currently operating the teleportation array. He'll be here very soon."

Dirtclaw then produced a small, bone-crafted box from his robes and handed it to Delilah.

"My incomparably beautiful Mistress, this is a gift from Dirtclaw to you!"

In front of so many onlookers, Delilah did not decline. She accepted the box and opened it.

At first glance, Delilah's pupils subtly constricted.

"This is a marvelous gift. I like it very much."

What Dirtclaw had given her was a portion of alpha-level life essence. He had indeed been extremely generous this time.

Chapter 528 528: He's back

After putting the life essence away, Delilah's gaze drifted past Dirtclaw and settled on the figures standing behind him.

Taran, Brontes, Steropes, Erythros, Thalion, Torvald, and five scorpion soldiers—all were Alpha-level beings. Such a lineup already matched the overall peak strength the Stoneheart Horde had in the past.

They were Pandaren, Thunderstorm Bearmen, Giants, and Scorpions, all races that had fought alongside Orion on his campaign. Delilah carefully observed them one by one and recognized each of them.

"Congratulations on your triumphant return!"

With that, Delilah withdrew her assessing stare, smiled at them, and waited for Orion, still on the other end of the teleportation array.

Over an hour later, once the main personnel had been transported into Stoneheart City, Orion finally emerged from the teleportation array.

Seeing his subordinates waiting, Orion waved a hand.

"I'm giving you three days off. After that, report back to your camps."

"Yes, My lord!"

They responded in unison, then scattered.

Delilah beamed as she came to Orion's side. She hooked both arms around his and pressed her entire body against him.

"My dear Orion, you've finally returned!"

Her familiar voice carried a touch of longing. Orion drew her into an embrace, murmuring, "Well done."

Delilah tipped her head back, seeking a kiss—ardent and unrestrained.

Right then, Delilah's clothes slid from her body, leaving her naked in the open air. Her figure was irresistibly enticing.

Two hours later, when Orion and Delilah left the underground teleportation plaza, Delilah had put on a fresh set of garments.

"I want a command circulated. Three days from now, we'll convene a council meeting and rotate the elders stationed in each region."

Delilah nodded, her cheeks still rosy. As a succubus, she craved both love and sex, and with Orion, that hunger was all the more intense.

Whenever he returned, the thing she looked forward to most was making love—she loved Orion's big cock.

"I'm heading out. For the next few days, I'll be staying in Bedchamber No. 2."

Bedchamber No. 2 was a secret signal of sorts. Delilah gave him a flirtatious wink, let out a playful laugh, and swayed her hips as she walked out of Vagrelly Castle.

Watching her leave, Orion released a brief, formidable surge of power across Stoneheart City. The crushing aura, though fleeting, was strong enough to warn any outsiders with ill intentions.

Orion was now at the peak of legendary rank, capable of defeating some of the weaker arch lords. Aside from a small handful of top-tier powers, there was no one else on this continent whom he truly feared.

Even though the territory could no longer expand, it didn't mean other endeavors would be hindered.

Inside the castle, in Sylvana's bedroom.

She certainly felt Orion's aura.

"He's back!"

That was Sylvana's immediate thought, followed by an inexplicable surge of delight. Losing one's sight often brings a certain calm, because the world isn't black or white—only void. Sylvana had maintained her composure all winter. But at the brief sound of his breathing near her ear, her stillness rippled.

"Did you just take a bath?"

"There's the scent of magical plants soaked into your skin."

Orion reached out and pinched Sylvana's nipple. She curled up instantly like a startled rabbit.

"Ha ha ha... Looks like I was right."

With desire flaring in his eyes, Orion stared at Sylvana's face. Though blinded, her eyes looked large, clear, with upturned corners and thick lashes that made her especially endearing.

"You're not answering my question."

Orion raised a single finger, lifting Sylvana's chin.

So close to him, Sylvana's pale cheeks flushed with warmth.

"Mm..."



A soft, almost inaudible reply made Orion's lips tilt into a smile.

"Seems you've been yearning for my cock."

Showing no restraint, Orion scooped her up and tossed her onto the large bed laden with thick furs and cotton. Then he stripped off his own clothes and moved toward Sylvana.

By the next morning, Orion was still asleep with Sylvana tucked in his arms.

Meanwhile, Pandaren Taran had already set off on a stroll through Stoneheart City, invited by the Giant Thalion.

"Taran, what do you think? Stoneheart City is pretty impressive, right?"

Thalion had grown up here, though back then it had been called Starveil City. Gazing over the bustling district, with its many buildings and constant stream of people, Taran's eyes shone with curiosity.

"It's even more lively than Blackstone City!"

The city's outer ring was home not only to members of the Stoneheart Horde. Over the past month, trade caravans from human lands, Blood Elf lands, dwarves, and dragons had one by one arrived in

Stoneheart City. The dwarves and dragons, especially, had been absent last year only because they had to travel such long distances. They first passed through human territory, using it as a midpoint. Once the dark beast tides receded, those caravans headed gradually for the giants' lands.

From this year onward, communication and trade of the Five-Race Alliance had finally started in earnest. In kind, the commercial and diplomatic groups the giants dispatched to the dwarves and dragons only arrived around this same time.

"Come on. I'll take you to the Blood Elf shops," Thalion said. "They're said to sell enchanted weapons. You might be able to find yourself a good pair of gauntlets there."

Gauntlets were rare. The Stoneheart Horde didn't produce standardized ones. Part of the reason Taran and Thalion had ventured into the outer city at this early hour was to look for a suitable set of gauntlets for Taran.

They'd learned yesterday that besides Blood Elf and human shops, a dwarven trade caravan had just arrived.

Dwarves were natural blacksmiths, and Thalion was convinced Taran would be able to buy the perfect gauntlets from them. During their time in the Valkorath Realm, fighting fungal creatures side by side, Taran and Thalion had formed a strong bond.

At Stoneheart City's southern gate.

A human caravan slowly rolled into town after undergoing a thorough inspection. In the middle of this caravan was a roofless wagon carrying two pudgy humans. Each wore lavish garments that made them stand out starkly from the scarred and rugged mercenaries around them.

However, they were no nobles—certainly no noble bearing clung to them. Instead, they exuded nothing but a strong odor of gold.

"Kadir, this place is even more bustling and civilized than we were told."

The beard man was called Nico.

"Look—there's no filth or random piles of waste thrown around, and you don't catch a whiff of that sewer stench, even in the outer city. Instead, the air practically has the faint aroma of magical plants."

Chapter 529 529: Sixth sense

Nico's nose twitched sharply—he was sensitive like that, especially for a merchant.

A city's most appealing features invariably come down to two points: clean sanitation and a secure environment.

As for other goods, as long as there are people and land, they can conjure them out of thin air.

This was the conclusion drawn by Nico and Kadir, and they believed in it wholeheartedly.

Kadir stayed silent while Nico spoke to himself. In Kadir's hand were three types of coins—large, medium, and small—minted by the Stoneheart Horde, known as Blackstone coins.

At this moment, each coin was spinning around a different fingertip like three obedient pets.

Kadir gazed at these spinning Blackstone coins as though he were staring at his lover.

His eyes shone with ardor, and also with greed.

"Incredible!"

"Savage, violent, bloodthirsty, and insane giants actually managed to issue their own currency and their own Code."

"Nico, do you know what that means?"

Although Kadir was also very plump, he was still comparatively slimmer than Nico.

Plus, his robe did a decent job of hiding his figure. If you ignored his face, he wasn't that big when compared to the giants in Stoneheart City.

"It means opportunity—limitless wealth waiting to be seized!"

Nico turned his head and cast a glance at Kadir, whose forehead bore a scar. He answered Kadir's question in an excited tone while also looking off into the distance at a group of lovely blood elves passing by.

"Oh yeah... those blood elves perfectly blend beauty and sex appeal! If I could marry one, I'd definitely have sex with her every single day!"

Kadir lifted his head and followed Nico's gaze toward the departing blood elves.

Unlike Nico, who saw only beauty and sensuality, Kadir noticed a blending and exchange of civilizations.

"Young master, is it worth it?"

"Selling off all your possessions just to come here, seeking that slim chance for the family to rise again?"

The speaker was the old steward riding alongside the carriage. He was sworn to Nico by a master-servant contract.

"Losing the family's territory and its title means losing any hope for survival."

"If we don't leave and keep staying in the kingdom, those nobles would squeeze out the last of our fortune."

"Wealth, without something else to back it up, is just another cake waiting to be devoured."

When Kadir shifted his gaze away from the blood elves and heard the mention of his family, a trace of sorrow flickered in his eyes.

In the human kingdom, with territories shrinking across the board, many lesser nobles had lost their lands and titles in a recent reshuffling, reduced to commoners.

Kadir's family was among them. One by one, his relatives had perished along the way for various reasons, leaving only him.

In order to protect the family's final remnants of wealth and bloodline, he chose to leave his homeland.

After enduring countless hardships, Kadir had finally arrived in Stoneheart City.

Meanwhile, also outside the city walls, someone else had already stepped into the Mysterious Tavern.

Delilah ran this Mysterious Tavern, which had no official name. Whenever people in Stoneheart City talked about "the tavern," they usually meant this place.

At the moment, Torin, Mike, and Wyatt were seated at a single table, sampling a few plates of snacks and beast meat. The master and his two attendants were casually sipping their drinks and sizing up Stoneheart City.

"Master, I can't believe how fast this place is growing. How are they doing it?"

Mike, an experienced mercenary, had traveled extensively. He was certain that, aside from the human capital cities, there was no place more prosperous than here.

Keep in mind, Stoneheart City was established less than two years ago.

Mike remembered clearly that when they visited last year, the outer city was a complete mess, with countless ramshackle huts for the poor.

"It's not just here. I've heard they also built four other cities in different regions, linking all of the Stoneheart Horde's territory together."

Wyatt seemed just as intrigued by the Stoneheart Horde's development, eagerly sharing what he had learned.

"Linked them together?"

"Yes. They cleared a wide road and reinforced the soil so it's solid."

"Really?"

"It's true. Apparently, every month they send out guards to patrol the territory. In addition to monitoring the subordinate races, they also check and repair any damaged roads along the way."

"What exactly are these non-humans trying to do?"

Mike and Wyatt, discussing possible plans of the Stoneheart Horde, couldn't guess at the bigger picture.

But Torin, an Earth survivor, caught on right away.

The Stoneheart Horde was aiming for growth. They wanted to connect their entire territory, sealing off and fortifying the land they occupied.

Precisely because Torin could see this so clearly, he felt all the more miserable.



It reminded him of his own Soaring Bird City. If Soaring Bird City were still in his hands, he too would be actively building roads to every corner.

Torin knew that if you want to develop a city, you have to build roads first. That principle never changes.

Torin had been in Stoneheart City for several days already. You could say he was among the first to arrive here.

He had sent a letter requesting an audience at the castle, but there had been no response whatsoever, like a stone dropped into the sea.

In desperation, Torin sought out the Mysterious Tavern based on rumors and tried bribing its enigmatic proprietress.

Unfortunately, the only result Torin got was more waiting.

"We can't just wait around like this. I have to attract the Giant King's attention."

"How do I do that?"

"Bring him a rare tribute?"

"..."

Around midday in the castle, Orion was getting dressed with Sylvana's help.

"If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I'd never believe you were blind."

It was true—a blind person dressing Orion perfectly without a single slip was downright astonishing.

"Once you're used to emptiness, you learn to orient yourself within it."

"I call it a sixth sense."

Sylvana handed Orion a cup of tea, which he accepted and gulped down in one go.

"Your eyes aren't blind in the absolute sense. I'll figure something out for you."

Sylvana's face lit up with a smile. Orion's concern made her happy, and it also calmed her heart.

"Thank you."

In truth, Sylvana held no great hope for her eyes. She took Orion's concern more as a comforting gesture.

Orion merely shook his head, offering no further explanation.

Sylvana's blindness came from her attempt to peer into the future of a powerful being, which caused a backlash and robbed her sight.

That type of blindness was connected to the power of fate. Fixing it would require the same strength of fate in return.

Fate itself was too mysterious for Orion to grasp.

However, Orion did know one potential way: making sacrifices of faith to a god in return for the power to undo such a backlash.

But faith was far too valuable to Orion in his current situation.

Chapter 530 530: Is it all true?

Orion currently has no intention of helping Sylvana regain her sight. It wasn't that Orion was heartless, nor that he was selfish.

On one hand, faith was tied to Orion's advancement as an arch lord. Having witnessed the power of an arch lord firsthand, he was impatient to reach that level himself.

On the other hand, no one had any idea how much faith would need to be sacrificed to restore Sylvana's eyesight. So, this matter would have to wait a while longer.

"You assisted the Elder of Stewardship in managing logistics, and for that, you deserve a reward."

As he spoke, Orion took out two boxes and placed them in Sylvana's hands.

One box contained an Alpha-level life essence, and the other held an Alpha-level dark source crystal.

As for anything below Alpha-level resources, Orion was certain Delilah would continuously provide Sylvana with whatever she needed.

"Once you reach the peak of hero level, these can help you break through to Alpha-level."

"As my woman, your strength mustn't lag behind."

With a flourish of the beast-skin cloak draped over his shoulders, Orion turned and strode out of Sylvana's bedchamber.

Sylvana lifted her head. Though she could not see, she could easily imagine Orion's imposing and majestic figure as he left.

Three days later, the council meeting officially began in the castle.

Orion listened to Delilah's extensive briefing—everything that had happened, large and small, was recorded in detail since he had left Stoneheart City.

He affirmed the achievements of Delilah and the others, immediately distributing a round of rewards.

Then Orion dispatched a territory inspection group to tour the region.

Afterward, Taran, Brontes, Steropes, Erythros, Thalion, and Torvald—six newly promoted elders—were assigned to Buffalofolk City, Obsidian City, Delilah City, and Lilith City respectively.

They would rotate in for Grulbane, Dace, Otho, Beyn, Torba, Thundar, and Ursa while also overseeing construction in the four cities.

Once everything was arranged, Delilah finally brought up some matters needing Orion's personal attention.

"My lord, the dwarven and dragon delegations have already arrived in Stoneheart City. When will you receive them?"

Upon hearing this, Orion looked in the direction of the Mysterious Tavern, sensing a powerful yet unfamiliar presence there.

Without a doubt, that aura belonged to a Legendary-level being.

"Which dwarf specifically came?"

"Harbek Bronzebeard, the Arch Elder of the dwarven race."

Delilah felt a twinge of curiosity, not quite understanding how Orion knew the individual must be dwarven.

In fact, Orion was familiar with all publicly recognized Legendary-level figures among the dragons and had memorized their auras. Since the formidable presence in Stoneheart City was unfamiliar, it had to be from the dwarven race.

"Three days from now, I'll meet him formally in the arena."

"At that time, we'll host a public challenge for everyone in Stoneheart City."

"Bring out those captured dark creatures. Anyone who manages to kill them can claim them as a prize."

"Take care of it."

Delilah nodded. She had the authority to access the resources needed to organize that kind of event.

Recalling a visit from the dwarven Arch Elder, Orion suddenly remembered something, and in a stern, commanding tone, he began:

"Effective immediately, all Wardens in the Horde will become members of the council."

"At present, there are only two Wardens in the Stoneheart Horde—Lumi and Soraya—and both are now Legendary-level figures."

"Henceforth, a Warden's status is second only to mine, and above that of the other council members."

"Only those who reach Legendary level may serve as a Warden."

Orion's voice echoed through the hall.

Everyone was in utter shock.

No one had expected the Stoneheart Horde to suddenly produce two Legendary-level Wardens, and both of them were Orion's women. Delilah, in particular, froze in place the moment she heard the news.

Until now, Delilah believed that, aside from Lilith, she was the most valued and powerful figure in the Stoneheart Horde. Yet none of that could compare to actual Legendary-level might.

Time passed, eventually Orion coughed once, and people snapped back to their senses.

"Are there any more issues?"

"If not, go tend to your respective duties."

Dirtclaw, Drakthul, and the others exchanged looks, then departed the main hall with their subordinates in tow.

Only Delilah remained.



Orion cast his gaze on Delilah, noting the disappointment on her face, and silently sighed.

He had revealed Lumi and Soraya's ascension to Legendary level partly to spur his subordinates on.

Delilah especially—she spent most of her time governing in Orion's stead, holding power for too long. Frankly, Orion worried she would lose her ambition and stagnate.

Both Delilah and Lilith were God-touched individuals; they had the potential to reach Legendary level. Delilah's skill set was extremely comprehensive, and Orion relied on her heavily. He had no desire to see her fall behind.

She just needed a push.

Lumi and Soraya were that motivation for the two succubus sisters, prodding them to keep up with Orion's pace. Otherwise, what awaited them was neglect.

They had to keep moving forward—for themselves, for their fellow succubi, and for the Stoneheart Horde.

Raising a hand, Orion generated a pulling force from his palm, drawing Delilah into his arms.

Embracing her, Orion reached out and squeezed her breasts.

"Feeling the pressure?"

Delilah still didn't speak, remaining in a daze.

Stoneheart Horde suddenly had two Legendary-level beings, both Orion's lovers—an immense blow to Delilah, who always considered herself the queen among succubi.

"Orion, is it all true?"

After some time, Delilah finally lifted her head and asked him in earnest.

At Orion's nod, the light in Delilah's rose-red eyes vanished completely.

The crushing force of superior strength, her sense of imbalance, and self-doubt all weighed heavily on her.

To be fair, advancing to Legendary level isn't as simple as talking about it.

Soraya had managed it with the bottomless resources from Arthas and Deputy Commander Edward backing her. Orion had once received three portions of Legendary-level life essence from Arthas. Though it was never stated outright, all of that had been prepared for Soraya.

Even then, her ascent took a long time.

Lumi, on the other hand, truly relied on her own innate talent.

And the negative example was the abyssal dragon Xalathar.

Orion had given the dragon Legendary-level resources early on, but it had yet to ascend even now.

All of this showed that reaching Legendary level truly was no easy feat.