

Titan King 621

Chapter 621 621: She's very intelligent and also very anxious

The void passage was silent.

Orion's mind once again immersed itself in the Survivor's Platform, entering the public channel of the Champions Alliance.

Hulk: "Hey bros, is there any way to subdue a Legendary level broodmother through a void passage?"

Lolth, the Queen of Blind Spiders, was very smart, willing to trade materials for intelligence. Such behavior made Orion see her in a new light.

If Orion were in Lolth's position, he felt he wouldn't have such daring; he would be very reluctant to part with painstakingly accumulated materials.

Leonidas: "Hulk, from the sound of it, you've got an idea?"

Leonidas: "Spill it, let me give you some input!"

Alexander: "Are you sure it's a broodmother?"

Kraken: "Also Legendary level, and through a void passage? That would be very difficult for us, wouldn't it?"

Orion didn't respond to Leonidas, Alexander, or Kraken. He was waiting for Deputy Commander Edward's opinion.

Edward: "First, tell us the specific situation."

Hulk: "The void passage I'm guarding has a legendary-level spider broodmother on the other side. She's very intelligent and also very anxious..."

Orion didn't hide anything, recounting his series of trades with Lolth and her behavior to everyone.

Leonidas: "Not bad! Didn't realize you had the potential to be a con artist!"

Orion ignored Leonidas. Then, Leonidas replied again.

Leonidas: "That being said, that spider broodmother really has some guts. That's not something mere cunning can achieve."

Hulk: "My idea is, can we directly subdue her, give her resources and a chance for self-preservation, and have her act as an inside agent?"

Hulk: "Then, have her cooperate with Arthas's undead armies to expand our territory together."

After hearing Orion's idea, everyone fell into a brief silence.

Silence at this moment meant the idea was feasible.

Invading the Emerald Dream Realm with a Legendary level broodmother as cover and support would bring them a lot of convenience.

Leonidas: "Subduing a broodmother through a void passage? I definitely can't do that."

Alexander: "I could, but it would definitely attract the attention of demigod-level powerhouses. The cost is too great."

As for Kraken, he simply said nothing. His strength was the weakest; this had nothing to do with him.

The negative answers from Leonidas and Alexander made everyone place their hopes on the Deputy Commander.

Edward: "Helping you subdue her directly is out of the question. Your mental strength isn't enough to contend with a spider broodmother across a void passage."

Edward: "How about this: I'll give you a contract scroll later. As long as that spider broodmother agrees to surrender, I'll take her in."

With the Deputy Commander personally intervening, Orion got the method he wanted.

Now, the task was to persuade Lolth, Queen of the Blind Spiders, to surrender voluntarily.

This matter was difficult.

...

Emerald Dream Realm, Shadowcrag Forest.

The fire was lit.

The great fire blazed, crackling as it burned.

The excited roars of the various bloodline warriors and the hissing, agonizing cries of the Hatchery Spiders became the backdrop to the flames.

As the fire intensified, the flames mercilessly devoured the darkness and consumed life.

Bang!

Trees, amidst various impacts, crashed down.

Flesh, mercilessly roasted by the flames, emitted a meaty aroma, then burst, then charred.

A wind rose from an unknown place, whistling as it came, its sound growing increasingly mournful.

"When the wind picks up more, the flames will leap and dance."

The firelight reflected on Delilah's beautiful face. The surrounding temperature gradually rose, and a thick smell of char filled the air.

However, such an environment had no effect on these battle-hardened bloodline warriors.

Instead, the dense swarms of small spiders in the woods died in large swathes after the flames ravaged through.

"This world is very strange!"

Saelen came to Delilah's side. The moment the fire was lit, she had disengaged from combat and returned to Delilah's guard detail.

Just now, Saelen had tried again to awaken the tree spirits here, but unfortunately, she failed once more.

"Strange is normal!"

"Although I don't know what happened to this world, it exudes an eerie strangeness everywhere. We need to be careful."

The fire attack had a remarkable effect.

At least for this night, the invading armies could get some good rest in the heart of this sea of fire.

Looking at the warriors of various clans casually sprawled on the ground, Delilah also breathed a sigh of relief inwardly.

As the leader of this invading army, it was her duty to lead these people to invade another world, plunder resources, and simultaneously reduce unnecessary sacrifices.

Just then, a familiar roar came from the distant sky.

Delilah looked up, a pleasant surprise in her eyes.

That roar was unique to the Four-Winged Blood Bat.

The troops she had sent out to gather intelligence had finally returned.

"It looks like they found their way back by the firelight!"

"The fire must have helped drive away some of their enemies."

This was Saelen's guess, and it was indeed the case.

As the roars drew nearer, Delilah could faintly hear the sound of the Four-Winged Blood Bat flapping its fleshy wings.

Thud!

A huge dark shadow swooped down and, just as it was about to crash, soared past.

What remained was the prey dropped by the Four-Winged Blood Bat, and two dark figures leaping from its back.

The prey dropped by the Four-Winged Blood Bat was an Alpha-level dark creature.

The dark creature had fleshy wings, so it must have been a flying type.

"Your Majesty!"

These were two succubus warriors. They were covered in blood, and one had an injured arm with a gash so deep the bone was visible.

Judging by the wound, it was likely left by beast claws.

"Bandage and treat her first!"

A shaman hurried over from the rear, chanting spells to heal the injured personnel.

Only after this did Delilah turn her gaze to the uninjured succubus warrior.

"Any findings?"

The succubus warrior nodded, then shook her head.

Delilah said nothing. She knew there was more to come and waited for the succubus warrior to speak.

"Your Majesty, we followed the Four-Winged Blood Bat north to explore. On the way, we were attacked by a flock of Dark Bat Hawks. The accompanying harpy scout team was completely wiped out."

"More than half of the accompanying succubus squad also perished, with several members falling into the forest, their status unknown."

"For a thousand miles ahead, it's all dense forest like this."

Delilah lowered her head in thought, while Saelen, listening to the report beside her, frowned.

According to the intelligence provided by the succubus warrior, the situation was actually very bad.

Chapter 622 622: This is our chance

First, the terrain. Ahead lay a vast forest, a sprawl of dense woodland that would undoubtedly slow the army's advance.

Furthermore, the forest would provide natural cover for all sorts of Dark Creatures.

The invading armies could continue their fire attacks, but what would they do when their oil supplies ran dry?

Delilah was certain some Dark Creatures here also wielded water-based powers.

If their flames weren't potent enough, they could easily be extinguished.

At that point, they'd be bogged down in another war of attrition.

That kind of fight wasn't ideal for an invading force.

Invading armies needed to live off their conquests; plunder one place, then quickly move to the next.

Second, the enemy. In the region ahead, they'd face relentless attacks from Dark Bat Hawks.

These Dark Creatures were masters of sonic attacks. The Four-Winged Blood Bat that had previously encroached on their territory had been treated as an invader and besieged.

That was also why the Four-Winged Blood Bat hadn't made it back on schedule; things had evidently taken a grim turn.

Even though the Four-Winged Blood Bat had taken down an Alpha-rank Dark Bat Hawk, it wouldn't necessarily faze the entire flock.

"How many of those Dark Bat Hawks are we talking about?"

Delilah asked a crucial question, one that also weighed on her mind.

Because their invading army had no organized aerial forces.

"When they cornered us, there were at least a thousand of them."

"On our way back, judging by the constant roars, their total numbers must be several times that."

"If it wasn't for this huge fire guiding us and spooking those Dark Bat Hawks, we probably wouldn't have made it back at all."

Though the succubus warrior recounted this impassively, anyone could tell their journey had been incredibly perilous.

Delilah nodded, gesturing for the succubus warrior to go and rest.

Then, Delilah turned to the group of Alpha-rank powerhouses who had gathered around.

The commotion from the Four-Winged Blood Bat dropping its prey earlier had drawn them over.

"Everyone, you've heard the details."

"Let's head into the wooden hut to discuss this."

Delilah didn't make an immediate decision; she hoped to glean some useful suggestions from them.

Especially the humans, dwarves, and blood elves—they were known for their sharp minds.

Gormathar, Taran, Brontes, Steropes, Godfrey the human, Grum Ironfist the dwarf, and Saelen all nodded and headed towards the makeshift wooden hut.

"Report any developments on the perimeter immediately."

After instructing the guards posted outside the wooden hut, Delilah went in as well.

On the perimeter, the fire line raged.

Ragscrape the Gnoll and Maldrak the Giant, unlike those humans from the levy units, hadn't collapsed on the ground to rest.

Although the Hatchery Spiders were numerous, they were individually weak.

This intensity of attack barely registered as tiring for Ragscrape and Maldrak, who had been through the crucible of fighting the fungal creatures.

"These fools! Don't they realize this is their chance to earn glory and harvest Dark Source Crystals?"

Ragscrape the Gnoll took the lead, moving through the scorched forest, nimbly leaping among the embers.

"Look how spent they are; they must be out of steam."

Maldrak the Giant's reasoning was simple: if they weren't moving, they were simply out of strength.

Little did he know, those who stayed put, unwilling to budge, were mostly the cowards—the ones terrified of dying.

The cunning and fearless ones, like themselves, were already skirting the edge of the fire line, venturing into Shadowcrag Forest to claim their spoils.

"The whole place stinks of char. It's killed the appetite I just worked up."

Ragscrape twitched his snout vigorously. The air, thick with the smell of cooked meat and burnt wood, was both enticing and slightly sickening.

"Ragscrape, careful now."

"Forest beasts are most dangerous when they're cornered and dying."

Maldrak followed Ragscrape's path, close behind.

They were, in a sense, a rogue element. While not strictly against regulations, having no backup meant they had to be exceptionally cautious.

Woof woof...

A moment later, a low bark echoed. It was Ragscrape's signal.

Maldrak had partnered with Ragscrape for years; he knew what that sound meant.

Enemy nearby!

Ragscrape unslung the trident from his back.

Ever since Orion's rise in the Stoneheart Horde, nearly all warriors of giantkin had been training with tridents and spears.

The younger warriors in the Horde even favored the trident as their primary weapon.

Amidst the surrounding embers, an occasional crackle broke the silence. Ragscrape and Maldrak stood motionless.

A Hatchery Spider lurked nearby; Ragscrape could smell it.

Woof!

Ragscrape the Gnoll's fierce bark.

Crackle!

The sound of embers scattering as an Alpha-rank Hatchery Spider lunged from its hiding place.

Whoosh!

The whistle of Maldrak the Giant's thrown trident.

Three sounds, three actions—all in the same instant, the same space.

Amidst a shower of sparks, fire and shadow their backdrop.

A gnoll, a Hatchery Spider, a giant.

The moment froze, like a single frame from a film.

Then, the scene lurched into fast-forward.

Thunk!

The trident flew true, burying itself in the Hatchery Spider's eye.

"Ragscrape!"

As Maldrak roared, Ragscrape the Gnoll had already drawn his scimitar and lunged at the Hatchery Spider.

Ragscrape the Gnoll was confident; the scimitar in his hand was a hard-earned reward from the Horde's armory.

It was a masterwork weapon, capable of piercing the defenses of most Alpha-rank creatures.

"It's a heavily wounded Alpha-rank! This is our chance!"

"Kill it!"

Sensing the Hatchery Spider's weakened aura, Ragscrape the Gnoll grew excited, a battle frenzy taking hold.

Maldrak, seeing his friend Ragscrape charge, also brandished his spiked club and rushed in.

The next moment, Ragscrape's and Maldrak's battle cries drowned out the Hatchery Spider's screeching.

The air filled with flying sparks, the gleam of a swift scimitar, the furious whistle of the spiked club, and the blur of spider claws.

Ragscrape and Maldrak fought in perfect concert.

Fifteen minutes later, the monster crashed to the ground.

"Hahaha... this thing is finally dead!"

"You clubbed it to death. The main credit's yours."

Ragscape pulled a large Dark Source Crystal from the Hatchery Spider's corpse and tossed it to Maldrak.

"You found it, and you were the bait. I just provided the muscle."

Maldrak tossed the Dark Source Crystal back. They were precious, true, but nothing compared to his friendship with Ragscape.

"Alright then, don't mind if I do!"

"Let's keep moving. I'll make sure you get the next one!"

Maldrak nodded. This invasion was just starting; there would be plenty more opportunities.

"Friend, watch out for the others around us."

"Elder Dirtclaw always said, anyone not from the fodder units isn't one of us."

"Those human mercenaries have no scruples; they're even greedier than we are."

Not far off, a squad of human mercenaries from the levy units appeared.

They had broken off from the main force and entered the unsecured depths of the forest. Ragscrape figured they were making themselves easy targets, ripe for a backstabbing.

Chapter 623 623: Do you want to know the truth?

"The sun will have no afterglow, the constellations will turn to dust, life will wither."

"The apocalypse will come. What awaits you will ultimately be death and damnation."

Orion felt that what he said wasn't particularly shocking.

He wasn't trying to scare Lolth either, because the fate of the Emerald Dream Realm truly had a high probability of being so.

Of course, Orion didn't mention a single word about the root cause or the process leading to this outcome.

Orion put away the precious materials Lolth had teleported over. He himself was muttering inwardly, wondering how to begin persuading the Queen of the Blind Spiders on the other side.

Everything he had just said—how terrifying the future would be, how difficult the disaster would be to resist—was all groundwork for the next step: persuading Lolth to surrender.

"Is the apocalypse truly coming?"

This was Lolth's whisper, because she could discern that Orion wasn't lying.

Or perhaps, Orion possessed an even higher-tier power that was influencing her ability to judge.

"Do you want to know the truth?"

Orion's calm voice sounded, carrying a faint trace of bewitchment.

In Orion's understanding, there were many ways to persuade someone.

Here, Orion chose to present the facts and let the facts speak for themselves.

Because only in this way could he continue to reason with Lolth, and only then could this topic be discussed further.

To put it more crudely, only by grounding it in reality could he continue to coax Lolth, and even specifically promise her the moon.

"Do you want to survive this disaster?"

Orion posed this question from Lolth's perspective.

Thinking for others, considering others, offering suggestions to others, and even methods to solve their problems.

This would increase the persuasive power of Orion's words and gain others' trust.

This was what Orion was striving for.

And that wasn't all.

"Do you want to lead your people behind you to survival?"

"To find a true paradise for your people?"

Orion threw out two more questions, striking directly at Lolth's vulnerabilities.

Survival was a theme that no species could avoid.

Moreover, for a broodmother of a clan, the responsibility and survival of a huge population was a pressure Lolth almost bore alone.

Whether it was natural selection or survival of the fittest, the law of the jungle was truth, and the survival of the adaptable was the result.

Now, Orion had pushed the chance to choose and adapt right in front of Lolth.

At this moment, Orion himself felt that he and Lolth were on the same side, that he was considering things for her.

"Coincidentally, I have a way to save you and your entire clan."

"However, you should understand that such a thing definitely comes at a price."

"As for what price... once you've thought it through, we can continue this conversation."

Orion's tone was no longer nonchalant but had taken on a note of caution, even meticulous care.

He wanted Lolth to understand that this was her lifeline.

She had obtained this opportunity because she was fortunate enough to encounter Orion; she should be grateful to him.

Lolth on the other side of the void passage said nothing, as she had already sunk into deep thought and speculation.

Lolth had taken everything Orion said to heart.

However, it was impossible for Lolth to make a decision immediately.

Lolth, capable of becoming a lord and a clan's broodmother, understood that a leader must make decisions in a calm state.

And right now, Lolth was clearly not calm.

A glance at the mist on the other side of the void passage, which had thickened again, indicated at least that Lolth's mind was currently in turmoil.

Dream mist, in most cases, reflected the caster's inner thoughts.

"If this one isn't willing to surrender, what should I say next?"

"Tell her the truth? That might be inappropriate!"

"I don't mind, but I'm afraid saying it would scare her to death."

"..."

In reality, Orion was also pondering what to do next to easily and pleasantly persuade Lolth to sign the contract.

Orion wasn't a negotiation expert, nor was his eloquence particularly good; he was also finding it difficult.

He had proposed the idea in the Champions Alliance and was personally executing the plan; he didn't want it to fall through and lose face with his allies.

Orion, the King of Giants, was actually quite ordinary in this regard; he cared a lot about his reputation.

Shadowcrag Forest, unnamed valley.

Hyenas are dark creatures that prefer to hunt at night, but for the leaders within the pack, they are always at leisure.

Why is that?

Because apart from eating and sleeping, they spend long periods in their mating season.

Just like those nobles in human kingdoms: they aren't the ones planting crops, they aren't the ones fending off enemies, and they aren't the ones hunting.

Gravehowl was an existence similar to human nobles; it was the Alpha of this hyena pack, the Hyena King who got the first bite of the prey.

Ooo... oowooo...

Outside the valley, sporadic, whimpering howls of hyenas suddenly sounded.

In a hyena pack, this was a warning sound, meaning enemies were approaching the vicinity of the valley.

Gravehowl opened its eyes from a deep sleep, its eyes like two fist-sized emeralds, glinting with violence and ferocity.

When Gravehowl stood up, its powerful body was no less imposing than those of Alpha-level dark creatures.

What was most striking was Gravehowl's fur color: a rare mix of red and black.

In this Emerald Dream Realm, dominated by dark and deep colors, Gravehowl's appearance was flamboyant.

"Which damned neighbor has come to the outskirts of the valley?"

"Don't they want to live anymore?"

"Or have the nearby dark races challenged me, wanting to occupy this valley and seize my home?"

Gravehowl let out a low whimper, then bit open a pup beside it with one snap.

Gravehowl looked up at the sky; it was completely dark, and its mood wasn't good.

"Oowooo... Damn it, don't let me catch the intruder!"

"I'll bite its neck off and devour it completely, starting from its asshole."

However, just then, the whimpering of the hyenas outside the valley became more urgent and more miserable.

This was the signal for battle!

Roar!

Gravehowl the Hyena King let out a roar. Instantly, all the sleeping hyenas in the valley awoke and immediately entered a battle-ready state.

Howl!

At the same time, four huge dark shadows suddenly appeared high in the sky above the valley. A terrifying aura swept down, crashing into the entire hyena pack like a tsunami.

Oowooo!

Two more deep, resonant howls sounded. They came from Gravehowl the Hyena King's two brothers, also Alpha-level.

Together, they ruled this valley and occupied the nearby territory.

Unfortunately, it was a bit too late.

At this moment, a large number of skeleton warriors also surged into the valley entrance, along with small scorpions that had quietly buried themselves underground, ready to ambush at any time.

Following them were the invading armies led by Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul.

"Haha... three Alpha-level dark creatures, and quite sturdy ones at that."

"Gronthar, Drakthul, are you interested?"

The speaker was Earthshaker. As he said this, his body had already shot forward.

Gronthar and Drakthul exchanged a glance, a flash of delight in both their eyes.

Chapter 624 624: Good timing

Throughout the entire Stoneheart Horde, many envied Thundar and Onyx; they were the first elders to possess Alpha-level mounts.

Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul were also very envious; they too wanted their own Alpha-level mounts.

Previously, they lacked the strength or the opportunity.

But now, the opportunity was right before their eyes.

Gronthar and Drakthul each took out a taming collar from their satchels; these were items they had exchanged for battle achievements from the horde's treasury.

During the fight against the fungal creatures in the Valkorath Realm, Orion had obtained a batch of taming collars from Leonidas and placed them in the treasury, specifically for these subordinates.

Members of the Stoneheart Horde's council, as long as they didn't lack battle achievements, had almost all exchanged for a taming collar, precisely for moments like this.

"The one on the left is mine!"

Drakthul roared and then charged towards the hyena that looked more impressive.

Gronthar didn't mind, took out his battle-axe, and went for the hyena on the right.

However, what Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul didn't expect was that this wasn't a classic one-on-one, but a six-on-three.

As Earthshaker lunged, Gravehowl bared its teeth, continuously letting out low snarls.

To Earthshaker's astonishment, Hyena King Gravehowl completed a split within three breaths, dividing into two.

Hyena King Gravehowl's body shrank slightly, but it had split off an identical duplicate.

"The same aura, both Alpha-level!"

Earthshaker halted his charge, his gaze unsteady. He stared warily at the now-two Hyena King Gravehowls.

The two Hyena King Gravehowls, one on the left and one on the right, with fierce eyes, slowly approached Earthshaker.

Not far away, the hyenas Gronthar and Drakthul faced also split into two; the two of them encountered the same treatment as Earthshaker.

The three were unaware that Gravehowl's pack was the infamous Splitting Hyenas of the Emerald Dream Realm.

When Splitting Hyenas, a type of dark creature, advanced to Alpha-level, they would inevitably awaken their bloodline, learn the splitting ability, enabling them to divide themselves into two with little loss of strength.

Some exceptionally talented hero-level Splitting Hyenas might also awaken this ability prematurely.

It was just that Earthshaker and his group had steamrolled their way here and hadn't encountered them before.

Furthermore, Splitting Hyenas were very keen in terms of hearing, sight, and smell.

They could easily detect enemies and were highly alert.

"They need help!"

At the valley entrance, Arden and Selenis, escorting four necromancers, walked in and saw the scene before them.

"Have the venomous Lesser Dragons give them a hand!"

Three necromancers nodded and directed the venomous Lesser Dragons in the sky to swoop down, attracting the attention of three of the split Hyena Kings.

Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul were incredibly astute; they had experienced too many wars, brushing with death countless times.

They seized this opportunity in an instant.

Without a trace of hesitation, the three charged out with their weapons towards the remaining hyenas.

ROAR!

Earthshaker had already formed a combat habit; as he charged out, his inherited skill, Blood Sharing, was already activated.

A crimson bloodline chain linked Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul. As long as they weren't instantly killed or their souls obliterated, they were essentially immortal.

"That is?"

"The aura of an inherited skill!"

"It seems he is one chosen by Orion."

Arden and Selenis were puzzled; they couldn't understand what the four necromancers were saying.

Earthshaker's use of Blood Sharing was an ability obtained from a Heroic Altar.

There was also a Heroic Altar in Arthas's territory, and it was quite famous there.

Because all the lucky ones who received an inheritance from a Heroic Altar eventually advanced to Legendary level and were all powerful beings.

This was also why the four necromancers were exclaiming and envious!

They too wanted to advance to Legendary level, to look up at an even higher sky.

Then again, it wasn't guaranteed that receiving an inheritance meant one could advance to Legendary level.

Although an inheritance could enhance potential to a certain extent, it largely depended on individual talent and inherent potential.

Additionally, there was another scenario: if the same person received multiple inheritances, their potential could also be enhanced.

However, this practice was a waste of the Heroic Altar's inheritance opportunities and was detrimental to the development of a faction.

Meanwhile, after the three venomous Lesser Dragons drew the attention of three Hyena Kings, Earthshaker's trio had no more reservations and fiercely pounced.

Charge, close in, swing the totem pole in a wide arc.

This was Earthshaker's attack, but Hyena King Gravehowl dodged it.

As Earthshaker closed in, Hyena King Gravehowl leaped away, creating distance.

And before Earthshaker could pull back his momentum, it pushed off with its hind legs, rushed forward, and opened its massive jaws to bite at Earthshaker's waist.

One must know, apart from their splitting ability, the Splitting Hyenas' most formidable weapon was their terrifying bite force.

The Splitting Hyena's canines were huge like sharp blades, and its four premolars were like pointed awls; together, their power was astounding.

If truly bitten by this beast, it would absolutely result in lost flesh and injured bones.

"Good timing!"

Earthshaker was no battlefield novice; his combat experience was plentiful. How could he not have a follow-up move?

If his attacks were truly so simple, Earthshaker would have died on the battlefield long ago.

Earthshaker was seen gripping the totem pole with both hands. He didn't turn, nor did he swing it wildly; instead, he reversed its orientation, making the tail the head, and thrust it backward fiercely.

Krrrk-chak!

This was an extremely ear-piercing sound, the sound of the Hyena King's teeth colliding with the metal totem pole.

This impact knocked out two teeth from Hyena King Gravehowl's large mouth.

However, Earthshaker didn't come out unscathed either; clutching the totem pole, he staggered forward several steps.

Hyena King Gravehowl, not giving up, endured the pain, pushed off with its hind legs, and lunged again, mouth open to bite.

Because he stumbled, Earthshaker actually increased the distance between himself and Hyena King Gravehowl, buying time to turn around.

Bang!

The lunge and the turn were completed almost simultaneously, but the totem pole arrived first.

The totem pole struck Hyena King Gravehowl's cheek, knocking its jaw askew and sending it flying sideways.

Opportunity!

This was the chance Earthshaker seized.

Earthshaker lunged forward, chasing after Hyena King Gravehowl, and a taming collar simultaneously appeared in his hand.

However, Earthshaker had still underestimated Hyena King Gravehowl.

The creature didn't crash to the ground but landed steadily, turned, and opened its terrifyingly savage mouth to bite at Earthshaker's head, aiming for a fatal blow.

Earthshaker and Hyena King Gravehowl charged towards each other; neither could stop, and they were about to collide.

At the critical moment, a cold light flashed in Earthshaker's eyes, and with a backhand motion, he forcefully threw the totem pole in his hand.

Chapter 625: To cling to it, or not to cling?

After a clang, came Hyena King Gravehowl's painful howl.

After this collision, Hyena King Gravehowl lost a few more teeth, and its large mouth was already crooked.

Earthshaker steadied himself and slipped the taming collar onto Hyena King Gravehowl.

The next moment, Hyena King Gravehowl stopped struggling and recalled its other duplicate, which was fighting separately against the venomous Lesser Dragon.

After the duplicate returned to its body, Hyena King Gravehowl's form reverted to its original size, and its injuries had mostly healed.

"A very impressive ability!"

Earthshaker reached out to stroke Hyena King Gravehowl's head, then looked up at Gronthar and Drakthul, who were still fighting.

"Those two hyenas, can you suppress them?"

"Oowooo..."

Receiving an affirmative reply, Earthshaker understood that he was about to earn two big favors today.

"Make them stop!"

"Oowooo..."

...

Dawn broke. Where the great fire had raged the night before, thick smoke now rose above ashes and scorched earth.

Delilah didn't feel the slightest bit of pity or remorse for the scene before her.

Because after the fire, with the forest collapsed, it was a good opportunity to hunt dark creatures and advance the army to find large tribes and cities.

After a series of horn blasts, the invading armies, fully prepared, set off again in the direction they had scouted yesterday.

This direction had been scouted and was relatively safe.

"Your Majesty, last night, many battles took place in the forest."

"Many dark creatures were killed. Should we..."

"Suck their blood and collect taxes." This was what Gormathar left unsaid.

After all, to deal with the Hatchery Spiders last night, their Stoneheart Horde had invested heavily, using up a lot of burning oils.

"It doesn't matter. This is just the beginning!"

This was Delilah's response to Gormathar. She knew very well that now was not the time to reap from the mixed armies; instead, it was time to give them some sweeteners.

Only after tasting the benefits would more greed be bred.

And greed, at certain times, was the driving force behind courage and the will to fight.

To find large dark creature clans, Delilah still had to rely on the mixed armies to share the pressure.

As for now, as long as the mixed armies didn't secretly backstab the bloodline warriors of the Black Wilderness Tribe, Delilah didn't want to bother with these major troubles.

"I hope they are still alive!"

Delilah gazed into the distance; at the end of the smoke and ashes, she felt a little worried.

In the intelligence brought back by the Sentinel Corps last night, several succubus bloodline warriors had fallen into the forest.

With the succubi's ability to fly at low altitudes for short periods, those clan members certainly wouldn't have died just like that.

Meaning, those clan members might possess new intelligence.

Provided they weren't killed by other dark creatures and weren't burned by the fire on their way back.

"You all wait here. I'm going up to take a look!"

Delilah took out a whistle and blew it three times consecutively. The Four-Winged Blood Bat from high above swooped down and picked her up.

Regarding the terrain, the fire, and real-time intelligence of the surrounding area, Delilah felt it was more prudent to see it with her own eyes.

...

The void passage: the conversation resumed.

Surprisingly, this time the conversation wasn't initiated by Orion, but by Lolth, the Mistress of Dreams, herself.

"Orion, I completely believe what you say."

"But, why should I believe that you can lead us out of this disaster?"

"Based on your strength at the peak of the Legendary level?"

"That's not enough!"

Orion felt a bit disheartened; Lolth was speaking the truth.

Although Orion believed he could match an ordinary arch lord, his level wasn't there yet, which lacked any persuasive power.

If one of Leonidas, Alexander, or Arthas were standing here, Orion was sure Lolth would immediately bow in submission and willingly sign a contract of fealty.

Pushing aside those unpleasant thoughts, Orion gazed at Lolth on the other side of the void passage and explained.

"First, you must understand, you are not surrendering to me, but to the existence behind me."

"Second, I am more powerful than you imagine. If not for my fear of those beings high above, I could slaughter you right now."

"Third, we are not cooperating, much less trading. We are giving you an opportunity."

"This opportunity is fleeting. Once the void passage disappears, it will be gone."

After saying this, Orion fell silent.

Sometimes, saying too much was counterproductive. Letting Lolth guess and imagine on her own would yield better results.

At the same time, the silent Orion put on an aloof air, psychologically pressuring Lolth and giving her a sense of urgency.

"Then, to whom am I to surrender?"

After a long while, Lolth's voice sounded from the other side. Orion could detect a hint of anticipation and nervousness in her voice.

"To him!"

Orion took out a glittering golden contract scroll, one given to him by Deputy Commander Edward.

Engraved on the scroll was a contract sigil.

As long as Lolth signed the contract, she would become the Deputy Commander's servant, one of their own.

Of course, a mere scroll couldn't possibly make a Legendary level powerhouse surrender just like that.

If she truly surrendered based on that alone, it would be a feigned surrender, an attempt to deceive Orion.

Orion wasn't naive enough to think he possessed such great charm that he could persuade Lolth with just a few words.

What Orion relied on was the wisp of a mighty divine power aura on the contract scroll.

"This is..."

Amidst Lolth's confusion and surprise, Orion quickly put the contract scroll away.

"It's enough that you know what it is. Don't say it out loud."

Orion's voice was cold, still somewhat aloof.

And after saying this, Orion fell silent again, saying nothing, continuing to act cool and detached.

On the other side of the void passage, Lolth also fell silent.

But silence did not equal calmness.

At this moment, Lolth's heart was in turmoil, like a scene of the impending apocalypse.

"That aura just now... it wasn't a lord... nor an arch lord... it was a god..."

Lolth had encountered the aura of an arch lord before.

Although the Shadowcrag Forest that Lolth ruled wasn't the direct territory of an arch lord, nominally, she was subservient to the arch lord of this region.

If there were any orders, Lolth would most likely obey.

Precisely because she had witnessed the power of an arch lord and felt their aura, Lolth knew that the aura on that scroll was definitely divine power.

Whether it was a demigod or a god, Lolth wasn't sure, though she leaned towards the former.

Regardless of which it was, what lay before Lolth was a truly powerful backer.

To cling to it, or not to cling?

In fact, neither Orion nor Lolth knew that true gods possessed their own divine kingdoms.

Gods would not easily accept a subordinate like Lolth who was not yet a believer.

Chapter 626: Our enemy has appeared

This was a city, a city hidden within Shadowcrag Forest, built from massive piled stones.

At first glance, it appeared somewhat majestic; upon a second look, it revealed more age and substance.

On the giant stones exposed on the city walls were mottled moss and bloodstains.

Against the backdrop of darkness, the city stood there, seeming somewhat unreal.

Drusilla was a succubus bloodline warrior, a member of the Sentinel Corps, and also an elder of the succubus tribe.

Drusilla possessed an excellent ability: concealment.

During this invasion, Drusilla, serving as a point soldier and one of the top scouts in the Sentinel Corps, had fallen into Shadowcrag Forest under the sonic attacks of the Dark Bat Hawks.

However, this didn't claim Drusilla's life; instead, it ignited her curiosity to explore this otherworld.

Therefore, Drusilla continued forward, moving further away from the direction of the main force.

After overcoming numerous obstacles and escaping the pursuit of dark creatures, Drusilla secretly trailed a Night Stalker and arrived here.

Drusilla had found a target, a target for plunder.

She had found a city, a city inhabited by countless dark creatures.

Judging by the appearance of those dark creatures, this was undoubtedly a city belonging to the Night Stalkers.

Drusilla hesitated; she wanted to infiltrate the city before her to gather more relevant intelligence.

But Drusilla was also afraid of alerting the enemy prematurely.

"I've left secret signs all along the way. If any clan members pass where I've been, they will surely find them."

"So, what I need to do now is wait, wait for more clan members to arrive."

Having made up her mind, Drusilla took one last look at the city before her, slowly melted into the darkness, and headed back the way she came, leaving more secret signs and letters.

Shadowcrag Forest. After surveying the terrain, Delilah returned to the center of the armies.

"Your Majesty, has our target appeared?"

The one asking was Knight Godfrey; he frequented the mysterious tavern and was very familiar with Delilah.

"No!"

Delilah shook her head. She had flown a wide circle and hadn't seen a single Dark Bat Hawk.

"According to our intelligence, Dark Bat Hawks are nocturnal creatures."

"It's daytime now, so not encountering them is quite normal."

Although Delilah said this, she knew very well that not finding the monsters in broad daylight with clear visibility was not a good sign.

Because it meant they were highly likely to be attacked the following night.

"The fire is still burning continuously. We've gained quite a bit along the way."

"If things continue like this, it would be pretty good."

Grum the dwarven warrior was very happy because, over the past few days, his stores had accumulated many forging materials.

Of course, he had also racked up a large number of orders.

"This little bit of gain isn't even enough to fill the gaps between our teeth."

"Our Stoneheart Horde consumed a lot of burning oils and fire stones; we haven't even earned back our initial investment."

Gormathar, standing behind Delilah, snorted coldly, extremely dissatisfied.

In Gormathar's view, the reason others were able to gain anything was entirely based on the sacrifices made by their Stoneheart Horde.

"In the past, dark beast tides would last three to four months. I reckon our current invasion of the Emerald Dream Realm should last about the same amount of time."

"Everyone, we still have time."

Seeing the atmosphere gradually stiffen, Saelen stepped forward to smooth things over, hazarding a guess about the potential duration of the otherworld invasion.

"Everyone, this is just the beginning. We've all sent out quite a few scouts; I believe there will be results soon."

Delilah didn't stop Gormathar's complaining; she also wanted everyone to see that the horde was making contributions.

Having contributed, they deserved returns, or at least the gratitude of the others.

Even if Gormathar hadn't spoken up, Delilah would have found an opportunity for one of Brontes or Steropes to stand up and grumble a bit.

Now that Gormathar had expressed dissatisfaction, it was Delilah's turn to comfort the crowd.

However, just then, a member of the Sentinel Corps suddenly came up, approached Delilah's side, and handed over a secret letter.

Delilah opened the secret letter in front of everyone, her eyes narrowing slightly, then gradually showing delight.

"Everyone, our enemy has appeared! Continue straight in this direction, and we will encounter a city."

Delilah didn't pass the secret letter around, and everyone sensibly refrained from crowding forward to look.

There were some rules, some boundaries, that everyone had to tacitly acknowledge and abide by.

Otherwise, the consequences would be severe.

"A city! There must be many dark creatures inside!"

"Now, those heavy weapons the dwarves brought can finally be put to use!"

Grum Ironfist the dwarf stroked his beard and laughed heartily. If they could successfully take the city ahead, the dwarven clan would surely get a good share of the spoils again.

"Pass this news down. Tell all bloodline warriors to be more alert."

"The closer we get to the city, the easier it is to be discovered."

"..."

The void passage: the conversation continued.

"Giant King Orion, I didn't sense that aura clearly just now. I want to see that scroll again."

This was the request of Lolth, Queen of the Blind Spiders, but Orion refused.

"There is only one chance!"

"You need to know, the reason you were noticed by a certain great existence wasn't because you are a Legendary level powerhouse, nor because your appearance is passable."

"It's because you are a broodmother, a Legendary level broodmother."

Affirming Lolth, acknowledging her value, was also one of Orion's reasons to persuade her.

Orion wanted Lolth to know she was valued because she had value.

This way, Lolth would follow this line of reasoning further.

Lolth would believe that as long as she consistently maintained her value, she wouldn't be abandoned, and her race would still have hope for survival.

Lolth fell silent!

She was indeed following Orion's previous words, thinking along those lines.

"By the way, I must remind you of one thing."

"This is the first time the Titanion Realm has initiated a cross-realm invasion. No one knows how long this void passage will last."

"The void passage might close tomorrow, or perhaps a month later, who knows?"

"Next year, when the void passage opens again, the one engaging me on the other side most likely won't be you."

Orion was cornering Lolth step by step; he wanted to force her into a dead end, making her throw herself into the embrace of their Champions Alliance out of helplessness and despair.

"Giant King Orion, you also cannot guarantee that the existence behind you can defeat the mighty beings of our Emerald Dream Realm, can you?"

"What if, in the war between the two realms, the Emerald Dream Realm wins?"

It had to be said, during evolution, Legendary level broodmothers really maxed out their wisdom stat.

Lolth grasped the key point, but what she didn't know was that Orion didn't necessarily represent the Titanion Realm, but rather the Valkorath Realm.

Chapter 627: There's no such thing as a free lunch in this world

In a war between two realms, as long as Edward seizes the opportunity to act amidst the chaos, the war between the Titanion Realm and the Emerald Dream Realm could reverse at any time, undergoing unknown changes.

Orion extended his palm, shamelessly making a gesture requesting precious materials.

After a moment of speechless exchange, a silk bag came from the other side of the void passage and landed in Orion's hand.

There's no such thing as a free lunch in this world.

Some words, some intelligence, certainly couldn't be free.

"Is there a difference between victory and defeat?"

"In the end, both these worlds will face a great final battle, and the Blind Spiders clan will also face its own final battle."

"At that time, are you certain your clan can survive the final battle?"

This was Orion's deduction based on Lolth's words.

Regardless of the final outcome, minor lords and tribes like them would be annihilated.

Without exaggeration, most of the demigods and arch lords in the Emerald Dream Realm had surely already secured fallback plans for themselves and their clans(tribes).

What they were currently fighting for was the right to survive and reside in the Titanion Realm.

It was even possible that some demigod beings couldn't wait for the Emerald Dream Realm to quickly perish, so they could step out at the last moment to reap benefits.

The world essence of a complete world—let alone demigods, even gods would be tempted.

"Choose to follow us, and I guarantee the Blind Spiders will surely be preserved, and even grow stronger."

"If you have ambition, you could even strive to climb higher, perhaps aiming for arch lord status."

At the critical moment, Orion, King of Giants, was making grand promises again.

The fact that Lolth, the Spider Queen, could raise the previous questions already indicated one thing.

In her heart, she had already accepted the matter of surrender.

Lolth's current questioning was merely an attempt to find ways to know more, understand more, thereby reinforcing the choice in her heart.

However, some matters Orion would never reveal unless she became one of them.

Lolth fell silent once more. She had to admit that Orion's speculations were very likely to come true.

Without a demigod powerhouse to rely on, legendary-level lords and races like them were highly likely to become cannon fodder, or even sacrificial offerings, in the future.

The silence lasted a long time. Orion sighed inwardly; Lolth not agreeing immediately showed she was indeed very cautious and wise.

...

Shadowcrag Forest, unnamed valley.

The Splitting Hyenas' territory was occupied by the troops led by Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul. Most of the Splitting Hyenas residing here became mounts for the bloodline warriors in the armies.

Hyena King Gravehowl's splitting ability was a special bloodline trait allowing one to fight many; everyone was very satisfied with such a rare mount.

As for the Splitting Hyenas that died, they were about to become offerings for this graveyard.

"They said they want to convert this valley into a burial ground, but there aren't enough corpses yet."

"Next, with the help of the hyenas, we need to sweep through all the dark creatures nearby."

The speaker was Drakthul. Before coming, Orion had instructed him to do his best to meet the requests of the several necromancers.

At this moment, Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul stood at the earthen wall by the valley entrance. Since occupying this place, their three armies had been responsible for constructing a tall earthen wall here.

The wall wasn't built for defense, but for concealment, to block the view of most spying dark creatures and unknown enemies.

"It's hard to imagine what the consequences would be if we had to fight against such undead armies."

Gronthar sighed. The more he fought alongside these skeletons, the more appalled he became by the combat power of these undead armies.

They weren't immortal, but their numbers increased the more they fought; they rose on the battlefield without a shred of fear.

Such an enemy was too terrifying.

"These skeletons can not only go into battle, but they can also dig and labor, and they don't ask for wages."

Earthshaker watched the skeleton warriors in the valley continuously digging earth and tossing corpses into deep pits to bury them, sighing with mixed feelings.

"Once those four beings initiate the dead lands conversion and set up the summoning magical formation, it will be time for us to go out and sweep the area."

"We must complete the task My lord assigned us, ensuring both quality and quantity."

Gronthar and Drakthul both nodded; they thought the same.

Having finally received a mission from Orion, they certainly didn't want to mess it up.

"Obsidian City has officially become the Prophet's fiefdom. Do you think the Prophet has taken that final step?"

During the casual chat, Gronthar brought up Onyx, who had advanced to Alpha peak and been granted a territory.

As a giant originating from the Black Forest, Gronthar paid close attention to Onyx.

One could even say Onyx was Gronthar's role model, as well as his competitor.

Before Orion unified the Black Forest, the obsidian golems and giants were evenly matched.

Therefore, Gronthar had always believed he was no worse than Onyx.

"Don't know. Probably not!"

"If the Prophet had taken that step, even during wartime, the horde would hold a celebration. That's our tradition."

Earthshaker sighed. Onyx had always been ahead of them, giving them a target to chase.

For a long time, a competitive race had formed among many tribes within the horde.

Among the Alpha-level elders, Onyx was the strongest, with Dirtclaw currently ranked second.

However, the horde then saw the emergence of Soraya and Lumi, the two Wardens.

These were two great mountains weighing down on everyone.

Yet these two mountains were right before their eyes, tangible existences they could see and touch.

And this seemed to redefine the goal for everyone, suddenly expanding their futures.

"This is another world, dark source crystals are everywhere. I believe it won't be long before the three of us can catch up to the Prophet."

"When that time comes, we'll strive for Legendary level together."

This was Drakthul's wild ambition, and also that of Earthshaker and Gronthar.

The void passage. Someone was bored stiff.

With no response from Lolth the Spider Queen, Orion immersed part of his mind into the Survivor's Platform.

Hulk: "That's what I said. Now she's not talking, still no result."

Hulk: "However, I estimate she's thought it through enough, and has mustered sufficient resolve."

Orion shared his previous conversation with Lolth with his allies in the Champions Alliance.

For matters like this, having more people thinking about it increased the possibilities.

Perhaps others had better rhetoric; if Orion just learned from them, maybe he could get Lolth to surrender?

Besides, for something concerning everyone's invasion plan, Orion didn't mind indirectly sharing the pressure.

Chapter 628: She has no choice

Leonidas: "Big guy, I have high hopes for you. You're going to be the world's best sales master; you could probably sell a pen for the price of a car."

Alexander: "Heh, he hasn't even advanced to arch lord himself, yet he's already boasting and promising to make others arch lords."

Kraken: "Hulk, you're really good at speeches."

Hulk: "I'm talking serious business with you guys. Can you all be a bit more serious?"

Orion felt exasperated. Whenever they discussed serious matters, these guys would just start fooling around.

Edward: "Based on the situation you described, that spider broodmother is very likely to surrender. For her clan, for herself, she has no choice."

Edward: "You just need to find an opportunity to send the scroll out."

The Deputy Commander's statement was very certain, implying he had grasped Lolth's inner thoughts.

Hulk: "Send the scroll out?"

Hulk: "Are you sure, Deputy Commander?"

Orion asked very seriously, because this wasn't as simple as just sending out a scroll.

If the contract scroll were seized by someone else, Orion couldn't bear the consequences.

Seemingly seeing Orion's thoughts, the Deputy Commander explained.

Edward: "Don't worry, I've inscribed a self-destruct formation within the scroll. If anything unexpected happens to the scroll, it will instantly turn into a forbidden curse scroll."

Wow!

Deputy Commander, you sly old fox.

Without a trace of doubt, Orion believed the Deputy Commander's words and had already sighed with emotion inwardly.

In that instant, Orion no longer saw the contract scroll in his hand as a trump card to coerce Lolth, but as a forbidden curse that could detonate at any moment.

Hulk: "Deputy Commander, can we not do this? I'm so scared-scared?"

Leonidas: "Haha, Hulk, you're hilarious!"

Alexander: "Set off the forbidden curse, blow him up!"

Kraken: "Deputy Commander, I'm scared-scared too! I haven't used the magic scroll you gave me yet."

Seeing Kraken's message, Orion, who had been somewhat terrified, suddenly felt cheerful.

Danger needed to be shared; misery loves company.

This kind of joy was somewhat odd, tinged with schadenfreude.

Edward: "This is a defensive measure. Any top-tier mage incorporates countermeasures when crafting scrolls."

Edward: "So, a reminder to you little ones: don't carelessly accept magic scrolls from others when you're outside."

Edward's temperament was very steady. Unlike Leonidas and Alexander, he was older, more profound.

Leonidas had that naturally open personality, able to chat about anything anywhere.

Alexander was the inwardly passionate type; although he didn't talk much usually, he was quite wild on the inside.

Therefore, Deputy Commander Edward wouldn't joke around with everyone like Leonidas could.

Edward: "Hulk, find an opportunity and send the contract scroll out."

Edward: "Don't worry about that spider broodmother not signing. As long as she dares to accept it, she will surrender sooner or later."

These words were extremely domineering.

Furthermore, Deputy Commander Edward didn't specify whether Lolth the spider broodmother would surrender actively or passively.

Unconsciously, an image appeared in Orion's mind of the Deputy Commander making Lolth the spider broodmother surrender passively.

Hmm, that scene was hard to look at directly.

Having received the Deputy Commander's affirmative reply, Orion peacefully exited the public channel.

Orion had left, but someone else in the team was feeling uneasy.

Valkorath Realm, Western War Zone.

Isabella, riding atop a colossal dragon, felt frantic inside.

Isabella also took out a magic scroll from her storage belt.

Without a doubt, this must have been the welcome gift Deputy Commander Edward gave Isabella when she joined the Champions Alliance.

"Is this really a forbidden curse magic inscribed inside?"

At first, Isabella didn't believe it.

However, after asking Alexander, Isabella had no choice but to believe.

Isabella suddenly felt some regret. Not long ago, she had charged into a sea of slime molds and encountered a lower Legendary level slime molds parasitic creature.

Isabella used all her means and eventually managed to heavily injure the slime molds parasitic creature.

But, at the last moment, Isabella herself was nearly exhausted, allowing the slime molds parasitic creature to escape for nothing.

If she had had this magic scroll back then, Isabella felt she definitely could have taken down that slime molds parasitic creature, achieving her first kill of a Legendary level monster in the Valkorath Realm.

"With this, if I plan carefully, maybe I can kill a middle, or even upper, legendary-level powerhouse fungal creature."

Isabella pondered secretly, feeling a little pleased with her own cleverness.

In fact, Isabella still underestimated the power of that magic scroll.

The magic scroll gifted by the Deputy Commander—let alone middle legendary-level beings, even an ordinary arch lord could be killed if the timing was right.

But then again, every arch lord had many trump cards and skills; they couldn't be killed just like that.

Isabella put the magic scroll away, looked down at her subordinates fighting against the fungal creatures, and felt doubt rise in her heart again.

"These fungal creatures are so hard to fight; how did those two handle them?"

"Those two," of course, referred to Orion and Kraken, who were also Legendary level.

Also being Legendary level, Isabella was very clear about the power at that level.

She couldn't understand how Orion and Kraken could easily handle such vast numbers of fungal creatures.

Especially since she heard that when Kraken and Orion faced arch lord-level fungal creatures, one was injured, and the other was victorious.

Without seeing such a thing with her own eyes, no matter what Alexander said, Isabella found it hard to believe.

Because Isabella understood very well that arch lords possessed immense power, as her own father was such an existence.

To fight against an arch lord while still at Legendary level was simply too difficult.

In Isabella's current understanding, she felt it was impossible.

At least, she couldn't do it.

...

Emerald Dream Realm. Night fell upon Delilah and her forces.

The Emerald Dream Realm seemed to have no stars. Beneath the night sky flickered an unshakeable sense of oppression.

Fire stones were lit, blazing bonfires illuminating the darkness, dispelling the filth and evil hidden within it.

In the brightly lit temporary camp, most people in the invading armies were looking up at the sky.

Because dark shadows would flit across the sky from time to time.

Those were Dark Bat Hawks, flying-type dark creatures.

Their appearance above everyone meant they considered the people below as prey.

Roar!

Delilah's mount, the Four-Winged Blood Bat, soared into the sky. This creature, cultivated by Delilah sparing no effort, had progressed rapidly in strength and was extremely powerful.

After Onyx, the Four-Winged Blood Bat was another existence in the Stoneheart Horde to reach Alpha peak.

Part of Delilah's confidence in undertaking the cross-realm invasion also came from this Four-Winged Blood Bat.

As long as she didn't encounter Legendary level powerhouses or their will projections, Delilah couldn't imagine who could possibly handle her Four-Winged Blood Bat.

This was Delilah's foundation, a trump card she displayed openly.

This Four-Winged Blood Bat not only demonstrated Delilah's power but also served as a deterrent.

It allowed her to command the armies more smoothly, ensuring strict discipline where orders were executed without fail.

Chapter 629: Free is also the most expensive

However, at this moment in the pitch-black sky, a brutal aerial battle was underway.

The Four-Winged Blood Bat was single-handedly taking on an entire Dark Bat Hawk flock.

High in the sky, dark shadows and roars were everywhere.

There were too many Dark Bat Hawks!

Delilah couldn't track the Four-Winged Blood Bat at all; she could only rely on their contractual link to sense it fighting desperately.

"We can't wait any longer! Have the spear throwers and archers attack!"

Delilah gave the order. Initially, her idea was for the Four-Winged Blood Bat to kill the leader of these Dark Bat Hawks, thereby deterring or even dispersing them.

Now, it seemed this idea was somewhat unrealistic.

Although the Four-Winged Blood Bat was very powerful, it was alone. Without backup, it could only face being mobbed.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The order given, the already impatient archers and spear throwers quickly found their targets and launched their attacks.

Among them, Saelen was the most eye-catching. She was the blood elf clan's master archer and also an Alpha-level being.

With every arrow Saelen shot, a Dark Bat Hawk fell from the sky.

As time went on, Delilah even assigned Saelen two assistants: one to hand her bolts, and one to carry them.

"Hehehe... everyone watch, I'll show you a trick too, broaden your horizons a bit."

Grum Ironfist the dwarven warrior pulled out two steel tubes from a hidden layer in his trousers, assembled them quickly and deftly, and fired a shot into the sky.

If Orion were here, he would surely be surprised to find that this thing was already an early form of a hand cannon.

Unfortunately, in this world where magic and supernatural powers coexisted, the might of firearms hadn't garnered much attention.

Even the dwarven clan currently only considered these hand cannons as novelties and hadn't tried to integrate powers from another system into them.

Following a loud bang, the steel tube smoked, sparks flew, and a Dark Bat Hawk also fell from the sky.

"See that? When it comes to beasts in the sky, dwarves aren't defenseless either."

Showing off his toy was one thing; demonstrating the strength of the dwarven clan was Grum Ironfist's true purpose.

"Grum Ironfist, that thing of yours is worse than a crossbow inscribed with a magical formation. When we use it, there's no guarantee of accuracy at all."

Many mercenaries in the mixed armies knew about these hand cannons; it could be said they were well aware of what good things the dwarven clan's blacksmith shops offered.

The mercenaries had tried these things too, but their accuracy was insufficient; for the time being, they weren't as convenient as crossbows.

"What the hell do you know? Soon, we dwarves will develop a brand new advanced version, even more powerful, allowing ordinary people to kill enemies with it."

Grum Ironfist put away his hand cannon; he wasn't carrying much ammunition and couldn't fire continuously.

Delilah glanced at Grum Ironfist the dwarven warrior, her gaze lingering on the hand cannon in his hand for a moment before looking away.

The Stoneheart Horde had also purchased a few of these and sent them to the Bureau of Weapons for research.

However, this thing seemed very difficult to research; no feedback had come from the personnel at the Bureau of Weapons.

"Have the soldiers patrol the surroundings. Tonight is destined to be an eventful one."

Without the aid of burning oils and fire stones, the great fire ignited by the Stoneheart Horde didn't last long in this Shadowcrag Forest.

The forest was full of damp giant trees exuding a dark aura; for ordinary flames to burn them wasn't impossible, but it required prolonged heating.

However, after a long time, the giant trees didn't catch fire, and the flames themselves died out first.

Without the aid of a large fire, what everyone had to face wasn't just the Dark Bat Hawks in the sky, but also various dark creatures from the ground.

"As you command!"

Gormathar, Brontes, Steropes, and others, after receiving the order, personally went down to inspect and patrol.

They wouldn't entrust security patrols that concerned their own safety to personnel from the mixed armies.

"According to the clues left by Drusilla, we are not far from that city of dark creatures."

Delilah looked up, her eyes fixed on the sky, but her mind was on the unknown city ahead.

To take one step while seeing three ahead was something a person in power must do.

...

The void passage. Orion, who had been resting with his eyes closed, slowly opened them.

Because Lolth, Queen of the Blind Spiders on the other side, had spoken again.

"Giant King Orion, I want to know, on what grounds do you guarantee the safety of me and my clan?"

Hearing Lolth ask such a question, Orion felt considerably relieved.

Because only if one had decided to surrender would they consider such forward-looking questions.

At the same time, Lolth's cautious and meticulous behavior also earned Orion's goodwill.

It had to be said, this spider broodmother was truly too cautious.

"Sign the contract, surrender voluntarily, and we will transfer a portion of your clan members away."

Orion pondered for a moment before slowly speaking.

Such an answer wasn't quite what Lolth wanted.

Her delicate eyebrows arched slightly as she gazed at Orion with her beautiful eyes; her originally firming gaze actually became more hesitant.

Orion, of course, noticed this subtle change.

"I know what you're thinking, and I understand your concerns."

"But you don't actually believe that signing a contract will immediately bring salvation to you and your clan, do you?"

Orion's demeanor once again became lofty, and he revealed a trace of disdain for Lolth's thoughts.

"Only by demonstrating your value to a mighty existence can we gain hope."

Here, Orion used "we" instead of "you," drawing his relationship with Lolth closer, subconsciously telling her: I am the same as you.

"Lolth, since you could advance to Legendary level and possess the status of a lord, you should understand that in no world does a free lunch exist."

Yes, there is no free lunch in the world.

If it's free now, it just means the time for you to pay the bill hasn't arrived yet.

And sometimes, what's free is also the most expensive.

Just like Orion; his joining the Champions Alliance wasn't free either.

Firstly, Arthas could get many good things from Orion in the early stages; this was the premise of their association.

Afterwards, when Orion entered the Champions Alliance, whether it was the two trips to the Godforsaken Land or entering the Valkorath Realm to clear out fungal creatures, Orion demonstrated his value.

Of course, when one contributes, receiving returns from the team is perfectly legitimate.

At the same time, Orion also bore significant risks.

For example, when the fungal creatures launched their all-out attack, he shared the burden of a broodmother counterpart for Arthas.

In the subsequent cleanup, he again confronted a broodmother evolution; these all involved taking great risks.

Especially the previous time, Orion had almost perished.

And in the days to come, Orion would still have to drag the Stoneheart Horde along, sharing various dangers with his allies.

Especially the Deputy Commander and the Commander; the dangers that beings of their status might bring were definitely at a disaster level.

So, could any of this be considered free?

Chapter 630: Whether you sign it or not is up to you

"Your purpose is to facilitate us, to facilitate the mighty existence behind us."

"Don't tell me you don't understand this point!"

"As for security guarantees, as long as you don't actively court disaster, even if a demigod powerhouse comes, they won't be able to take your life."

This last sentence was Orion's indirect answer to some questions.

Lolth the Spider Queen understood and grasped the relevant key points.

However, just then, Lolth saw Orion on the other side make another gesture requesting materials.

Lolth was very annoyed. To extract intelligence, she had already sent over many good things.

Unexpectedly, just as she was about to become one of them, the other party was still exploiting her.

"Giant, your greed surpasses even us dark creatures."

Lolth pondered for a moment but still sent a silk bag over.

She wanted to know what the peak Legendary level existence on the other side could reveal to her.

However, Lolth was disappointed. Orion said nothing; after fiddling with it for a moment, he sent an empty silk bag back.

Lolth caught the silk bag, very puzzled, and scanned it again in disbelief.

This time, in a corner, Lolth discovered a rolled-up contract scroll.

If one wasn't careful, it would be easy to overlook.

Just then, Orion's voice also sounded from the other side of the void passage.

"I've given you the thing. Whether you sign it or not is up to you!"

Lolth didn't respond to Orion but carefully took out the contract scroll and earnestly sensed the divine power aura on it.

Of course, she also looked at the contract's contents; the terms were somewhat harsh, not much different from an ordinary slave contract.

If there was a difference, it was that the master of the contract would be a mighty existence, a demigod powerhouse.

Sensing the aura of a demigod powerhouse, Lolth's heart was a little chaotic, and also somewhat excited and nervous.

Lolth manipulated the mist, shrouding the void passage and cutting off Orion's prying eyes.

On the other side, having sent the contract scroll out, Orion himself felt much more relaxed.

In his view, that scroll was a time bomb.

It wasn't that Orion didn't trust Deputy Commander Edward's character, nor that he distrusted Deputy Commander Edward's magical skills; rather, it was that anyone who cherished their life would send such a thing away as quickly as possible.

It's not about fearing the ten thousand possibilities, but the one in ten thousand chance of an accident. What if that one-in-ten-thousand probability of error happened to him?

...

Emerald Dream Realm, unnamed valley.

On this day, the troops were assembling. Earthshaker, Gronthar, Drakthul, Arden, and Selenis's group were preparing to go out and sweep for dark creatures.

"We'll go with you!"

Two of the four necromancers came forward, intending to go out with Earthshaker and his group.

The other two remained in the valley, continuing to perfect the relevant defensive formations.

This graveyard also needed someone to guard it.

This was everyone's foothold and also one of the potential teleportation points for the various Big Bosses from the Valkorath Realm to descend later.

"It's a pity these three venomous Lesser Dragons aren't coming with us, or we'd have a much easier time."

Drakthul looked up at the three venomous Lesser Dragons circling high above the valley.

If not for the previous needs of those four necromancers, these Lesser Dragons would surely have already become the flying mounts for Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul.

"You have this pack of hyenas following us, and you're still not satisfied?"

Earthshaker patted the Hyena King mount beneath him; he was quite satisfied with Gravehowl.

"Who would be satisfied?"

"If we could also take a Lesser Dragon as a mount, how impressive would that be?"

Drakthul spoke frankly; in any case, he wouldn't be satisfied with just a Hyena mount.

"Everyone wants to be like Orion, having their own mounts for both sky and land."

Gronthar chimed in from the side.

"Last time I went to the treasury to exchange for a taming collar, I asked an extra question. It seems the number of taming collars is running low."

Suddenly, Earthshaker said this faintly from the side, causing Gronthar's and Drakthul's expressions to change drastically.

Coming here this time, they had each only brought one taming collar.

With so many invading forces descending upon this otherworld, taming collars would definitely let everyone taste the benefits.

Meaning, after returning, taming collars would absolutely become a hot commodity.

If they were slow to act then, they definitely wouldn't be able to exchange for any.

"I regret it. Before coming out, I should have exchanged all my battle achievements for taming collars."

"Maybe when we go back this time, we can even squeeze some good things out of those elders on the council."

Gronthar and Drakthul were filled with regret; they both still had many battle achievements.

The reason they hadn't exchanged all of them was that they were saving them for Alpha-level cultivation resources, hoping to break through to Alpha peak.

As long as one could reach Alpha peak, Orion would grant them an opportunity to strive for Legendary level.

This led to the members of the Stoneheart Horde council continuously accumulating battle achievements one by one.

Legendary level was what those Alpha-level elders dreamed of, and it also required accumulating a foundation bit by bit.

"Excuse me, three elders, I'd like to ask, the taming collar you used to subdue the Hyena King earlier, can it really be exchanged for in the horde treasury?"

The one asking was Selenis of the scorpion tribe; she was now also a member of the Stoneheart Horde.

However, Selenis, entrusted by Soraya, spent years in the Golden Pearl desert area looking after and managing her clan members, so she wasn't very familiar with some internal matters of the Stoneheart Horde.

Compared to Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Drakthul, who often participated in operations, the intelligence Selenis and Arden possessed was scarce.

"You don't know?"

"Orion used a large amount of resources to exchange for a batch of taming collars from a certain existence, and all of them were placed in the horde treasury."

"As long as one is a member of the council and has enough battle achievements, they are eligible to exchange for them."

Battle achievements, taming collar—these two keywords constantly assailed the nerves and hearts of Selenis and Arden.

After submitting to the Stoneheart Horde, one of them had been guarding the home, while the other had been traveling; neither had any battle achievements to their name.

They weren't qualified to exchange for taming collars.

At this moment, Selenis and Arden were both filled with immense regret.

Although they seemed free and safe, they had also missed out on a lot.

"My Queen only asked me to look after the horde; she didn't say I couldn't leave the Golden Pearl."

"Should I go out more often, contribute to the horde?"

At this moment, Selenis was tempted and also couldn't wait.

A taming collar—if she could also exchange for one, then find some friends to help, taming a flying mount shouldn't be difficult.

Then, on the ground, Selenis could ride a giant scorpion, and in the sky, she would also have her own flying mount.

Thus, the sky's restraint on Selenis would be lifted.

In this way, Selenis's combat power would see a significant improvement.

Even when participating in large-scale wars, she would have a strong ability to protect herself.