

Titan King 701

Chapter 701: This world isn't as simple as you think

While Dirtclaw was flattering him, he had already presented a parchment scroll filled with intelligence.

Orion unrolled the parchment. Recorded inside was the topographical distribution of Gloomwood Forest and a map showing the density distribution of dark fiends.

"You weren't discovered, were you?"

Orion put away the parchment and glanced at Dirtclaw.

"Master, all those who scouted for intelligence were members of the harpy race, and most of the intelligence was gathered at night."

"Those gnolls of my tribe did not venture deep into Gloomwood Forest. We did not alert those dark fiends."

Orion nodded, very satisfied with Dirtclaw's efficiency.

"Lorelia, Thundar, prepare yourselves. As soon as our allies return, we will immediately launch an invasion of Gloomwood Forest."

"Your main forces can start quietly moving south in advance."

This was not a suggestion; it was an order.

"As you command, Master!"

"As you command, My Lord!"

Lorelia's and Thundar's expressions turned serious; they knew it was time for them to get down to business.

"Prophet, you will remain in Lorelia City and assist Lumi in guarding this place."

Orion turned his head and also gave Onyx his assignment.

Onyx, who had been eager and ready for a killing spree, felt the frenzy and excitement in his eyes gradually fade after receiving the garrison duty.

"Prophet, the safety of Lorelia City is paramount to the Stoneheart Horde."

"Our invasion can fail, but this place cannot be lost."

Orion reached out and lightly patted Onyx's shoulder.

These few people around him were all those Orion had brought out from the Black Forest. Important tasks, Orion would only entrust to them.

Lorelia City was truly important. Not only did it house the cross-realm teleportation array, but also the slumbering Clymene and the others.

"Rest assured, I will definitely guard this place well!"

Orion smiled. After dismissing the few who had received their tasks, he went to see Lumi. After they made love, they shared some private words.

Once everything had quieted down, Orion immersed his consciousness into the Survivor's Platform, went to the Champions Alliance public channel, and began to communicate with the others.

Leonidas: "Hahaha... Alexander, I've already made my move over here and scored a victory right at the start."

Leonidas: "How are things on your end?"

Alexander: "Still in the preparation phase. The undead armies are in a state of rapid troop production."

This was prior communication between Leonidas and Alexander. Through these messages, Orion realized that the Aarakocra race to the west had already been eliminated by Leonidas.

Orion continued to read their idle chat for a while longer before sending an inquiry to Leonidas.

Hulk: "Leonidas, has Kraken been successfully brought over?"

Before long, Orion received replies from Leonidas and Kraken.

Kraken: "Hahaha, Hulk, I've already arrived and have set up a Nest on the western side of this continent of yours."

Kraken: "With us overlooking both sea and land, it's even more convenient for invasion!"

Kraken was somewhat excited because these sea regions would all be his in the future.

Leonidas: "Squiddy, take it easy. This world isn't as simple as you think. Just on this half of the continent where we are, I can faintly sense the aura of an Arch Lord."

Hulk: "Bro, when are you returning? Intelligence gathering for the next target is almost complete."

Leonidas: "Don't rush. I'm on my way back; I'll reach Red Moon Valley in three days at most."

Seeing Leonidas's reply, Orion sighed quietly to himself.

Leonidas's army of five hundred thousand wyverns was probably even more formidable than Orion had imagined.

In less than half a month, the Stratus Nest had been completely wiped out by them.

However, Alexander and Isabella were still in the preparation phase, which puzzled Orion somewhat.

Logically speaking, with Alexander's strength and foundation, he definitely shouldn't be inferior to Leonidas.

Orion, feeling puzzled, exited the public channel. He turned his attention to the trading platform, preparing to browse the items on sale there for these three days.

Emerald Dream Realm, Dawn Continent, Shadowcrag Forest.

Roar!

A high-pitched, resonant dragon's roar echoed through Shadowcrag Forest, completely shattering the tranquility here.

The oppressive silhouette of a colossal dragon flew past at a low altitude. All the Blind Spiders hidden in Shadowcrag Forest were suppressed by its draconic might.

"Mr. Alexander, that spider queen is hiding. Is patrolling like this going to have any effect?"

On the colossal dragon's back stood two figures; they were precisely Alexander and Isabella, who had arrived here.

Alexander hadn't hidden it from Leonidas; he and Isabella were indeed still in the preparation phase. Their main forces were stationed in the valley that Dace, Otho, and the others had developed during their cross-realm invasion.

Now, that valley had been transformed into a graveyard.

The undead lords Alexander had brought were in that valley, activating summoning formations and amassing troops day and night.

As for this scene unfolding in Shadowcrag Forest, it was entirely Alexander accompanying Isabella for practice.

Queen Lolth of the Blind Spiders, who had consistently refused to sign the contract, had become Isabella's sparring partner.

"Yes, it does. She will feel threatened; she will become increasingly afraid."

"Once she's afraid, she'll look for backing, and it's highly probable she'll sign the contract within a short time."

Alexander looked down, gazing at Shadowcrag Forest beneath him. He had actually already sensed Lolth's position.

However, this time was for Isabella's training; Alexander had no intention of intervening.

"That spider queen, what do you think of her strength?"

Alexander withdrew his gaze, wanting to hear how Isabella would assess the difference in strength between herself and Lolth.

"In a one-on-one fight, I might not necessarily be able to defeat her."

“If the battlefield is in the sky, I have my colossal dragon; victory would surely be mine.”

“If the battlefield is in Shadowcrag Forest below, the outcome is hard to say.”

It had to be said, Isabella’s assessment of her own strength was quite clear; she didn’t judge the battle situation with her inherent arrogance.

“You continue. Keep pressuring her!”

“If we want to invade this continent, this spider broodmother will play a very significant role.”

Alexander didn’t offer Isabella any advice. In his view, as long as one’s self-awareness was clear enough, it was a good sign.

“Alexander, there’s a question I’ve never been able to figure out.”

“Get straight to the point!”

Isabella, while guiding the colossal dragon, voiced the doubt in her heart.

“With such a resource-rich world, why didn’t that Hulk hide it and invade it slowly himself later on? This world would sooner or later be unified by him.”

“According to what you said before, Hulk has the combat power of an Arch Lord. The more time passes, the more advantageous it would surely be for him.”

Isabella glanced at Alexander. Seeing he didn’t speak, she continued to express the doubts in her heart.

“I know that demigod experts exist in this world. According to your and the Deputy Commander’s discussion, the divine war here might last for several hundred years, or even longer.”

“In such a long time, given Hulk’s rate of progress, it would be enough for him to mature.”

“I just feel that sharing such a good world is a bit unwise.”

Chapter 702: Let’s fuck ’em up

This was what Isabella truly thought, and she shared it with Alexander, hoping for his insight.

In her mind, most people would keep good things to themselves, to savor them privately.

Isabella wasn’t necessarily against sharing good things, but this particular situation struck her as odd.

“You’ll understand eventually!”

Alexander glanced at Isabella but didn’t elaborate.

In Alexander’s mind, Isabella would find the best answer when she figured it out herself.

Orion had shared the Emerald Dream Realm partly because he wasn’t strong enough on his own, and partly because he faced powerful enemies.

Another reason was to strengthen his bonds with the members of the Champions Alliance.

Alexander imagined that after the war in the Emerald Dream Realm, Orion would be fully accepted into their circle—into the Champions Alliance.

Orion's vision for a shared world won the respect of Commander Edward, Leonidas, and Alexander.

This group, a mix of the righteous and the nefarious, had all slaughtered countless beings and possessed a wealth of experience.

The members of the Champions Alliance had come together because they all recognized a certain truth:

True allies were those who looked out for each other's interests and offered mutual support.

Orion would integrate fully into their circle even before Kraken.

At that point, Orion would become the closest of friends with Leonidas, Alexander, and Edward.

This was unlike Kraken and Isabella, whose interactions remained reserved.

Isabella didn't understand this principle.

Only when Isabella understood this and began to contribute meaningfully to her allies would she gradually earn her place among Leonidas, Edward, Arthas, and the others.

For now, everyone was polite to Isabella out of respect for Alexander and because she was a potential teammate.

Joining the Champions Alliance didn't automatically make one a core member.

The principle was just that simple!

Three days later, at Red Moon Valley.

Leonidas returned, and Orion went out of the city to greet him.

"Orion, this is your share!"

Leonidas landed on the city wall and tossed a storage pouch to Orion, which was filled with dark source crystals.

“Thanks!”

Orion didn’t stand on ceremony. He took the storage pouch, glanced inside, then handed it to Lorelia, who was behind him.

The cave spiders were slated to be the main ground invasion force, so no amount of resources given to her would be excessive.

“This trip was quite fruitful. Besides some dark source crystals and special ores, we gained nearly two hundred thousand more aerial units.”

Leonidas beamed; Vexis and her subordinates had converted all two hundred thousand aerial units—they were all undead.

Orion glanced at the Aarakocra sleeping on the mountain peaks within Red Moon Valley. With these undead troops assisting, his spiders would suffer fewer losses.

Orion led Leonidas into the cavern beneath the castle, then took out the map of Gloomwood Forest to share the intelligence Dirtclaw had gathered.

“Bro, Gloomwood Forest is south of us. We’ll be invading from north to south this time.”

“Once we take this area, everything south of Red Moon Valley will be secured as our rear.”

“This battle must not fail. We can’t give the dark creatures a chance to pincer us.”

Invading Gloomwood Forest, slaughtering the dark creatures, and preventing any intelligence leaks in the short term—this was what Orion and his forces needed to accomplish.

“Bro, things might not be as simple as we think.”

Leonidas frowned, picking up where Orion left off, and shared his own perspective.

“If my senses aren’t mistaken, there are two Arch Lords on this half of the continent.”

“Their auras are a bit strange. They might be avatars, or perhaps some other kind of hidden entity.”

“Invading the dark creatures’ territory might not attract their attention, but slaughtering the races within that territory definitely will.”

“Think about it. If you were one of the rulers of this half-continent, wouldn’t you plant scouts and spies among the races under your jurisdiction?”

“If the subjects in your territory are being slaughtered, wouldn’t you sense the change in faith energy?”

Hearing this, Orion's face suddenly darkened. This was something he hadn't considered.

What Leonidas mentioned was inevitable.

Just like with the Stoneheart Horde, Delilah, who controlled the Sentinel Corps, had surely planted countless spies among the major races within their territory.

"Bro, so what you're saying is...?"

"This southern war needs to be fast. We must quickly occupy Gloomwood Forest, then turn our forces north and kill as many as we can before those natives react and unite."

Leonidas was very serious, but his mood wasn't as heavy as Orion's.

"Bro, you need to understand, this world is definitely divided among those demigods and Arch Lords."

"We are now treading on the turf of some Arch Lord or demigod. To put it bluntly, our enemies will react very soon."

“Fortunately, our apparent strength is only at the peak Legendary level, so it won’t attract the real heavy hitters.”

“But even so, we’ll definitely encounter entities like avatars with the strength of Arch Lords.”

Leonidas transformed back into his dragon form. He stretched out a dragon claw, patted Orion’s shoulder, and declared with bold confidence:

“Two Arch Lord avatars, bro. One for each of us. Let’s fuck ’em up.”

“If we really stir up trouble, we’ll just let Deputy Commander Edward clean up our mess, right?”

“Hehehe...”

Orion gave a wry smile, his thoughts involuntarily turning to Bloodreaver, who resided in the Ashenfang Traverse.

One of those two powerful auras Leonidas mentioned might just be the entity within the sarcophagus.

“No time to lose. Shall we set off now?”

“Alright!”

Some things, once decided, should be done immediately.

Besides, Orion had already made the necessary arrangements.

Days earlier, he had ordered Lorelia’s cave spider armies and Thundar’s cavalry regiment to move south. The invasion could begin at any moment.

In a flash of electricity, Orion appeared high in the sky, landing on a wyvern. His sheer weight caused the mount to dip momentarily before it soared upwards again.

Leonidas, transformed into a fire dragon, flew alongside, teasing Orion in a booming voice.

“Bro, no offense, but you really need a Legendary-level flying mount. Otherwise, you’re looking a bit déclassé.”

“Look at that Isabella chick—her colossal dragon is so damn cool, right? Why can’t your abyssal dragon fly?”

“Worst case, get an avatar like mine, one that can fight and fly.”

“Preferably a dragon type, too. Then we could team up and unleash a synchronized dragon roar.”

“Awoooo...”

Leonidas let out a howl, and hundreds of thousands of wyverns echoed him in unison. The scene possessed a strangely beautiful quality.

Orion nodded, then shook his head, a faint, bitter smile on his face.

Legendary-level flying mounts—were they really that easy to obtain?

His abyssal dragon hadn’t yet evolved wings, and it was unclear when it would. He did have another flying mount, Thunderhawk Rayden, but it was only Alpha-level.

Thunderhawk Rayden was currently following Orion’s orders to assemble the thunderhawk armies. Once successful, Orion would bring them into the Emerald Dream Realm.

“Then, I’ll have to train Rayden properly!”

“Hopefully, he can also advance to Legendary level!”

Orion silently planned his future. Some things couldn't be rushed, but they also couldn't be delayed indefinitely.

Chapter 703: We need to pick up the pace

Titanion Realm, Southern Ironveil Escarpment.

Excavating a canal was an enormous undertaking, a colossal project demanding vast financial, material, and human resources.

Fortunately, within the Stoneheart Horde, Delilah was calling the shots.

All the tools, supplies, and manpower needed for the canal were hers to command with a single word.

Gazing at the pit before her—some fifteen hundred feet in radius—Delilah found herself deep in thought. She suddenly realized she'd underestimated the sheer scale of digging the canal.

Before the work began, she had confidently taken on the responsibility, believing it to be a simple excavation.

Only when the excavation started and they encountered various difficulties did Delilah realize this grand project was far more complex than she had imagined.

Firstly, Orion intended to train troops here. The site would hold many of the Stoneheart Horde's secrets, so it had to be isolated from the Sea Race and secure from their interference.

In other words, they needed to dig an artificial lake near the Ironveil Escarpment—one large enough, private enough, and suitable for military training.

And for this artificial lake to serve for both training troops and cultivating Ocean Hunters, its required depth and width had already far exceeded Delilah's initial estimates.

“Sylvana, do you think our lord’s grand canal plan is truly feasible?”

Sylvana stood behind Delilah, gently supported by an elder of the fox tribe.

“In the great river of fate, I have seen many mighty ships. Aboard them are warriors of various races and... and merchants.”

“The warriors sing in triumph, the merchants count their goods, their faces alight with smiles and eager anticipation.”

“I also saw that wherever these mighty ships passed, deep mountains, forests, swamps, and hills... all were illuminated, bustling with new life.”

Sylvana didn’t answer Delilah’s question directly. She gazed at the newly excavated pit below the escarpment, her mind’s eye tracing the currents of fate into the future.

The future, starting from here, was one of prosperity.

“Respected Elder of Stewardship, perhaps you are now undertaking one of the most significant endeavors—one that is both grand and vital for the Stoneheart Horde.”

Delilah turned back and looked at Sylvana quietly.

Sylvana’s exquisite face, caressed by the sea breeze, possessed an almost sacred beauty.

Delilah blinked, thinking her eyes were playing tricks on her.

When Delilah looked at Sylvana again, Sylvana’s eyes, though blind and devoid of luster, held a mixture of confusion and doubt, yet also a flicker of affirmation amidst the uncertainty.

“It seems you’re quite optimistic about the grand canal plan, then?”

Delilah smiled, and her smile was breathtaking.

“Elder of Stewardship, I am optimistic about Lord Orion, and optimistic about the Stoneheart Horde.”

“Hehehe...”

Delilah laughed, very pleased with Sylvana’s answer.

“Sylvana, you’re becoming more and more charming!”

“If I were Orion, I’d make love to you every day, ensure you couldn’t leave the bed, and have you birthing his children year after year.”

This was Delilah’s jest, the kind of private talk shared between women.

At such a jest, Sylvana’s face flushed slightly, as if a stirring, unmentionable memory had surfaced.

“Heeheehee... Orion’s little fox wants to make love with her man!”

Delilah’s laughter was unrestrained. Such a joke, before Pallas was born, she would never have been able to utter.

Since Pallas’s birth and Delilah’s own advancement to Alpha peak, her mindset had broadened considerably.

As long as Pallas’s position and the interests of the succubus race within the Stoneheart Horde were not threatened, Delilah was open-minded and could take a joke.

Just then, in the distant sky, a harpy flew swiftly towards them.

It was a member of the Sentinel Corps. Upon sensing its presence, Delilah's expression instantly sobered.

An operative from the Sentinel Corps wouldn't appear here without good cause; something significant must have occurred.

After a moment, the harpy landed nearby and delivered an intelligence report.

After a nearby succubus guard relayed the report to Delilah, the harpy who delivered it turned, ascended into the sky, and soon vanished from sight.

"Has it begun?"

This was the first thing Delilah said after absorbing the report, her voice tinged with surprise and a hint of excitement.

Sylvana watched Delilah intently. Though her beautiful eyes were blind and held no light, they seemed all the more focused for it.

"Want to know what happened?"

"Mm!"

"The human kingdom and the dwarves have allied and declared war on the Sea Race. They've chosen to invade the eastern sea regions of the continent, targeting the Sea Race's naga."

Delilah hid nothing. The Sylvana before her was a keen intellect; before her surrender, she had been a prophet.

Delilah needed Sylvana's sharp mind; her divination and insight were remarkably prescient.

“So, Lord Lycanor’s trip to the human kingdom didn’t achieve its intended purpose,” Sylvana observed.

According to the plan discussed by the blood elves and the Stoneheart Horde, the humans, blood elves, and the Horde were to confront the Merfolk in the western sea regions together. With the combined strength and resources of the three factions, mutual cooperation and a coordinated approach would have undoubtedly been best.

After all, this war against the Sea Race was bound to last a very long time.

“The human kingdom’s choice is not the optimal one,” Delilah said. “The higher-ups of the blood elf race probably didn’t expect this, and neither did we. Before the dragons returned, the human kingdom managed to rule the south. They are powerful and intelligent; there’s no doubt about that. Therefore, for the human kingdom to make such a choice, they must have their own reasons. For them, this choice is undoubtedly the most advantageous one.”

Sylvana knew Delilah valued her insight. She offered her perspective without reservation:

“We don’t truly understand the humans’ intentions; we can only watch how events unfold. However, without the human kingdom as a primary force in the western sea, we and the blood elves will undoubtedly face greater pressure. On the surface, this certainly doesn’t appear to be a positive development.”

Delilah frowned. The human kingdom choosing not to participate in the west was something she hadn’t anticipated.

“The dragons and humans, always so mysterious in their dealings, both open and secret. What games are they playing?”

Delilah gazed at the distant sea, her hair disheveled by the wind. Seen from the side, her contemplative figure possessed a striking, almost ethereal grace.

“Elder of Stewardship, when will we declare war on the Sea Race?” Sylvana asked.

“After the blood elves declare war,” Delilah replied, her voice taking on a colder edge. “There’s an order to these things; let them take the lead and bear the initial brunt.”

She stood on the escarpment.

“Relay my orders: transfer the three main armies stationed in Stoneheart City here. Have them join the canal excavation efforts as well.”

“We need to pick up the pace!”

Chapter 704: Wings of Flame

Emerald Dream Realm, Gloomwood Forest.

Darkness lurked deep within the dense woods.

The arrival of the cave spiders cast an even deeper hush over the silent forest.

From time to time, a light breeze rustled the leaves; the sound, like whispering, broke the silence only to deepen the hair-raising, sinister atmosphere.

Dark silhouettes flitting through the trees made the forest increasingly grim and terrifying.

Awooo!

Suddenly, a beast’s roar echoed through the forest—the sound of a dark fiend.

The dark fiend was pitch black, its hide deflecting most of the force from ordinary attacks.

Due to the special structure of their hides, these monsters were essentially immune to physical attacks.

However, these dark fiends took double damage from magical attacks.

“Dirtclaw is the greatest, strongest, most handsome gnoll warrior!”

“Revel in my hellfire! I shall burn away all sin and extinguish the hopes of these dark creatures.”

“This shall be the place of your damnation!”

Dirtclaw, transformed into a Hellhound, thrust a paw into the body of the dark fiend beneath him and pulled out an Alpha-level dark source crystal.

The dark fiend had already succumbed to the hellfire.

The shriek moments ago had come from this dark fiend as Dirtclaw killed it.

It was like a signal; beast roars began to echo one after another throughout Gloomwood Forest.

“Bro Fergus, how was my declaration just now? Did it have that touch of the sacred? That ‘revered by thousands’ vibe?”

Dirtclaw tilted his head, asking Fergus, the giant-blooded warrior beside him.

Fergus rode an abyssal dragon, his aura formidable, his entire being radiating a potent force of blood and vitality.

This inability to fully retract his aura indicated that Fergus had achieved a new breakthrough in his cultivation.

Just in the past two days, Fergus had broken through to Alpha-level.

“Elder Dirtclaw, your mighty strength is already revered by thousands.”

“Hahaha... Bro Fergus, you sure know how to flatter.”

Dirtclaw stayed close to Fergus, who had just advanced to Alpha-level, partly to foster their bond and partly to protect him.

Protecting Fergus was not a task given to Dirtclaw by Orion, but by Delilah.

Fergus was a genius of the Blackrock Giant clan.

The more geniuses the Blackrock Giants produced, the more stable their clan’s position within the Stoneheart Horde became, which would indirectly further consolidate the succubus race’s status.

Of course, this also included the gnoll race.

Some advantages had to be built incrementally, through small deeds. When it came to matters concerning his own interests and the status of his gnoll race, Dirtclaw was very patient.

Aside from the recently born Pallas, Fergus and Tarn also held Orion’s attention; this was a widely acknowledged fact within the Stoneheart Horde.

With every distribution of supplies, the ever-efficient Lilith would personally review the allocations, specifically granting the giant clans extra preferential treatment.

In Lilith’s view, such matters could not be treated carelessly.

Awoooo!

Dirtclaw let out a roar, his mood excellent, hellfire blazing around his body. He cut an incredibly valiant and dashing figure.

“There’ll be non-stop battles up ahead. This is our chance to rack up achievements and boost our strength.”

“Bro Fergus, stick with your friend Dirtclaw. Let’s get your abyssal dragon to Alpha-level ASAP.”

Dirtclaw’s words made Fergus’s heart burn with an intense fire.

Alpha-level—that would be the second abyssal dragon of that rank, after Orion’s.

Such an honor was something Fergus craved immensely.

This was a path filled with glory, for it was a road Orion himself had walked.

“My fighting spirit still burns! I cannot be blinded by pride! My road ahead is still long.” Fergus clenched his fist. “I can definitely do it!”

Roar!

The abyssal dragon let out a deep growl, a sound like rolling thunder that penetrated Gloomwood Forest, as if echoing its master’s declaration to the world.

“Awoooo, Bro Fergus, keep up! I’m about to take off!”

“I will guard your back, Elder Dirtclaw.”

The invasion had begun, and with it, the slaughter.

Slaughter was inevitable, as Orion and Leonidas needed to continually expand their forces.

High in the sky, Leonidas flapped his leathery wings and called out to Orion.

“Bro, get on my back! The wyvern you’re on is too slow!”

“That Legendary-level dark creature sensed us. The bugger’s trying to bolt.”

Despite being only an avatar, Leonidas’s perception range was still much wider than Orion’s.

Leonidas could sense threats far sooner than Orion.

It had to be said, the gap between an Arch Lord and a Legendary-level entity was truly immense.

With a crackle of electricity, Orion didn’t stand on ceremony and instantly appeared on Leonidas’s back.

“Hahaha... Well? How’s this for a special experience?”

“My avatar might not compare to a colossal dragon, but it’s still a fire dragon of excellent lineage. Feels pretty damn good, doesn’t it?”

Honestly, Orion didn’t feel much of anything.

The main reason was that he was on Leonidas, someone he deeply respected.

In Orion’s heart, he didn’t dare to think of him as a mere mount.

Besides, even if he did feel something, only an idiot would say so at a time like this.

If it were to be mentioned, it should be when their friendship had deepened, brought up as an amusing anecdote.

“Bro, is that Legendary-level dark fiend at peak Legendary?”

It wasn't surprising Orion asked; the truth was, he hadn't even sensed this dark fiend lord before it chose to flee.

“Could the dark fiend lord's perception be stronger than mine?”

This was Orion's doubt, and he also began to question the dark fiend lord's actual strength.

“Awooo... Peak Legendary? That fellow is far from it. Judging by its aura, it's an upper-tier Legendary at best.”

“The critter probably has some special way of sensing us and bolted because it knew it was outmatched.”

Hearing this, Orion squinted at the path ahead and said nothing.

In such a situation, choosing to escape was indeed the most sensible course of action.

When facing two opponents stronger than oneself, if one lacked the resolve for a fight to the death, abandoning one's lair, fleeing with some of one's kin, and finding allies to stage a comeback was the wisest move.

“Bro, can we make it? Can we catch up?”

“Bro, don't underestimate me. It won't get away.”

As Leonidas finished speaking, his dragon mouth opened slightly, and a low draconic incantation emerged. The surrounding fire elements immediately flared with greater intensity.

A moment later, a pair of enormous flame wings erupted from the fire dragon's ribs. With a single flap of these fiery wings, Leonidas's speed surged, increasing by two whole tiers.

"Haha, these are the Wings of Flame!"

"Ever seen 'em? My own draconic magic—pretty badass, huh?"

A howling gale rushed past Orion's face, faintly carrying Leonidas's proud and flamboyant laughter through the wind.

Chapter 705: Mysterious eggs

The midsummer wind, caressed the face, bringing a delicate coolness and a whisper of anticipation.

Delilah lost herself for a moment in this breeze, envisioning the future.

It was during this brief reverie that the message she'd just received didn't quite register.

Delilah gazed at the fellow succubus before her and asked, slightly confused.

"What did you just say?"

The succubus warrior from the Sentinel Corps thought it a bit strange but dared not question her superior, instead repeating what she had just said.

"While excavating the artificial lake, the slaves accidentally caused a section of land to collapse, revealing an underground cavern. Inside, they found rows upon rows of mysterious eggs, neatly stacked."

The succubus warrior wasn't certain if they were indeed insect eggs.

However, Dace, who was in charge of overseeing the slaves, had instructed her to report it this way.

"My Lady, the cavern has already been secured by Elders Dace and Otho. Would you like to go and see it?"

"Lead the way!"

Delilah didn't hesitate, immediately instructing the succubus to lead on.

Half an hour later, Delilah stepped into the mysterious cavern. It was now guarded by regular Stoneheart Horde troops—all their own people.

As for the slaves who had initially stumbled upon it, they had all been silenced and eliminated.

This was standard procedure; in the eyes of Delilah and her ilk, slaves were ultimately meant to be eliminated.

"Elder of Stewardship!"

Dace and Otho, guarding the entrance, greeted her respectfully. Though they were the cavern's guards, Delilah was in command here, and her orders were paramount.

"Show me."

Dace glanced at Otho, signaling him to remain and guard the cavern entrance, then led Delilah into the cavern.

Fifty feet into the cavern, rows of neatly arranged, ostrich-egg-sized mysterious eggs came into Delilah's view.

Looking further, she saw densely packed mysterious eggs, all of the same color.

Delilah's fine brows furrowed. She walked another three hundred feet into the cavern, confirming it was filled entirely with these mysterious eggs and devoid of any beastly aura, before approaching one of the eggs at random.

Staring at the mysterious egg, Delilah pondered for a moment, then took out a dagger Orion had gifted her and decisively sliced downwards.

The eggshell broke, and a viscous, fishy-smelling fluid leaked out. It was clear, indicating these were not dead eggs.

Delilah, holding the dagger, pried open the eggshell and looked at the contents inside.

In the center of the white albumen, a nondescript lump of flesh floated.

At this, Delilah's frown deepened further; she couldn't identify what kind of creature it was—perhaps an insect, perhaps a bird.

These eggs, buried underground, seemed utterly mysterious no matter how one looked at them.

Delilah stood up, scanned the mysterious eggs in the cavern, and after a few moments, made her decision.

"Collect these, pack them all up, and send them to Lilith."

"Just because we can't identify them doesn't mean she can't."

This was the best way to handle it, as Lilith was a beastmaster and had many methods to determine the origin of these mysterious eggs.

“As you command!”

Dace acknowledged, summoned a few of his giant kinsmen, and they immediately set to work.

After giving a few more instructions, Delilah exited the cavern and returned to the top of the escarpment.

The escarpment housed the command post; all matters were relayed there, and Delilah couldn’t afford to be away for too long.

Furthermore, the discovery of the mysterious cavern and its unknown eggs made Delilah realize this southern land still held many secrets.

“Go, dispatch a squadron to monitor this entire vicinity.”

“Without my command, no one is permitted to leave this area.”

“Also, monitor the excavation process. Report any unexpected occurrences during the digging to me immediately.”

Delilah walked straight ahead without looking back, her commands already being relayed by a shadowy figure trailing behind her.

...

Emerald Dream Realm, Gloomwood Forest.

Leonidas, his Wings of Flame summoned, carried Orion as they pursued the dark fiend lord attempting to escape.

Far in the distance, Orion could already sense the aura of the Legendary-level dark fiend.

The creature was incredibly fast, actually running upon the void. As it ran, small tornadoes swirled around each of its four legs.

“Awooo... We’ve caught up, bro! You want to take it, or shall I?”

Leonidas let out a howl, his excitement palpable. Gazing at the fleeing dark fiend lord in the distance, he felt a cat-and-mouse-like sense of superiority.

“I’ll take it. You handled the last one!”

Orion said this and transformed into a bolt of lightning, continuing the pursuit into the distance.

To catch up to the enemy, Orion continuously unleashed Instant Impact.

Using such a collision-based attack to hunt down the dark fiend lord showed just how serious Orion was.

Because of this, Orion appeared behind the dark fiend lord within a few blinks of an eye.

“Continuously using Instant Impact is pretty taxing on the body!”

Orion sighed inwardly. The Instant Impact skill was powerful, but that didn’t mean it had no drawbacks.

Moving at such speed, comparable to teleportation, his massive physique endured immense stress.

Instant Impact wasn't true teleportation; it lacked an inherent connection to spatial manipulation. This continuous, uninterrupted rushing was proving somewhat taxing, even for Orion.

However, this strain was insignificant compared to the need to eliminate the enemy before him.

Tszla!

The flames at the tip of his projected trident flared intensely, its outer edges a flickering interplay of electricity, blood-qi, Abyssal energy, and other transcendent powers.

"Kill!"

Orion roared, his figure vanishing from its spot.

Boom!

Following a thunderous explosion, an invisible sonic wave blasted outwards, scattering the dark clouds in the sky.

The wyverns flying at low altitudes, continuously attacking the dark fiends, also suffered collateral damage.

They were thrown off course, tumbling to the ground.

Fortunately, most of the dark fiends were desperately fleeing and didn't seize the opportunity to pounce on them.

"Mighty one, I am willing to submit!"

Orion landed, approaching the enormous dark fiend lord with his trident held inverted.

The dark fiend lord's body was immense; Orion estimated its length to be at least a thousand feet.

The dark fiend lord didn't ask Orion's origin, nor did it question why Orion was attacking it. Its very first words were a plea for mercy and an offer of surrender.

Orion remained expressionless, saying nothing.

In truth, Orion was also somewhat surprised; this dark fiend lord had taken a full-power blow from him in his normal state and survived. It clearly possessed considerable strength.

Orion raised his trident. A colossal blood-red spear materialized above the dark fiend lord's head and, amidst the creature's terrified gaze, descended.

"Damn it, I don't want to die!"

The dark fiend lord raised its twin claws, upon which two black whirlwinds were coalescing.

These two whirlwinds were originally intended for a sneak attack on Orion while it feigned surrender; now, they could only be used for a final, desperate struggle.

Chapter 706: Prepare for battle

Rumble!

A violent explosion erupted. Orion activated Battle Will Surge to shield himself from the blast's impact.

Once everything had calmed, Orion strode forward and, from the dark fiend lord's enormous head, extracted a Legendary-level dark source crystal.

“What a pity!” Leonidas said. “If Arthas weren’t asleep, he definitely could have turned this little kitty into an undead.”

Orion almost broke out in a sweat; the powerful dark fiend lord was just a “little kitty” in Leonidas’s eyes.

Orion, too, found it somewhat regrettable. If their side could gain an additional upper-Legendary powerhouse, this invasion would be somewhat easier.

Vexis did have the ability to form a contract, but she would first have to abandon the flying Aarakocra she had previously contracted.

With Vexis’s current power, she wasn’t strong enough to maintain contracts with two Legendary-level beings simultaneously.

“Leonidas, do you want the corpse?” Orion asked.

“Hmm... You took it down, you deal with it.”

After Leonidas returned from Stratus in the west, Orion had heard Vexis mention that Leonidas was collecting high-level corpses to feed his dragon brood.

“Using this fellow’s corpse to feed those dragon whelps is a bit of a waste,” Leonidas mused.

“Don’t you have a way to convert Skeletal Knights?”

“Use it as auxiliary material, and you’ll get a batch of even more powerful Skeletal Knights.”

“Oh, right, perhaps your kinsfolk in their deep slumber might also have use for it.”

Now that Leonidas mentioned it, Orion thought it plausible. Last time his sister Clymene and the others were fusing, they had lacked energy.

Perhaps they also lacked materials for physical evolution.

With this thought, Orion immediately stored away the dark fiend lord's corpse.

"Bro, we won the first two easiest battles quite comfortably. The tough fights are next," Leonidas stated with certainty, having experienced such situations many times.

He and Orion had consecutively wiped out two major dark creature groups, which would undoubtedly attract the attention of certain entities.

And indeed, events unfolded just as Leonidas had predicted.

North of Red Moon Valley, beyond the territories of the Nethervarg Soulflayers and the Zephyrkin Swifts, lay an ancient architectural complex.

This was the Watchtower.

Also known as Marshlight Sanctuary, it was the dominion of the Hellhound Knights.

In a dilapidated palace, a colossal statue of a Hellhound Knight sensed something, the stone and dirt encasing it flaking off bit by bit.

Once the stone debris had fallen away completely, it revealed the Hellhound's bronze-colored skin, and atop it, a humanoid knight with bone spurs growing from his back, clad in bone armor.

Suddenly, the humanoid knight snapped open his eyes, revealing a pair of pale, bloodshot orbs.

"Who is slaughtering my people?"

“The Aarakocra and the dark fiends have been wiped out. This is no coincidence. Someone is invading my territory.”

“Stratus and Dex are also dead. Are enemies from the other two continents trying to meddle here?”

Awooooo...

The Hellhound Knight murmured, and the Hellhound beneath him, now fully awakened from its slumber, threw back its head and roared, announcing its and its master’s return.

A few moments later, the Hellhound Knight seemed to perceive something and whispered again.

“Wyverns... spiders... undead... all unfamiliar. Where did they spring from?”

“Despicable invaders, slaughtering my people while I slumbered, diminishing my faith.”

“You all deserve to die!”

“Relay my command, prepare for battle...”

As the Hellhound Knight issued his command, a powerful and terrifying aura surged outwards, sweeping through the entirety of Marshlight Sanctuary.

The next moment, the entire region plunged into endless darkness. A suffocating pressure permeated everywhere, and a sense of bloodlust and despair gradually welled up in the hearts of all dark creatures.

Far north, Ashenfang Traverse, Bloodreaver’s territory.

Deep within a mountain cave, the giant blood-red sarcophagus, hidden within a shimmering light shield, was trembling continuously.

Sensing the aura of the Hellhound Knight Arch Lord, the sarcophagus's vibrations grew increasingly violent.

Crack! An odd sound emanated from within the sarcophagus, as if a hidden mechanism had been triggered from the inside.

Simultaneously, the blood-red sarcophagus ceased its trembling.

A few moments later, the coffin lid slid open, inch by inch, and a withered Bloodreaver, with goat-like horns and wings sprouting from his back, climbed out of the sarcophagus.

"An Arch Lord's aura. What has happened?"

"Is it Kian? Has he awakened too?"

"The scent of anger, the taste of war... has conflict reached our Dusk Continent?"

"Perhaps I should venture out. Caution is warranted."

The aged Bloodreaver climbed out of the sarcophagus. He had been hungry for a very long time; he needed to feed, needed to drink blood.

South, Gloomwood Forest.

The moment the Hellhound Knight and Bloodreaver awakened, Leonidas sensed their presence.

"Leonidas, what's wrong?" Orion asked.

Just moments before, Leonidas had been standing with Orion on high ground, watching the dark fiend clans being slaughtered.

Leonidas had been gesturing towards the wyverns he had brought, chatting and laughing boisterously, full of pride.

But then, Leonidas suddenly fell silent, turned northwards, and stared intently at the northern sky.

“Bro, I was right. Two Arch Lords were indeed slumbering on this half-continent.”

“What? They’re coming?”

“No. One likely awakened upon sensing the changes in faith energy. The other was probably drawn by that awakening and woke up as well.”

Leonidas shook his head, his expression growing much graver.

The simultaneous awakening of two Arch Lords meant that the other dark creatures were highly likely to unite—this was the worst-case scenario.

“This is really going to be a tough fight!” Leonidas lamented, then turned to look at Orion.

“Bro, we can’t split up from now on, or we’ll be easily picked off one by one.”

“And the enemy numbers are vast. We absolutely cannot afford to lose Lich Vexis, or this war becomes unwinnable.”

“We need to stick close to Vexis, lure the enemy in, and pick them off bit by bit.”

Orion nodded. This was the crucial focus for the upcoming battles. As long as this tactic remained unchanged, they still had considerable room to maneuver.

The appearance of Arch Lords made Orion more cautious.

An unknown Arch Lord undoubtedly represented the absolute peak of power in a region.

It wouldn't be surprising at all for such an entity to possess strange and unpredictable abilities.

This was also why Leonidas had warned Orion to be cautious and for them not to separate.

"Leonidas, do we continue our offensive, or do we wait for them to attack?" Orion asked, somewhat uncertain; the appearance of the Arch Lords had disrupted his plans.

"We press the attack," Leonidas declared. "With Vexis, we can bolster our combat forces, especially in these early stages."

"At a time like this, we cannot afford to miss any opportunity, any means to increase our strength."

"Even the slightest advantage must be fought for."

Orion looked at Leonidas, momentarily stunned. The composure Leonidas displayed was reshaping his perception of the Arch Lord.

Chapter 707: Death spider

"For the Horde! For the Lord!"

"For Master! For Lorelia! Charge! Charge! Charge!"

On the forest battlefield, a clear cry rang out. It was Lorelia, crossbow raised, urging her kinsfolk to charge relentlessly forward.

Lorelia's small face was flushed, radiating excitement.

However, the young girl wasn't excited by the battle itself, but rather by the thrill of shouting encouragement.

Unlike Dirtclaw, who, despite also enjoying riling up his subordinates and cannon fodder, always led the charge into the fray himself.

As for Lorelia, she was surrounded by four powerful spider guards; charging was out of the question—she had no intention of even joining the battle.

Furthermore, not far from Lorelia stood a calm-faced Vexis.

Lorelia had her own agenda; she never strayed far from Vexis's line of sight.

Lorelia was merely enjoying the thrill of shouting commands.

Meanwhile, deeper in Gloomwood Forest, various skirmishes were constantly erupting.

Gnawing, tearing, biting, and grappling—in battles between beasts, these were all too natural.

The losing side, in the vast majority of cases, would become the other's food.

With cave spiders giving chase on the ground and wyverns circling covetously from above, the dark fiends in the forest were plunged into despair.

From time to time, small groups of dark fiends would rally to counter-attack the invaders, but their assaults were quickly swallowed by the tide of cave spiders.

At the very front line of the battlefield, on a patch of flat ground, Thundar, mounted on a dark fiend and leading a troop of cavalry, had a group of dark fiends completely surrounded.

Ignoring the dark fiends' furious roars, Thundar, his face cold and indifferent, slowly raised the greatsword in his hand and gave the order to annihilate them.

Howls and roars echoed, a cacophony of rage and pain. Many dark fiends couldn't understand why the dark fiend Thundar rode would lead enemies to slaughter its own kin.

Swish, swish—bolts flew out; these were the Stoneheart Horde's unique enchanted arrows, imbued with magical effects.

These enchanted arrows were crafted by the Garland Tribe and the serpentfolk. Though designed for production in numbers, their quantity was limited as each was handmade.

After a few volleys, dark fiends died one after another, or were paralyzed by the petrification spell on the bolts.

Those who didn't die merely awaited the cavalry regiment's finishing blows.

"Elder, we're running low on enchanted arrows!"

"Hmm, from now on, we will only be responsible for surrounding them. Leave the task of killing the dark fiends to those cave spiders and wyverns."

Both cave spiders and wyverns could attack with venom. Although dark fiends were largely immune to physical attacks, they were not immune to venom.

Moreover, their venom was potent; any dark fiend poisoned would essentially be paralyzed on the spot, unable to move, eventually becoming food for the young spiders.

“Commander, Elder Dirtclaw and Elder Fergus are in trouble! They’ve been surrounded and are under attack!”

Just as Thundar was observing his subordinates deliver the finishing blows to this group of dark fiends, a member of the cavalry regiment charged out from the forest ahead, seeking reinforcements.

“Which direction are they in?”

“In the dense forest about a mile ahead.”

“Leave some men behind. The rest of you, with me, to reinforce them!”

Thundar called out. The dark fiend beneath him let out a low roar and was the first to charge into the dense forest.

Dirtclaw and Fergus had charged too aggressively; they were the first wave of combatants to rush out, and also the fastest.

It was hardly surprising for them to be surrounded by a swarm of dark fiends after becoming separated from the main force.

To survive, the best tactic for the dark fiends was to split off a portion of their forces to entangle, or even kill, the pursuing enemy—and that’s exactly what the dark fiends had chosen to do.

Dirtclaw and Fergus found themselves caught in the trap laid by the dark fiend horde.

“Hehe, Bro, what do you think of the wyverns I brought?”

Above the forest, after killing the dark fiend lord, Orion and Leonidas stood high in the air, surveying the battles unfolding within and around Gloomwood Forest.

To prevent the dark fiend clans from escaping, Leonidas had specifically mobilized a group of wyverns to circle around to their front, herding back those dark fiends scattering in all directions.

This way, these dark fiends would ultimately fall prey to the invading cave spiders.

“Very agile, highly mobile, and very obedient.”

Orion had a high opinion of the wyvern armies. Only these intelligent drakes could accomplish tasks requiring such flexibility.

Unlike the Aarakocra converted by Vexis, which could only execute simple, rigid commands, such as mindlessly attacking the enemy.

Furthermore, if they moved out of Vexis’s control range, those Aarakocra would fall into chaos and attack indiscriminately.

This was one of the few drawbacks of undead summoning: separated from Vexis, who acted as their soul core, their combat effectiveness would be greatly diminished.

“Your little spiders are pretty effective too,” Leonidas remarked. “Their individual combat power isn’t much, but their strength lies in their numbers.”

“With Lich Vexis coordinating them, they’re practically unstoppable.”

Orion smiled without speaking. This combat style had first taken shape when he was helping Arthas and Leonidas invade the Godforsaken Land.

Arthas had a very sharp eye; upon seeing the troops Orion had brought, he immediately dispatched Skeleton General Rumbold to assist.

In subsequent battles, Orion relied on this combat style to sweep through various territories.

It had to be said, by this point in their development, Orion's invading armies had become inseparable from Arthas's undead forces.

It was also because of this that Orion deeply understood why individuals like Leonidas, Alexander, Arthas, and Kraken had come together.

Only by coordinating armies of various types and different styles could one avoid being easily countered and potentially create even more powerful invading forces.

The combination of different troop types was an art.

As long as one had enough diverse troop types, one could assemble mixed forces adaptable to various environments, ensuring the army's combat effectiveness and survival rate.

"I'm planning to convert all these cave spiders into death spiders. What do you think?"

Orion voiced his plans for the cave spider armies. The death and dark auras in the Emerald Dream Realm were very dense, well-suited for cave spiders.

If the cave spiders were converted into death spiders, their talents and strength would be enhanced, and their overall combat power would increase significantly.

Leonidas's judgment and experience were undoubtedly superior to Orion's; by mentioning it now, Orion was seeking Leonidas's opinion.

"Bro, you want to build an army similar to the undead?"

"Well, I can't always rely on Arthas. Vexis and Rumbold can't possibly assist me indefinitely; they'll have to return to their own affairs eventually."

"That makes sense!"

Leonidas strongly agreed with Orion's line of thinking.

Because Leonidas himself had once had similar ideas, though his solution had differed from Orion's.

Chapter 708: We're definitely not special

"After your little spiders transform, will you have an undead unit to command them?"

Leonidas looked down, surveying the dense mass of cave spiders in Gloomwood Forest, and posed a very important question.

For undead units, the most crucial element was a command center—a core figure capable of controlling them.

"Bro, you misunderstand. These cave spiders transforming into death spiders doesn't mean they truly die."

"It's merely a shift in their attributes, granting them abilities similar to those of the undead."

"They can't be considered undead; it's more accurate to say they become attuned to the power of death."

"This way, my spider broodmother can still maintain control over them."

In fact, Orion had this idea long ago.

The plan had initially formed in his mind after Lorelia dispatched young spiders to explore the Underworld, and a few of them unexpectedly transformed into death spiders.

Later, when Soraya joined the Stoneheart Horde, Orion found himself with two broodmothers, which solidified his determination.

This was because Lorelia's and Soraya's roles had a significant overlap.

Therefore, transforming Lorelia's cave spider armies would diversify the Stoneheart Horde's troop types, thereby enhancing the versatility of its combat styles.

There was another reason: his sister, Clymene.

Once Clymene successfully advanced to the Legendary level, they could convert more Skeletal Knights themselves.

The combination of Skeletal Knights and death spiders would again significantly boost their combat power.

At that point, with elite figures like Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, and Desdemona, the Stoneheart Horde could possess its very own undead army.

This way, Orion could begin to break free from Arthas's 'restraints.'

It wasn't that Orion disliked Arthas's assistance; on the contrary, he greatly desired such aid in every battle.

However, things couldn't possibly remain so ideal forever.

In the future, Orion would undoubtedly have to invade some Godforsaken Lands, or even major worlds, on his own.

If Arthas's aid wasn't available then, would the Stoneheart Horde's own armies be incapable of fighting?

What if, one day, Arthas couldn't even spare attention for his own affairs?

What if Orion and Arthas had a falling out?

What if...

The future held too many uncertainties. As the ruler of a horde and a powerhouse in his own right, Orion had to consider these deeper, more far-reaching matters.

“Bro, I suddenly realize you’re even crazier than Arthas.”

“You’re not thinking of recycling those death spiders, are you?”

“My heavens! For those spiders to have a lord like you, they won’t even find peace in death.”

Orion remained noncommittal. If all the cave spiders successfully transformed, they could exhibit combat power comparable to undead without actually dying.

And even if they did die, the Skeletal Knights could convert their remains through offerings, allowing them to be deployed once more.

Leonidas had also thought of this, initially expressing disdain for Orion’s exploitative methods.

“How did I not think of that?”

“This is a new line of thought! I’ll have to try it when I have some free time!”

However, with a swift change of heart, Leonidas immediately altered his stance, eager to join Orion in his “shameful” endeavor.

Leonidas also possessed the method for converting Skeletal Knights.

His relationship with Arthas was so strong that Leonidas knew more things—and more secrets—than Orion did.

Just as Leonidas and Orion were scheming about this, Leonidas suddenly looked up and said to Orion,

“There’s something new on the public channel!”

Orion raised an eyebrow slightly, nodded at Leonidas, and then slowly closed his eyes.

Survivor’s Platform, Champions Alliance Public Channel.

Edward: “That Blind Spiders broodmother has signed the contract. Alexander, you can stand down on your end!”

This was absolutely fantastic news. It meant that Alexander and Isabella, on another continent, could soon begin their main invasion phase.

Especially with a native spider broodmother assisting, their progress would undoubtedly accelerate considerably.

Alexander: “Leonidas, is our previous bet still on?”

Leonidas: “Forget it. We’ve already started over here. I don’t want to take advantage of you.”

Alexander: “What a chicken!”

With Queen Lolth of the Blind Spiders signing the contract and submitting to Deputy Commander Edward, Alexander immediately gained a surge of confidence.

When Leonidas had previously mentioned the bet, Alexander was no longer intimidated.

However, Leonidas was no fool. With Alexander gaining the aid of a Legendary-level native broodmother, his invasion progress was highly likely to outpace that of Leonidas and Orion.

Leonidas wouldn't accept a bet he was very likely to lose.

Edward: "Our previous guess was correct. Spider Queen Lolth is indeed an Awakener."

Edward: "The talent Lolth awakened is a talent tree resembling a spider web."

Edward: "However, she can't clearly explain how she uses this talent tree. She only knows that each time she activates a node on the spider web, she grows stronger and gains an ability."

Edward: "I suspect their talents are different from ours."

No one spoke in the public channel. Everyone was reading the Deputy Commander's statements over and over, hoping to glean some useful information.

Orion was no exception. This first contact with an Awakener from another world was a matter of curiosity for all the allies in the Champions Alliance.

Orion strongly agreed with the Deputy Commander referring to Lolth's ability as a "talent."

Just like the Survivor's Platform, which Orion also considered his own talent.

The only difference was that other Awakeners from Orion's world of origin could also awaken this particular talent.

It was Lolth's spider web talent tree, however, that truly piqued Orion's curiosity.

But something like a spider web talent tree remained shrouded in mystery; even a demigod-level figure like the Deputy Commander couldn't make heads or tails of it.

Leonidas: "I knew it. We're definitely not special."

Leonidas: "This cosmos has so many worlds, so many realms, so many races... beings stronger than us are everywhere."

Leonidas's words sounded like he was musing to himself, and also like he was airing some grievances about this mysterious world.

Alexander: "So, there should be a group of beings more special, more powerful, and more ancient than us. Could they have walked ahead of us?"

"Walked ahead of us"—that meant achieving godhood.

No one could answer Alexander's question.

Kraken: "Big Bosses, if you put it that way, I feel like it's dangerous for me everywhere I go."

No one spoke. Everyone tacitly avoided this topic thereafter.

Demigod, god, even beings above god... these concepts were very distant from Orion. He decided to set them aside for the time being.

Orion hadn't even reached the Arch Lord level yet; how could he possibly dream of such indescribable futures?

Chapter 709: I can still fight

Shadowcrag Forest. The colossal dragon continued its flight through the sky, searching for the spider broodmother's trail.

"Lower your flight altitude. Eleven o'clock, five miles out."

Alexander slowly opened his eyes, glanced at Isabella who was still intently searching for their target, and pointed out its location.

"Mr. Alexander?"

Isabella paused, startled for a moment, then turned her head to look at Alexander in surprise. She hadn't seen the communication log from the Champions Alliance public channel.

"Under your constant pressure, that spider broodmother signed a contract with the Deputy Commander."

"Now, she is no longer our enemy, but a powerful ally."

It had to be said, Isabella had done exceptionally well this time. If not for her relentless, day-and-night pressure, Spider Queen Lolth wouldn't have surrendered so quickly.

As for the deterrent role Alexander played in this, even if he didn't say it, Isabella understood it clearly in her heart.

"Mr. Alexander, are we going to initiate the invasion plan now?"

"Yes. We'll go down and exchange information with that spider broodmother. Some intelligence needs to be verified with her."

"Alright!"

A hint of excitement appeared on Isabella's face. She urged the colossal dragon onward, flying towards the location Alexander had indicated.

...

Titanion Realm, Stoneheart City.

Beneath the castle, many secret chambers had been constructed. One specific area was dedicated to the rearing of pets.

And this area, for the most part, was managed by Beastmaster Lilith.

At this moment, Lilith stood in one of the secret chambers, her attention fully focused on a mysterious egg before her that was on the verge of hatching.

These mysterious eggs were the batch of live ones Delilah had unearthed while excavating the grand canal.

This batch of eggs was now neatly arranged in the secret chamber, having become Lilith's research subjects.

Crack!

A tiny fissure appeared on one of the mysterious eggs. The creature inside had been successfully incubated by Lilith.

The eggshell broke, and a small, slender-bodied, winged insect with semi-transparent skin appeared on the tray before Lilith.

"Compound eyes on either side, bristle-like antennae, twin wings on its back, its body shaped like a swimming fish."

“It seems this is the long-lost Flying Fish Mayfly.”

The Flying Fish Mayfly, a very primitive type of insect.

To be precise, it was an insectoid beast, a magical species capable of surviving both in water and on land.

Most incredibly, this Flying Fish Mayfly was also an omnivorous, flying-type beast.

Omnivorous meant it was very easy to raise.

Gazing at the Flying Fish Mayfly on the tray, the corners of Lilith’s mouth unconsciously curled upwards.

Looking again at the live eggs that filled the entire secret chamber, Lilith’s heart began to race, and she grew increasingly excited.

“Ancestors be praised! The Stoneheart Horde finally has its own aerial unit!”

Lilith was well aware of the value of these Flying Fish Mayflies.

Furthermore, Lilith was very confident that, given some time, she could definitely hatch all of them.

Then, using these Flying Fish Mayflies as breeding stock, the Stoneheart Horde would soon possess a large-scale, organized aerial unit.

As a beastmaster, Lilith had already figured out through certain secret techniques that Flying Fish Mayflies took only one year to mature from larva to adult.

This type of flying unit, capable of maturing in a short period, was something the Stoneheart Horde had always dreamed of.

Of course, a beast that could grow up so quickly meant its quality likely wouldn't be top-tier.

However, all the shortcomings of the Flying Fish Mayfly could be compensated for by sheer numbers.

No matter the beast, once their numbers reached a certain threshold, a qualitative change could occur—quantity itself would become a quality.

"This news must be relayed as soon as possible. Perhaps Delilah can dig up even more eggs over there."

"Also, this is top secret..."

Lilith slowly closed her eyes and, using a special mental connection ability, transmitted the information about the Flying Fish Mayflies to Delilah.

Since Lilith had left the succubus tribe, she had rarely used this ability.

Because each time it was used, it signified that there were absolutely no secrets between the sisters; it was a complete opening of their hearts to one another.

...

Emerald Dream Realm, Gloomwood Forest.

Dirtclaw and the giant warrior Fergus stood back-to-back, glaring ferociously at the surrounding dark fiends.

Four Alpha-level dark fiends, coordinating with over a hundred Hero-level dark fiends, were besieging Dirtclaw and Fergus, intent on killing them.

The abyssal dragon beneath Fergus was already covered in wounds; not only was one of its forepaws broken, but half of its tail had also been bitten off.

The tail was what the abyssal dragon used to balance its body. With its tail severed, the dragon couldn't adapt its movements in battle, becoming much slower.

"Bro Fergus, don't be afraid! If we just hold on a little longer, the reinforcements behind us will reach us!"

In contrast to the grave-faced Fergus, Dirtclaw seemed to be reveling in the chaos.

Dirtclaw's mouth was stained with fresh blood, his eyes were crimson, and he was baring his fangs, constantly roaring.

His roars were both a threat to the enemy and a signal for help to his allies.

Dirtclaw's four paws gripped the ground tightly as he stared with murderous intent at the surrounding enemies.

"Dirtclaw, don't worry about me. I can still fight."

Fergus's voice was firm; Dirtclaw couldn't detect the slightest hint of panic or fear in it.

"Woof... Very good! You are indeed a giant worthy of Orion's regard."

"After this war, I'll introduce you to the most beautiful maiden of our gnoll race."

"If you don't like her, I can even plunder women from other races for you, to serve as your sex slaves."

"Hahaha..."

In this battle frenzy, the blood staining Dirtclaw's muzzle was not his own, but that of his enemies.

"Praise the Titan God! Glory accompanies me!"

Fergus raised his trident, shouted loudly, and was the first to charge the onrushing enemies.

Dirtclaw roared ceaselessly, hellfire erupting from his body and spreading outwards, coating Fergus and his abyssal dragon in a layer of infernal flame.

This was a new application of hellfire that Dirtclaw had developed. Although it couldn't increase Constitution or defensive capabilities, it could add an outer layer of magical attack.

Especially for species like dark fiends that feared magic, coming into contact with hellfire meant they were done for.

In the blink of an eye, the desperate struggle—a chaotic mix of entrapment and fierce resistance—intensified, with howls and the sounds of tearing flesh echoing continuously.

Pfft! Pfft!!

Several more dark fiend corpses littered the surrounding battlefield.

Notably, one of the largest among them was Alpha-level.

However, Dirtclaw and Fergus were not faring well either.

Dirtclaw had several new wounds on his hind leg, deep enough to reveal bone, the teeth marks that had sliced through his skin clearly visible.

If not for a layer of hellfire covering the wounds and slowly healing them, Dirtclaw feared he would have been crippled.

Fergus was also in a bad state. Though he himself was uninjured, the abyssal dragon beneath him was on its last breath.

The abyssal dragon was blinded in one eye, and both of its hind legs, which supported its body, had been bitten through.

Chapter 710: Nethervarg Soulflayers

The abyssal dragon, still carrying Fergus, was now running purely on its indomitable will and ferocious spirit.

Fergus dared not look down, dared not caress the abyssal dragon beneath him; he feared that the moment he lowered his head, the surrounding dark fiends would pounce again.

Neither Dirtclaw nor Fergus spoke; the current battle atmosphere and rhythm didn't allow for any distractions.

"Kill!"

Just then, a dark fiend abruptly charged out from the dense forest.

The appearance of this dark fiend momentarily stunned the dark fiends besieging Dirtclaw and Fergus.

In that fleeting moment of stunned silence, Thundar's greatsword had already slashed down upon the dark fiend closest to him.

"Awooo... Bro, our reinforcements are here!!"

When they first saw the dark fiend emerge, despair had flashed in Dirtclaw's and Fergus's eyes.

However, upon seeing Thundar's familiar sword light, the despair in their eyes was banished; hope had dawned.

With a dying cry, as one dark fiend fell, the others reacted.

Facing the dark fiend Thundar rode—a traitor to its kind—the surrounding dark fiends radiated a chilling killing intent.

However, this killing intent quickly transformed into fear.

Because from the dense forest behind Thundar, a wolf-mounted cavalry troop, several hundred strong, began to stream out.

The icefield snow wolves, panting rapidly with their tongues lolling, swiftly encircled the hundred-odd dark fiends on the battlefield.

“Woof... The reinforcements we yearned for have arrived!”

“Praise the Elder of Combat! You are the most beautiful being in my heart!”

“You damned beasts! You dared to injure your Dirtclaw! I'll cook you all!!”

“Bro Fergus, this is the great turning point! This is snatching life from the jaws of death! Isn't it thrilling? Isn't it exciting?”

“Hahaha...”

Amidst a flurry of howls, Dirtclaw charged towards the most powerful dark fiend.

Thundar's arrival had given him courage and also exposed the hysterically brutal side of Dirtclaw's nature.

Fergus, however, did not charge out with Dirtclaw.

Because the abyssal dragon beneath him could go no further; it could no longer run.

Fergus could only stand beside the abyssal dragon, guarding his companion.

A quarter of an hour later, with the combined efforts of Dirtclaw and Thundar, the dark fiends that had besieged them were completely wiped out.

"A brave creature, resolute in its will to fight. It shouldn't die here!"

The battle temporarily concluded. Thundar, mounted on his dark fiend, slowly approached Fergus and looked at the abyssal dragon beside him.

This was the second abyssal dragon in the Stoneheart Horde. Many of the giant kinsfolk had high hopes for it; it shouldn't die here.

"Feed this to it. Tell it to hold on, to pull through, and it will welcome a new life."

Thundar took out a mass of Alpha-level life essence and several Blood Mushrooms from his storage pouch, handing them to Fergus.

Many members of the cavalry regiment had experienced what Fergus was going through now.

No one could bear to lose a companion they had spent every day with.

Thus, life essence and Blood Mushrooms had become rare resources that cavalry regiment members carried with them at all times.

These two items could give a mount on the brink of death one last chance.

If it successfully advanced, all injuries would be a small matter.

If the advancement failed, it meant death.

“Bro Fergus, tell it, it has to pull through!!”

Dirtclaw, with a few leaps, also arrived beside Fergus.

Dirtclaw opened his mouth, and four Alpha-level dark source crystals dropped out, landing in Fergus’s hand.

“With these added, I refuse to believe this fellow will fail to advance!”

Fergus was deeply moved. He blinked back the sting in his eyes and nodded his gratitude to Dirtclaw and Thundar.

Then, Fergus knelt and stuffed all the precious resources in his hands into the abyssal dragon’s mouth.

High above, Orion and Leonidas had witnessed everything that transpired.

“Bro, the chances of that abyssal dragon surviving are quite high.”

“Abyssal dragons are different from ordinary dragons. They belong to the abyssal species. Though they cannot fly, abyssal species are much tougher than one might imagine, possessing extraordinary vitality. Creatures that emerge from the abyss usually have remarkable talents.”

Leonidas's research into abyssal species was far more in-depth than Orion's.

To enhance his own strength, Leonidas had once spent a considerable amount of time in the abyss, where he had devoured many different types of abyssal beasts.

"That abyssal dragon will definitely advance!"

Orion gazed at Fergus, also feeling very certain about this.

Orion himself possessed an abyssal dragon; he understood them all too well, knowing them to be savage creatures with exceedingly vigorous life force.

"Fergus has grown up too!"

Orion sighed inwardly, filled with emotion.

Although Orion was the Giant King, he and Fergus were essentially of the same generation.

From their generation, aside from Orion himself, eight other Alpha-level giants had emerged: Ursa, Fergus, Brom, James, Dace, Otho, Beyn, and Torba.

It could be said that these eight bloodline warriors represented the best of their generation among the Blackrock Giants.

Of course, Tarn, far away in the human kingdom, also counted as one.

However, news of Tarn's advancement to Alpha-level had not yet reached Orion's ears.

"The overall situation is settled. Which is the next target?"

Leonidas gazed towards the north, sensing those two faint, indistinct auras, his heart filled with fighting spirit.

This thrill of challenging a superior foe was something he hadn't experienced for a long time, not since he had advanced to Arch Lord.

"Nethervarg Soulflayers!"

Orion withdrew his gaze from Fergus, a flicker of gratification in his eyes.

Fergus had his own path to walk, as did the other kinsmen.

What Orion could do was shelter them and provide them with a superior environment for growth, one rich in resources.

"What's the intelligence on them?" Leonidas asked.

Orion took out a secret scroll from his attire and handed it to Leonidas.

Leonidas scanned the scroll, his brow furrowing slightly.

"Monsters filled with such an evil aura are probably not native to this world."

Orion remained silent. According to the intelligence gathered by the Shadow Paper Figures and the Sentinel Corps, the Nethervarg Soulflayers were an exceedingly powerful race.

The Arch Lord that Leonidas had sensed was highly likely to be found among this race. Nethervarg Soulflayers were wolf-like creatures, incomparably brutal by nature.

“Flames filled with dark energy... such things are rare. I’ve only encountered them in two special types of places.”

“One is a dark world inhabited by demonkind; the other is the Abyss.”

“Regardless, these demonic wolves might have been introduced to this world by some evil entity.”

Leonidas made his preliminary judgment about the Nethervarg Soulflayers, and Orion nodded in agreement.

Demonic wolves, as powerful dark creatures, possessed bizarre abilities and were even more difficult to deal with than dark fiends.

According to the intelligence Orion had obtained, Nethervarg Soulflayers possessed abilities such as Fire Cloak, Group Howl, and Flame Burst.

“Bro, is it possible that one of the Arch Lords resides among the Nethervarg Soulflayers(demonic wolves)?”

Orion’s speculation was based on the intelligence provided by the Shadow Paper Figures.

Among the races inhabiting this half-continent, the demonic wolves and the Bloodreavers possessed the most diverse abilities and were the races most likely to produce powerhouses.

“It’s highly possible. If we run into one, let me test the waters first.”