

Titan King 891

Chapter 891: A Dangerous Treasure

"That's just... insane."

Leonidas stared at the black, hole-like tear in the sky. Even as an ally, seeing that kind of power display filled him with a profound sense of helplessness. He swallowed hard, trying to calm his racing heart.

It's terrifying, was Orion's only thought.

In the commander's hands, the blade flashes were on a completely different level of existence from when they used them.

Only Alexander remained silent, his eyes fixed on the sky, deep in thought.

"Bro, was that the mysterious entity you saw?" After a long time, once the tear in the sky had vanished and everything had returned to normal, Leonidas turned to Orion, his curiosity piqued.

An enemy that even the combined forces of the Deputy Commander and Arthas couldn't handle, one that required the commander himself to intervene—the thought of such an opponent was deeply unsettling.

Orion nodded, then shook his head.

Seeing Leonidas's confusion, he pointed to the sarcophagus, which he still hadn't put away.

"I didn't see the enemy," he said. "But it definitely used this thing's Aura to Lock onto us."

With that, Alexander and Leonidas focused their attention back on the sarcophagus.

It was now clear that whatever was inside was absolutely astonishing, but it was also a potato far too hot to handle.

Valkorath Realm, Bone City.

The scar the commander had torn across the sky of the Emerald Dream Realm still glittered in the ghost fire of Arthas's eye sockets. It seemed that simple strike had been incredibly enlightening for him.

Just then, the commander's voice, tinged with a hint of regret, echoed in Arthas's mind.

"A pity. What came was only a seed. The item Leonidas and the others acquired should be special. You two should go take a look. It might be of use to you."

Something that a third-stage demigod cared about was an absolute treasure for a first-stage demigod.

The commander seemed to have guessed what the sarcophagus contained, though he wasn't certain.

But his message served two purposes: it gave the Deputy Commander and Arthas a clear direction, and it gave Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander—the troublemakers—a way out of the mess they'd created.

Emerald Dream Realm, Marshlight Sanctuary.

A ripple of spatial energy filled the air. To the surprise of Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander, the sleeping forms of the Deputy Commander and Arthas appeared before them, having arrived in their true forms.

"Deputy Commander, Arthas, what are you two doing here?" Leonidas looked up, his expression shifting from shock to delight.

The Deputy Commander pointed a finger at the sarcophagus beside Orion. "If we didn't come," he said meaningfully, "you three wouldn't be able to open this."

He elaborated, "The magical formation on this sarcophagus is bound by divine power. By rules. It's not something you can open."

His explanation was a lightbulb moment for the trio. No wonder Alexander's attempts to brute-force it open, even with his spirit sword avatar, had been completely useless.

"Before we open it, let's be clear," the Deputy Commander stated. "If the contents are suitable for myself or Arthas, we will claim them as our own. In return, we will handle the trouble you three have stirred up."

Even among brothers, accounts had to be settled clearly. It was better to set the terms at the beginning.

Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander exchanged a look and nodded in unison. It wasn't that they had any selfish thoughts; it was a sign of mutual respect for the others.

After all, all three of them had risked their necks to bring this thing back. Orion, especially, had nearly lost his arch lord peak Deathly Soul-Reaper avatar for good.

"Deputy Commander, please," Orion and Leonidas said, stepping back and ceding the sarcophagus to the two powerful figures.

The Deputy Commander stared at the sarcophagus but didn't touch it. "We'll open it back in the Valkorath Realm. This realm has too many prying eyes."

He waved his hand, and a small group teleportation formation appeared at their feet. They were all used to this and offered no resistance.

A flash of light, and they appeared in the city of Stormwind in the Valkorath Realm.

Stormwind was the Deputy Commander's main base of operations. Little Elara came here often; it was like her second home. For Orion, however, it was his first time.

Rows of warm-hued magic streetlamps lit the roads, and all kinds of natural faerie insects flowed with the gentle breeze. In the distance stood a magnificent Mage Tower.

Elara was right; compared to the Deputy Commander's territory, their Stoneheart Horde was practically a backwater slum. This was a city woven from magic, where magical elements were a part of everything.

"Stop drooling," Leonidas said, clapping Orion on the back. "Compared to the Deputy Commander's territory, the cities we've built are the savage lands."

Orion subconsciously wiped at his mouth, drawing a few shaking heads and soft smiles from the others.

"Follow me."

Still looking around in every direction, Orion and the others followed Deputy Commander Edward into the tallest Mage Tower.

"You three, stand inside the protective circle," the Deputy Commander instructed them once they were in a lab filled with magical artifacts, after placing the sarcophagus on a platform.

The sarcophagus belonged to a demigod powerhouse. There was no telling what might happen when it was opened. To be safe, he put a protective ward around the three 'troublemakers' who had yet to reach demigod status.

Once the trio was obediently standing in the circle, the Deputy Commander began to seriously study the sarcophagus. Waves of magical energy pulsed from his hands, washing over its surface.

Arthas came to stand beside him, saying nothing, just watching silently.

What followed was a truly eye-opening experience for Orion. He witnessed the mutual deconstruction of magic runes, the probing and dispelling of a complex magical formation, and the tangible, visible clash of raw universal laws.

After three days and three nights, under everyone's watchful gaze, the magical formation and the rules binding the mysterious sarcophagus were finally, completely purged.

"Open it," the Deputy Commander said, his voice weary but filled with curiosity and excitement. It was the first time he had ever seen a sarcophagus sealed with this level of power.

Arthas stepped forward. He reached out with a skeletal finger, wreathed in the power of cosmic law and encased in armor, and slowly lifted the lid.

"This is..."

Aside from the Deputy Commander's whisper, no one made a sound. Everyone stared silently at the treasure inside.

"This is an absolutely incredible hoard," the Deputy Commander finally said after a long moment, his voice trembling with excitement.

He then turned to look at Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander, a wry smile on his face.

"You three are in deep trouble now. Now its master will hunt you down—no matter where you run."

"Afraid of him? Hell no!" Leonidas grinned, absolutely ecstatic. Not only was the quality of the items in the sarcophagus beyond question, but the quantity was staggering. "So, Deputy Commander... you want in on this, or what? Heh heh."

Chapter 892: World Dragons

Arthas was direct. He reached out and took one of the dragon eggs.

"Water, Fire, Wind, Earth, Light, and Lunar," the Deputy Commander said, his voice returning to a calm, analytical tone as Arthas selected the earth-element egg. "Six of the most perfect, top-tier dragon eggs. The fundamental elements required to form a world."

"These aren't just any dragons. They are World Dragons."

He then reached out and took the wind-element egg for himself. The message was clear: he was taking one as well, and with it, a share of the responsibility.

After his and Arthas's selections, four eggs remained in the sarcophagus: Water, Fire, Light, and Lunar.

"I'll take the fire one." Under the watchful eyes of the two demigods, Alexander stepped out of the protective circle and claimed his prize.

"Heh heh, well, don't mind if I do!" Leonidas stepped forward and took the water-element egg.

Seeing this, Orion prepared to go and take the Lunar egg. But just as he moved, Leonidas put a hand on his shoulder, stopping him.

"Bro, don't bother choosing," he said with a strange grin. "The last two are both yours."

Orion was stunned. He turned to look at Leonidas and Alexander. Leonidas's grin was unwavering, and Alexander gave him a slight, confirming nod.

"You took the biggest loss and the biggest risk this time," Leonidas explained. "The extra egg is your compensation."

Faced with such a treasure, Orion didn't refuse. After a moment's thought, he decisively collected the two remaining dragon eggs.

As for the sarcophagus itself, it was left with the Deputy Commander, who planned to reforge its unique material into a special magic artifact for his disciple, Elara. Orion had no objections; he even offered some of his own materials to help, but the Deputy Commander had no use for the rare treasures he presented.

"Hahaha! We're rich! We're rich! We really hit the jackpot this time!" Leonidas held his new dragon egg up to the light, admiring it.

"Bro, what's so special about this type of egg?" Of everyone present, Orion's knowledge was the most limited. He walked over to Arthas, not ashamed to ask for an explanation.

"This is no ordinary dragon egg. This is a World Dragon," Arthas explained.

"I do not know how the eggs of World Dragons are created. But I do know that when a World Dragon hatches, it carries a pocket dimension within its body."

"The element of the egg doesn't represent the dragon's attribute, but rather the attribute of the world inside it."

To be honest, Orion was dumbfounded by what Arthas was telling him.

"Bro, this egg can really hatch a whole world?" The idea was so unbelievable he couldn't quite accept it. In his mind, without a World Tree, creating a world was impossible.

"It can," Arthas confirmed. "These eggs are alive, and they lack a true spirit of their own. I cannot imagine what method the being you were chasing used to create them."

When speaking of the eggs and the third-stage demigod, even Arthas's voice held a note of awe.

"If I'm not mistaken, it's not that these eggs lack a true spirit, but that they are not yet mature," the Deputy Commander's old, deep voice interjected, drawing everyone's attention.

"In truth, Water, Fire, Wind, Earth, Light, and Lunar are the fundamental elements of a world. Special elements like Space and Time will simply come into being the moment the world is born. Or rather, they will evolve on their own."

He skipped past the topic of the true spirit and continued his explanation of the world's elemental composition. No one interrupted him; when the Deputy Commander spoke like this, it was for a reason.

"The eggs we hold each represent a single attribute. The world that eventually evolves from the egg will be related to that attribute. For example, the wind-element egg in my hand will give birth to a world more suitable for practitioners of wind magic, and it will be more likely to produce wind-elemental minerals, magical plants, and creatures."

The Deputy Commander's eyes were half-closed, his gaze distant as he stared at the egg in his hand.

"With all six elements—Water, Fire, Wind, Earth, Light, and Lunar—gathered together, the third-stage demigod who owned them was likely planning to fuse them into a single Chaos Dragon Egg, from which a perfect World would be born."

"Such a world is the ideal foundation for building one's own Divine Kingdom, and it makes comprehending one's divine calling far easier."

Divine power, divine fire, and divine soul—these were the first three stages of a demigod. To advance to the fourth stage, divine calling, a demigod first needed their own Divine Kingdom.

A being like a World Dragon, with a universe inside its very body, was the most suitable vessel imaginable.

Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander listened, only half-understanding. Their knowledge of the universe's fundamental laws was still too shallow.

But they understood one thing: these World Dragon eggs were priceless. Even if they spent a thousand years searching other worlds, they might not find a single one.

"Then by splitting up the eggs, aren't we wasting a heavenly treasure?" Alexander asked, voicing the question on everyone's mind.

"Not necessarily," the Deputy Commander replied. "For that third-stage demigod, his goal was the Chaos Dragon Egg and the supreme divine calling it would grant. For him, the individual eggs were a catch-22: tasteless to eat, but a pity to throw away. They were not quite what he needed, but far too valuable to simply discard."

As he said this, a bright light shone in Deputy Commander Edward's eyes, and a look of joy spread across his face. Arthas wore the exact same expression.

In a way, the trio's reckless adventure had solved a major problem that the Deputy Commander and Arthas would have inevitably faced on their own paths to becoming full-fledged gods.

Of course, the same was true for Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander, who had also received eggs. They just weren't at the demigod stage yet, so they couldn't fully appreciate the sheer magnitude of their good fortune.

Because of this, the Deputy Commander and Arthas now owed the three of them a massive favor.

"More importantly," the Deputy Commander said, his calm gaze sweeping over Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander, "separating these eggs gives each of us an opportunity. We now have enough time to find the materials we need, the ones best suited for us, and fuse them into our own newly born worlds."

He paused.

"I will aid each of you three times, unconditionally."

"As will I," Arthas added immediately after.

In truth, with their relationship, helping each other was a normal occurrence, and they never counted the cost. But stating things clearly was a matter of principle for them, a part of their style.

"And I'm sure this isn't over," Arthas added, looking at Orion with a well-intentioned warning. "The loss of something this precious... its master will not let this go. Be careful and cautious in your future endeavors."

Chapter 893: Loose Ends and New Threats

To be honest, if you took the Champions Alliance out of the equation, the three of them—Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander—had gotten themselves into some serious trouble with their little trip to the Uynting Realm.

With the tracking abilities of that third-stage demigod soul, it was entirely possible it could have brought disaster back to Orion's Stoneheart Horde or the realms Leonidas and Alexander called home.

But Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander were smart.

After their escape, none of them returned to their own base of operations. Instead, they all convened in the Emerald Dream Realm. You had to admit, with old-timers like Leonidas and Alexander leading the way, some things were considered very carefully.

"Alright, give us the full report," the Deputy Commander said after sealing the sarcophagus with a magic scroll. He looked at the trio. "That thing came knocking on our door. This isn't over by a long shot."

"Bro, you tell them. You know more," Leonidas said with a purse of his lips, gesturing for Orion to speak.

During this particular expedition, it was Orion's Deathly Soul-Reaper that had ventured into the temple's depths. He had seen the most.

"Here's what happened," Orion began, withholding nothing. "After following the dragon soul into the Dragon Mausoleum, we encountered the Lunar Serpent. With its help, Leonidas and I entered the Azure Mirage and inhabited the bodies of the Lunarfin..."

He recounted the battle in the temple, his fight in the depths, and how he had made off with the treasure, telling them every detail. Alexander then added his part of the story, explaining how the Lunar Serpent's seals were broken.

"In that case, my guess was more or less correct," Deputy Commander Edward said, confirming his conclusion. "Those dragon eggs were definitely being prepared for a fusion into a Chaos Dragon Egg. That demigod must be preparing to advance to the fourth stage."

He fell into a thoughtful silence.

It was Arthas who spoke next. He walked over to Leonidas and Orion and said with a frown, "Let me see the weapons you fused with the dragon bones."

Hearing this, both Leonidas and Orion were startled. Leonidas, however, quickly relaxed. His great axe had been sacrificed during the battle.

He turned to Orion with an expression of profound pity.

Orion flipped his right hand over, and the trident, Flame of Will, appeared. Without a word, he handed it to Arthas.

Arthas took the trident and inspected it carefully. A moment later, a chilling aura emanated from him.

A ball of white bone-cold fire appeared in his hand, enveloping the Flame of Will. As Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander watched, a faint phantom of a Jiao-like serpent materialized from the trident, looking at Arthas in terror.

"Your Excellency, this is just a misunderstanding!" the serpent phantom tried to negotiate, but Arthas gave it no such chance.

The bone-cold fire flared, consuming it completely.

Half an hour later, the fire in Arthas's hand receded. He looked at the trident with satisfaction before handing it back to Orion.

"See if it meets your standards."

Orion nodded seriously, taking the trident and sensing the changes within it.

"Tch," came a sound from the side. Leonidas was making a dismissive noise and whistling, while Alexander had turned to look elsewhere, feigning total disinterest.

They both knew Arthas too well. The famously proud Lich King was showing off, and he was doing it right in front of them.

Orion, on the other hand, was filled with pure joy.

WHOOSH!

He swung the Flame of Will, and it cut through the air with a powerful hum. The feel of it, the very texture of its power, was completely different from before.

A blood-red serpent phantom materialized around the trident and, with a hiss, coiled up the shaft all the way to Orion's wrist. Then, the phantom spread, covering his entire body in a brand-new suit of Ice-Bone Armor.

"Bro, this is..." Orion was ecstatic. This unexpected windfall felt so good he wasn't sure if it was real or just another illusion.

"Your trident had a good foundation," Arthas explained. "It was already on the cusp between Alpha-grade and legendary equipment."

"The Lunar Serpent fused a sliver of its seed into that spine bone. It was plotting against you from the start, hoping you would carry it out of the Uynting Realm."

Arthas glanced at Leonidas and Alexander, his look seeming to say: You two careless idiots, are you trying to help your student get rich, or lead him straight into a fire pit?

"I just used my power to erase the consciousness from that seed, allowing it to fully merge with your trident. That process was the catalyst that gave birth to a weapon spirit. Congratulations. Your trident is now a piece of legendary equipment. And it has even more potential than a typical legendary."

Orion didn't need Arthas to tell him that. He could feel it the moment he held the trident.

"Bro... thanks," he said. The surprise was so great he didn't know what else to say, so he just offered his earnest gratitude.

Emerald Dream Realm, West of the Dusk Continent.

Two phantoms crossed over from the void. Sensing the potent evolutionary factors active in the air of the Emerald Dream Realm, they grew excited.

"The Great Dragon King of Light was right. This is an evolving world," one of the figures said, its voice thrilled.

A world like this, if brought under the wing of the dragon race, could become a paradise for their people and perhaps even nurture a few new demigods.

"Kork, we'll split up," the other figure said. He was excited too, but he hadn't forgotten his mission. "You gather intel on the overall situation of this world. I will investigate the enemies of the Great Dragon King of Light."

Whether the dragon race could descend upon this world depended on the situation on the ground, and whether the demigod who controlled the realm formation would allow it.

"Be careful, Monjebel," Kork replied. "The Great Dragon King said there is a very powerful being hidden behind his enemies."

"Don't worry. I'm not foolish enough to conduct my investigation out in the open."

A moment later, the two figures split up, one heading north, the other south.

Dusk Continent, Kadira Giant Territory.

After the loot had been divided, Orion returned to the giants' tribe. With him in the lead, Rendall, Thundar, and Fergus followed behind as they made their way toward the lord's tent.

"Rest assured, lord," Rendall said, walking beside Orion and pointing out the various safety measures around the camp. "The Tribe has multiple patrol teams. We can ensure all settled areas are properly looked after."

"Not many of our people are scattered; with only a few exceptions, most live within the major gathering places."

Orion walked with his hands clasped behind his back, nodding and occasionally waving to his people, who looked back at him with expressions of fervent, reverent awe.

"Have you kept a count of the population increase?" he asked. "And what about the bloodline talents of the new younglings?"

"We have, my lord. So far, we've welcomed over twenty-eight thousand new younglings. More than eighty percent of them carry excellent bloodlines."

Chapter 894: Seeds of the Future

When Rendall spoke of the Tribe's new population, his face beamed with pride. Seeing the Tribe flourishing was his greatest comfort.

Although his own power remained stuck at the late Alpha stage, he was content. Rendall had come to terms with it. He'd already decided that when he died, he would ask Orion to transform him into one of the Skeletal Knights.

"Have you truly decided, Elder?" Orion turned, looking at Rendall with a calm expression.

The older man didn't flinch. Instead, a look of peace settled on his face. He had mentioned his desire to become a Skeletal Knight to Orion before; Orion asking now was a way of giving him another chance to choose.

"I have thought it over, and this is the choice my heart can, and will, most readily accept."

Orion sighed, a complicated feeling churning within him.

Disappointment? Pity? Sadness? Perhaps a little of each.

He had originally come to give one of the dragon eggs to Rendall. The three dead eggs he'd swiped on his way out, while seemingly useless, still had value.

Their potential was limited, so Leonidas and Alexander weren't interested, which meant they all went to Orion. In truth, he didn't have much use for them either, but they would be a massive boon to his subordinates.

Leonidas had even given him the secret technique for refining them into avatars.

It was a pity. Rendall's heart already belonged elsewhere. Giving him a dragon egg now wouldn't be right.

"I'll be staying in Kadir for a while. If any of you have questions about your training, you can come find me," Orion said, stepping into a tent styled much like the ones in Moonshadow Valley.

Rendall, Thundar, and Fergus exchanged a look and followed him inside.

To celebrate Orion's return, a feast was laid out with meat, wine, and fruit. Outside the tent, bonfires burned long into the night, surrounded by joyous celebration. It was late when the three men finally prepared to leave.

"Thundar, you stay," Orion said. "I have something for you."

Thundar, who had just stood up, slowly sat back down.

Once Rendall and Fergus had left the tent, Orion flipped his wrist, and a scroll detailing a secret technique appeared on the low table in front of Thundar.

"Memorize this secret technique," Orion instructed. "And remember, it is not to be shared."

Thundar didn't ask why. He immediately lowered his head and began to commit the technique to memory. An hour later, he looked up, his face a mask of shock.

"Lord, this is...?"

"An avatar secret technique," Orion said, taking a sip of wine. He then retrieved a dragon egg from his storage pouch. "You are the Stoneheart Horde's Elder of Combat and the commander of our cavalry regiment. Your dark fiend mount is good, but it's not good enough."

What he said was simply the truth.

"Thundar has brought shame upon my lord and the Tribe," Thundar said, rising to his feet and bowing in shame.

Orion shook his head and pushed the dragon egg toward him. "This is a dead dragon egg, but it has Legendary level potential. Use the secret technique to refine it. All the materials you need can be requisitioned from the Tribe's treasury."

He paused, his gaze steady. "Beyond the avatar, I hope to one day see you truly step into the Legendary level yourself."

The Stoneheart Horde already had several Wardens. Aside from the special case of the Clymene, the giant tribe needed a Legendary level Warden of their own, a representative to project their power to the other races.

Orion's first choice for that role had been the Archelder. But the Elder's heart had already made its decision.

"Oh, and one more thing," Orion added. "For taking this dragon egg, all your accumulated battle achievements will be reset to 0, and you will owe the Horde one great deed."

This was the rule. The Horde's resources were not given without a cost.

"Thundar obeys!" This time, when Thundar stood, he beat his chest with his fist, the sound booming like a drum. "I will follow any decision my lord makes!" his deep, powerful voice resonated.

"Go on, then." Orion waved him away.

But just as Thundar reached the tent flap, he added one last thing. "Increase patrols around the territory for the near future. The Dusk Continent may become... unstable."

"Yes, lord!"

After Thundar had left, Orion let out a long, slow sigh.

A treasure on the level of the Chaos Dragon eggs had been stolen. Anyone would go mad. That demigod powerhouse would definitely make another move.

It was his gut feeling, and a judgment shared by his bros in the Champions Alliance. In Leonidas's words, if someone had stolen a treasure like that from him, he wouldn't just be angry; he'd probably launch a cross-realm war.

Titanion Realm, The Castle.

After a battle of conquest and surrender, Delilah lay bonelessly against Orion. He looked down and kissed her, a tender response to her earlier passion.

"Orion," she murmured, "do you want me to bear you a child?"

"Can you?" In response to her half-conscious whisper, Orion gave her hip a playful squeeze.

Delilah looked up, her pupils still slightly dilated. In their recent conquest, she had been utterly defeated, losing herself completely.

"I would like to," she said, after a long moment. Her eyes had regained their focus, and she leaned forward to nip his shoulder.

In truth, if she really wanted a child, Delilah was certain she could make it happen. She still had one of the fruits she had once given to Lilith, a treasure she had kept hidden away. She hadn't used it, saving it as a contingency against unforeseen disasters.

If something terrible were to happen to Pallas, that fruit would ensure the alliance and the relationship between the succubus race and the giant tribe still had a future. As queen of her race, Delilah would never shy away from such a backup plan for the sake of her people's continuation.

But as a woman, she was also proud. She hoped that her child with Orion could be conceived naturally.

"Alright, spill it," Orion said softly. He knew his woman. He knew her moods. "Is there something you need me to decide on?"

Delilah released his shoulder and smiled seductively at him, then blew a wisp of warm air into his ear.

"According to recent intelligence from Soaring Bird City, the situation there is a bit unstable," she said, her tone shifting to business.

She found a comfortable spot on Orion's chest and rested her head there. "The human kingdom's officials stationed in the city have been assassinated, one after another. They say the deaths were all gruesome. The most crucial part is that the killer left no trace, not a single clue."

"At first, the human kingdom suspected us," she continued. "But after a series of communications and denials from our side, they shifted their focus."

"To who?" Orion asked, sensing that something wasn't right.

"The lord of Soaring Bird City himself, Baron Torin. The very same human noble who signed that unequal treaty with us."

"With the kingdom's officials dead, he's the one who stands to gain the most. And he has been taking over a lot of territory in the city recently."

She paused, adding the final, intriguing detail. "The funny thing is, the man has a perfect alibi. He hasn't left Soaring Bird City once, and many people can attest to it."

Chapter 895: Betray

Delilah seemed to find the humans' scheming and plotting to be a fascinating and wonderful game. She was intensely interested in Torin.

"Don't even have to think about it. The killer is definitely Torin," Orion stated with certainty. "The exact methods he used don't matter. What matters is that his ambition is now out in the open."

As an Awakened with the Survivor's Platform to rely on, it wasn't at all strange for Torin to have a few unusual tricks up his sleeve.

"What comes next is predictable. He'll face pressure and ostracism from within the human kingdom, maybe even assassination attempts." Orion held Delilah close, also falling into a contemplative silence. "But he must have anticipated all of this. So why would he still choose to do it?"

For Torin to expose his ambition and his methods now, he must have a trump card, or even a powerful backer. Orion just wasn't sure if that backer was from the Survivor's Platform or from within the human kingdom itself. Both were highly likely.

The human kingdom was hardly a united front; the major princes were constantly scheming against each other for the throne.

"We're not getting involved in the kingdom's internal affairs," Orion finally decided. "We'll just watch from the sidelines. The truth will come out sooner or later."

Despite Torin's business connections with the Stoneheart Horde, Orion preferred to wait. Why not let them fight it out and be the one to pick up the pieces?

"Mm," Delilah hummed softly, twisting a lock of her hair and teasing Orion's chin with it. "My lord," she purred, "there's one other strange thing about that Torin."

"Tell me."

Delilah's teasing had stoked the fire in Orion once more, and his restless hands began to roam over her again. Succubi were like that—never satisfied. The moment she recovered her strength, she immediately began to provoke him.

"Heh heh... at our Stoneheart City's textile market, besides buying up rare ores, Torin also made several roundabout purchases of a large batch of weapons and equipment." She looked up at him. "My lord, what do you think he's planning?"

Orion's hands, which were kneading Delilah's hips, paused. A possibility flashed through his mind.

Don't tell me that guy is planning to launch a rebellion right now, to overthrow the human kingdom? Where would he get the courage—or the power?

The thought had barely formed before Orion dismissed it.

No, based on the decisiveness and intelligence Torin has shown before, he's not that stupid. His own strength isn't nearly enough to support that kind of ambition. Which means... his confidence must come from the Survivor's Platform. From some Awakened Big boss? Yes, that has to be it. Only then could Torin eliminate his enemies so cleanly.

The more he thought about it, the more plausible it seemed. Lost in thought, he held Delilah tighter. She, already aroused, took the initiative and launched her own invasion.

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Half a day later, Orion gently stroked Delilah's smooth back.

"Increase surveillance on Torin and Soaring Bird City," he said softly. "And demand our share of the profits from the city that we're owed."

"Mobilize the armies in our territory. Assemble the warriors under the guise of conducting military drills."

"Double the patrols on our borders and on the border with the ogre territory."

"And notify Aldous. Tell him to be on high alert."

The orders were clear. Orion was preparing for war. If there was an Awakened Big boss standing behind Torin, then this rebellion would be no small affair. The flames of war could very well spread to the Stoneheart Horde. Taking precautions was absolutely necessary.

"Orion, is that Torin really planning to rebel?" Sensing the seriousness in his commands, Delilah's playful demeanor vanished. She sat up straight, her expression grave.

"This isn't just a rebellion," Orion said, his words shocking enough to make Delilah's scalp tingle. "It might be a full-blown betrayal of his own race."

"Betray his race? How could he possibly have the power for that?"

Orion shook his head. It was all just speculation. They would only know the truth after Torin made his next move. "I don't know. My gut just tells me something big is about to happen in Soaring Bird City. Keep a close eye on it for me. I'm very interested to see what kind of game our partner is planning to play."

Human Kingdom, Soaring Bird City.

In a secret chamber within the palace, Torin unrolled the mysterious scroll and began to communicate with the entity sealed within.

"Just as you said, the attempt to misdirect them failed. They are indeed watching me now." Torin's voice was exceptionally calm as he spoke.

Things had already reached this point; he had no regrets. In fact, he felt a sense of relief. He was now a force to be reckoned with in Soaring Bird City. But he knew that was only temporary.

"You act calm, but I can feel your fear," Ogu's mocking voice drifted from the scroll, perfectly crafted to grate on one's nerves. "Are you afraid of your enemies, or are you afraid of death?"

If he wasn't being completely controlled, if he didn't desperately need what the entity offered, Torin would have burned the scroll to ashes right then and there.

"Yi," the voice continued, using Torin's name from the Survivor's Platform, "you and I are both Awakened. Compared to these natives, we possess far greater foresight and experience. They are nothing but a bunch of locals, unworthy of your fear! They should be the ones who fear you!"

It was both encouragement and poison. Ever since Torin had made his first deal with the clown, Ogu, he had fallen deeper and deeper into a trap from which he couldn't escape.

Under the clown's influence, Torin had become more brutal. The shrewd, veteran mindset he had been developing was getting lost in a haze of increasing slaughter.

"Don't worry, Yi. It's just one city!" Ogu's voice was like a Demon holding out candy to a little girl. "Once we corrupt the dwarven race, transform them into dark dwarves, and then rally some of the other northern races to our cause, we will have a true foothold on this continent."

"Then, you will be the sovereign of a great faction, an esteemed patron on par with the leaders of the human kingdom, the blood elves, the giants, and the dragons."

"At that point, won't finding any resource you desire be as simple as asking for it? Before all that, losing a single Soaring Bird City is a worthy sacrifice."

"You'd better not be lying to me," Torin said, his voice low. "Or I will make sure you die a horrible death."

It was his last bit of defiance, a threat that was completely hollow. The more deals he made with Ogu, the faster his own power grew, and the more his foundation deepened. In just a short period of time, Torin had already become an Alpha-peak powerhouse.

Chapter 896: Delivery Service

Most importantly, Ogu had dangled a Lord's Stone as bait, proposing a series of conditions that Torin simply couldn't refuse.

Gradually, Torin gave up resisting and chose to cooperate. He had no choice but to accept Ogu's plan: betray the human kingdom and corrupt other races to build an army to fight against it.

In his heart, Torin knew he was probably just a pawn, doing all the dirty work for Ogu's benefit. But to advance to the Legendary level, he had to agree.

If he continued down the normal path within the human kingdom, becoming a lord meant being shackled by the rigid nobles system. Even after paying an enormous price, his chances of obtaining a Lord's Stone were minuscule.

In short, Torin had figured it out. He had no future in the human kingdom. That was why he chose to work with Ogu.

Of course, starting a rebellion in Soaring Bird City would be foolish. The city was surrounded by the blood elves, the stoneheart horde, and the human kingdom. If he started a fight there, he'd have nowhere to run.

So, after careful consideration, Torin set his sights on the territory of the dwarven race. The dwarves' territory was bordered by the human kingdom to the south, the sea to the east, and other non-human

paces to the north and west. Its strategic location offered multiple escape routes and was ideal for a protracted conflict with the major powers.

"You must understand, Yi," Ogu's voice faded, but his words, like a virus, had taken root in Torin's mind. "You and I are the same kind of people. As for these natives... in our eyes, they are nothing but ants."

Emerald Dream Realm. Two months passed in the blink of an eye.

One day, as Orion was overseeing things from the city of Lorelia, focusing his attention on incubating the World Dragons, trouble finally came to the Dusk Continent.

To be precise, it came to the seas west of the continent.

<Public Channel>

Kraken: [@everyone] HELP! WE HAVE A SITUATION!

Kraken: A dragon fleet appeared out of nowhere in the western sea! They've occupied a large island and are starting to invade Champions Alliance faction territory!

Kraken: We've already lost most of the western sea!

It was a flood of messages from Kraken, a desperate cry for help, a testament to his powerlessness. He was absolutely furious.

If the dragons had just arrived a little later, he might have already advanced to arch lord. After taking control of the seas around the Dusk Continent, his faith energy had accumulated to over nine million. He had been on the verge of attempting to form his body of faith and break through.

But the dragons' appearance had stopped him at the most critical moment, shattering his dream.

Kraken: @everyone GET IN HERE AND WRECK THESE GUYS!!

He was enraged. He wanted a fight. He wanted slaughter.

But none of the relevant demigod powerhouses—Deputy Commander Edward or Arthas—said a word. Even the usually chatty Leonidas, Alexander, and Orion were silent.

Just as Kraken was starting to wonder what was going on, Demon Makareth and Isabella finally spoke up.

Makareth: @Kraken Bro Barnacle, your territory is being invaded?

Makareth: Need a hand?

Makareth: I can't promise much, but helping you wipe out a bunch of Legendary level scrubs? Absolutely no problem.

Honestly, with Kraken's social skills, it wasn't surprising that Makareth was calling him "Bro Barnacle." Kraken had managed to get along with Orion; of course he could handle a smooth-talking opportunist like Demon Makareth.

Isabella: @Kraken Are you talking about the Valkorath Realm or the Emerald Dream Realm?

Isabella had picked up the habit of calling him Kraken from Orion. After a few times, it felt natural.

Kraken: The Emerald Dream Realm, obviously! Who would have the guts to invade the Valkorath Realm?

Makareth: ??? Bro Barnacle, where is the Emerald Dream Realm?

Kraken: It's the world the Champions Alliance invaded together before you joined the group. We took over an entire continent here.

Valkorath Realm, Northern Coast.

Demon Makareth stood on a reef, looking out at the distant slime molds layer. Suddenly, the fungal creatures spread out before him seemed far less appetizing.

A group cross-realm invasion? he thought. An opportunity like that, led by a demigod Big boss... the resources you could plunder would be endless! Something like that...

As he thought about it, his breathing quickened. Demons were born of evil, darkness, cruelty, greed, and lust. Even with the memories of his past life suppressing these negative emotions, Makareth sometimes couldn't help but feel a pang of envy and jealousy.

But just as those negative emotions began to cloud his mind, the Big bosses of the Champions Alliance finally spoke.

Edward: Just dragons. They're nothing more than a delivery service for magical components.

Arthas: Excellent. I was in need of materials to upgrade my bone dragons.

The signals sent by the two demigods, the Deputy Commander and Arthas, were a massive relief to the anxiously waiting Kraken. With these two speaking up, he felt that his territory might not shrink after all. In fact, it might even expand significantly.

Leonidas: Looks like I'll have to transfer some Sea Race troops over. Squiddy's forces won't be enough to even serve as cannon fodder.

Leonidas was already preparing for battle, taking a moment to poke fun at Kraken.

Alexander: Intel is being gathered. It will be distributed to all of you shortly.

As always, Alexander was reliable, already on the job.

Hulk: I can also deploy Sea Race units, but they'll need time to mass before they're effective. They won't be much help in the early stages.

No one had to guess. The Big bosses in the group knew exactly what was happening. This dragon fleet was here for them, for the Champions Alliance.

Orion, Leonidas, and Alexander had caused the trouble. Everyone had shared in the loot. Now, everyone had to face the consequences and bear the burden together.

As for Kraken, all Orion could do was offer a silent prayer: Tough break, man.

Of course, Isabella, with her territory on the northern continent, would also certainly be affected by this dragon invasion.

Edward: This dragon invasion will primarily involve naval and aerial combat. All of you, prepare accordingly. It would be best not to let the flames of war reach the Dusk Continent.

The Deputy Commander had spoken again, laying out the key strategy. The battlefield could not be on the mainland, as it would disrupt the development of everyone's territory. The main combat units would be the Sea Race and aerial forces.

Arthas: I have already awakened the various graveyards on the Dusk Continent. The undead armies are marching toward the western coastline. At most, it will be half a month before all combat personnel are in position.

For Arthas, it didn't matter where the war was. Wherever there was death, the undead race would never lack for soldiers.

Makareth: I request to join the group war effort! I will contribute both money and manpower for the team!

Makareth: I promise to be obedient and not cause any trouble for anyone!

Chapter 897: Overwhelming Force

No one else spoke. Demon Makareth had been brought into the group by the Deputy Commander; he was, for all intents and purposes, the Deputy Commander's disciple. The decision could only be his to make.

Edward: You have three days to assemble your forces that specialize in naval and aerial combat. After three days, I will open a portal for you.

After only about five minutes, Deputy Commander Edward had agreed to Demon Makareth's request.

Makareth: You got it, Big boss! I don't have any naval units, but I can bring a detachment of troops that excel in air combat!

Far away in the Valkorath Realm, Demon Makareth was ecstatic to have gotten the Deputy Commander's approval.

He knew that the fungal creatures of the Valkorath Realm were essentially a welfare program for new members of the alliance. It was a benefit he could take advantage of anytime he had the will and the time.

But participating in a full-blown group war was an opportunity that was much harder for a newcomer like him to join.

War, as long as you won, was always incredibly profitable. At the same time, it was also an excellent opportunity to strengthen friendships with his teammates. This last point was something Makareth, a shrewd operator, valued even more.

Isabella: I apologize. It seems I can only contribute myself. My cavalry are land units, and they are all currently dispatched to guard and patrol various regions.

Isabella's cavalry forces were small to begin with, and she had lost many in the previous battle against the Silver-Eyed people. She still hadn't fully recovered her strength.

However, no one really cared about Isabella's apology or her slight melancholy. In the eyes of the Deputy Commander, Arthas, Leonidas, Alexander, and Orion, this war was aimed squarely at them.

They were the ones who should be giving it their all. For Makareth and Isabella, the thought was what counted. Whether they joined the battle to gain experience or just to tag along for the ride, no one would judge them.

Leonidas: Deputy Commander, I have a question.

Leonidas: The dragons from the Uynting Realm are descending upon the Emerald Dream Realm. Aren't the demigods on the Chaos Continent who control the realm formation going to do anything about it?

It was a valid question, and one that Orion also wanted the answer to. Furthermore, one of his women and his child were living on the Chaos Continent, so he paid close attention to its affairs.

Edward: The dragons' cross-realm invasion is targeting us specifically. The others won't stop it. They'd probably love nothing more than for us and the dragons to cripple each other.

Edward: Besides, they can't manage it even if they wanted to. The commander damaged a section of the Emerald Dream Realm's formation. It can no longer prevent the dragons from descending.

Edward: If the realm formation isn't repaired, the Emerald Dream Realm will only become more chaotic from here on out. It's not just us; the other continents are facing the same problem. We have enemies. Do you think the other factions don't?

In reality, the Deputy Commander was absolutely right. The Dawn Continent had already fallen into chaos, infested with all sorts of ghouls and goblins, its situation changing daily. The Chaos Continent wasn't much better off. While it appeared calm on the surface, a turbulent undercurrent was brewing. The races that had welcomed demigods from other realms, fearing reprisal, had long since banded together for mutual protection.

Edward: In the Emerald Dream Realm right now, every inch of land is worth fighting for.

Arthas: The Champions Alliance never fears a war.

This was their stance. The stance of the two demigod powerhouses of the Champions Alliance, and their stance toward the Dusk Continent and the outside world.

Edward: Leo and Hulk, get to the battlefield as soon as possible and take command of the front lines.

Leonidas: Yes, sir!

Hulk: Roger that.

The demigod-level combat would be handled by the Deputy Commander and Arthas, but the arch lords and other lords on the front lines needed to be cleaned up by Leonidas and Orion.

Alexander had to focus on gathering intelligence, which meant that the only ones who could maintain a long-term presence on the front lines were Leonidas and Orion.

Edward: Kraken, resources will be diverted to you. Your job right now is to spam out troops by any means necessary to lay the groundwork for our undead armies.

The troops the Deputy Commander was requesting were, of course, the cannon fodder types that could be bred quickly, such as the Ocean Hunters from the Stoneheart Horde.

Edward: As for Makareth and Isabella, participate as you see fit. Act within your means. War is not a game, and no one can watch over you forever.

Makareth: Don't worry, Deputy Commander. This Demon has long been prepared for this. People die in war. Sooner or later, death comes for everyone.

Isabella: Understood.

Unlike Isabella, Makareth, as a Demon who had clawed his way up, had seen too much of life and death. He had decided the fates of too many people. He was already prepared.

Edward: Then, get ready. We must fight this battle with overwhelming force. We must show the other factions and demigods who are watching from the sidelines that they dare not entertain any ideas about our Dusk Continent.

Reading the Deputy Commander's speech, Orion felt a slight thrill of excitement. This was the first time he was entering the team's core as a main force, shouldering the responsibilities that came with it.

Titanion Realm, The Castle, Upon the Throne.

Orion slowly opened his eyes and muttered to himself.

"The configuration between my avatars... it needs to be adjusted."

To the North, Serpent Isle, Jynx.

Orion's mirror avatar descended upon the isle with Lycanor, immediately drawing the attention of Lysinthia and Gustalon.

"Gustalon, you're with me. I have a mission for you."

"As you command, My lord!" Gustalon appeared at Orion's side, a flicker of excitement in his eyes. He knew his lord well enough to understand that when he was summoned like this, it usually meant a large-scale, complex war was brewing. The more complex the battlefield, the greater his chance to shine.

"Lycanor is a Warden," Orion said, introducing her to Lysinthia. "She will guard this place in Gustalon's stead from now on. You can just call her your big sister."

After the introductions, Orion walked straight toward the sea.

Under the curious gazes of the others, an arch lord-level ancient giant-horned whale surfaced from the deep sea, swimming swiftly toward the lighthouse.

In truth, the whale was a trump card Orion had prepared for Lysinthia, but due to the situation in the Emerald Dream Realm, he now needed to take it back.

"An arch lord deep-sea monster?" The most surprised person in the crowd was Lycanor.

She had only joined the Stoneheart Horde a short time ago and didn't yet know the true depth and secrets of the Tribe. The appearance of the ancient giant-horned whale completely refreshed her understanding of the Stoneheart Horde's power.

She didn't even know that the man who had accompanied her to Serpent Isle was just a mirror avatar; Orion's true body was still overseeing things from his castle.

Orion collected the ancient giant-horned whale and took with him a Sea-Devouring Warship, along with the Giant Kelp Water Cannons and the Ocean Hunters on board.

This was the seed for his cannon-fodder legion; he needed to bring them to the Emerald Dream Realm to cultivate their numbers.

"I'll leave things here to you two to sort out."

With that final word, Orion handed Gustalon a teleportation scroll. The two of them vanished from Lysinthia's and Lycanor's sight.

Chapter 898: A Burden Lifted

"So this is the place you've been guarding, Sister Lysinthia." Lycanor walked over to Lysinthia.

It wasn't the first time they had met. Orion's introduction just now wasn't for them to get acquainted; it was his way of telling them, You are both my women.

"Sister Lycanor," Lysinthia replied, her smile a little forced. "This is Serpent Isle, located in the northern Silvercurrent Sea."

It wasn't that she was unwelcoming, but aside from Lilith, there were few women she trusted unconditionally. Still, Lycanor was a Warden and would be helping her guard this post; she couldn't exactly give her the cold shoulder.

In truth, before marrying into the Stoneheart Horde, Lycanor had done her research on Orion's other women. Lysinthia was one of the first to be by his side. According to the blood elf race's intelligence, her importance was second only to the two succubus sisters. Lycanor knew her temperament well.

She stepped forward and gently linked her arm with Lysinthia's.

"Since we'll be guarding this place together, fighting side-by-side," she said with a warm and pleasant smile, "aren't you going to show me around, sister?"

Lysinthia nodded, not refusing the physical contact, and began to give her a tour of Jynx.

To the South, Stoneheart City.

Delilah and Lilith, the succubus sisters, appearing in the castle together—and appearing before Orion together—was a rare sight.

Orion patted the arms of his throne, gesturing for the sisters to sit on either side of him.

Delilah glanced at Lilith out of the corner of her eye. Seeing no reaction on her sister's face, she smiled gracefully and took the seat to Orion's right, leaving the more prestigious left side open.

Delilah knew that while Orion seemed unrestrained with women, in certain special circumstances, he adhered strictly to tradition. For example, in front of Elara and Pallas, he was a mighty father whose word was bond. So, this time, when Orion had summoned them to the palace alone, it certainly wasn't for him to play games.

After Lilith was seated, Orion reached out and pulled both sisters into his embrace.

"From the rise of our Blackstone Tribe, from the day your elder sister came to our people in a political marriage, our fates have been forever bound together," Orion's voice was low and gentle.

He sounded like he was reminiscing, flipping through old photographs with the women he loved most. The atmosphere grew warm, exceptionally sweet.

"Lilith," he said, looking at her, "you manage things at home, shouldering the responsibilities of a lord for me, taking care of the giant tribe, the succubus race, and all the other peoples of our Horde so well. And you have always quietly dedicated yourself to the Horde through your work in taming and cultivating magical plants."

He leaned down and kissed her forehead. This was his wife. He loved her dearly, and she deserved to be loved.

"And you," he said, turning his head to praise Delilah. "The Grand Steward of the Stoneheart Horde. You worry about every little thing, and your hand is in every affair of the Tribe, from top to bottom. Thank you for your hard work."

Gazing at the two sisters' nearly identical faces and their synchronized smiles, Orion found himself momentarily lost in a daze.

"Don't tempt me," he said after a long moment, gently batting away the hand Delilah was slowly sliding under his leather robe. "We have serious business to discuss today."

"The giants, the succubi, the obsidian golems... our three races have lived for generations in the harsh lands of the black forest. The resources our Tribe possessed were few, and the number of people with real potential we could nurture was even smaller."

"Even the talent and potential of our own generation is limited. I know you both feel a lot of pressure, and I understand the worries you keep buried inside."

He held them tighter, his emotion raw and genuine. "Don't be afraid. I've got everything."

"Just do your best to keep up with me. Leave the rest to me. Remember, your best is all I ask."

He kissed them both, and the succubus sisters responded passionately, hugging him tightly. "Legendary level is just the beginning. Don't think of it as an insurmountable wall."

Orion released them and retrieved the two dragon eggs from his storage pouch, letting them float in the air before them.

"Dragon eggs!"

"Dead eggs, their life force is gone," Lilith, the Beast Tamer, said, recognizing them instantly. She tilted her head, looking at Orion with some confusion. If he had produced two living dragon eggs, she wouldn't have been surprised at all.

"Yes, they're dragon eggs, and yes, their life force is gone," Orion confirmed, impressed by her keen eye. He then handed her the scroll detailing the avatar secret technique, gesturing for Delilah to read it as well.

After a long while, the sisters looked up in unison, their identical, beautiful eyes making it impossible for Orion to tell them apart.

"The eggs' potential might not reach the arch lord level, but they can definitely reach the peak of the Legendary level," Orion explained. "With these two avatars, you will both be guaranteed to reach Legendary."

"Of course, these are just avatars. I hope that both of your true bodies can reach the Legendary level as well. I want you to follow me, to stride toward even higher planes and greater realms."

He was brimming with a commanding confidence. He put his arms around the two succubus sisters and declared his grand ambition.

Delilah and Lilith were thrilled, linking their arms with his, one on each side, and looking up at the man who belonged to them.

The appearance of the dragon eggs and the secret technique was Orion's way of providing a safety net for their futures. It was also his way of unburdening their hearts, of releasing the immense pressure they carried, allowing them to strive for the Legendary level without fear. After all, both women had already reached Alpha-peak. Their potential was immense.

"My Orion!"

"Dearest!"

The depth of their emotion was staggering.

Emerald Dream Realm, The City of Irisgarde.

This was Isabella's territory, the city she had built. Although she was reserved in front of the other members of the Champions Alliance, as a queen, she had always been proud.

By the time Orion arrived, nearly all the members of the Champions Alliance, except for the two demigod Big bosses, had already gathered.

Looking at the palace before him, Orion sighed to himself. It really did have a queenly vibe.

Exquisite carvings, opulent decorations, a classical palace design... every detail radiated a sense of solemnity and splendor. The gardens were filled with irises, their purple petals drifting on the wind, shimmering in the sunlight like a swarm of dancing sprites, adding a touch of romance and grandeur to the magnificent palace.

It was a party, and a feast.

"Bro, over here!"

Not far away, Leonidas was lounging under a large parasol, holding an oversized, custom-made glass goblet, and waving energetically at Orion.

Orion nodded and walked toward him. As he got closer, he realized that this girl, Isabella, lived a truly extravagant life.

Chapter 899: Your eyes are glued to me

The exquisite carpets on the ground, the glittering candlelight adorning the nearby dining tables, and the endless spread of delicacies, pastries, and fine wines made the banquet feel as rich and colorful as a Dreamscape.

Like a magician pulling a trick, Leonidas produced another parasol and beach chair for Orion.

Orion casually plopped down, took the glass Leonidas offered, and took a long, comfortable gulp.

"You know, you gotta admit, this Isabella chick's got some serious style," Leonidas said, raising his glass in a toast to both Isabella's taste and Orion.

"Big boss, are you just going to ignore me?" a wounded voice came from a fishbowl on a nearby round table.

Kraken was draped over the edge of the bowl, one tentacle holding a goblet, one holding a roasted chicken leg, and another balancing a plate of pastries. The sight was utterly ridiculous.

"Here's to you, Kraken," Orion said, leaning over and clinking his glass against the one held by the cheerfully grinning octopus.

"Hey Squiddy," he asked, "how come you don't get a humanoid avatar like Leo?"

"I'd love to, but I haven't had the chance!"

Kraken was truly envious of Leonidas's Behemoth avatar; he wanted one just like it.

"That guy's full of it," Leonidas blurted out, shamelessly exposing Kraken's lie. "It's not that he hasn't had a chance, he's just too picky for a low-tier avatar. He's afraid a weak one would drain his soul power and energy, affecting his own advancement to arch lord."

Leonidas had been Kraken's mentor in the group; he knew his personality inside and out. Kraken might seem easygoing, but he was incredibly particular—about his friends, and about himself. A run-of-the-mill avatar simply wouldn't cut it.

"Hey, once I advance to arch lord, my power and my connections will level up. I'll be able to find something better than," Kraken said with a chuckle.

On this point, Orion completely agreed with him. He hadn't bothered looking for an avatar during his own time as a lord. It was too much of a drain on both his energy and resources. Even his own two special mirror avatars had only been deployed after he'd advanced to arch lord.

"Hulk, I'm telling you, I've had the worst luck of my life," Kraken began to complain, now that he was with his bro and a good friend and could let loose. "My faith energy was already at nine million eight hundred thousand! I was so close! If you'd given me another six months, I might have hit arch lord by now!"

Leonidas and Orion exchanged a look and burst out laughing. The fact that they had coincidentally screwed over Kraken was, admittedly, pretty funny to them.

"I'll get revenge for you," Orion said, comforting him after the laughter died down.

"Don't worry. Whatever territory you lost, your big brother will win back for you tenfold," Leonidas said, clinking his giant goblet against the massive octopus's fishbowl.

"Big boss, is there a lot of territory up for grabs? I want some too." A low, lazy, and magnetic drawl picked up where Leonidas had left off.

Orion looked up and saw Demon Makareth and Isabella approaching together.

With a handsome, chiseled face and a tall, powerful frame clad in red-and-black battle armor.

And Isabella, standing beside him, was in no way outshone. As the host of the party, she was dressed to the nines. Of course, for her, that didn't mean a long gown and a pile of jewelry.

Isabella was in full military attire, a silver-white suit of armor accented with a light purple cape. She had a high-bridged nose, captivating mixed-race eyes, and hair like golden silk. A pair of high-heeled combat boots accentuated her long, straight legs.

She was the perfect picture of a heroic, dashing warrior queen.

"Your eyes are glued to me," Isabella noted, having keenly caught Orion's gaze sweeping over her long legs. Her own eyes were as sharp and resolute as a falcon's, and she looked down at the lounging Orion with an air of pride.

"Tch. I seem to recall someone getting her legs broken back on the Dawn Continent," Orion shot back. "Just curious if it left a scar."

It was crass, but he was only saying it because he and Isabella were familiar with each other. It was a sign that they were close, their relationship solid.

"Big boss, you gonna carry this apprentice? This apprentice is in dire need of territory too!" Seeing that Isabella had no intention of continuing the banter with Orion, Demon Makareth quickly jumped in with his own request.

He was direct; when he wanted something, he said it plainly. It was a method of dealing with the Big bosses that he had figured out on his own. With people like Leonidas, Alexander, and the ghost Arthas, being straightforward earned you more goodwill. The same was true for Orion.

Conversely, when people like them started being polite and feigning civility with you, that's when you knew they didn't truly consider you one of them.

"Sit, let's talk," Leonidas said, tossing out two more sets of parasols and lounge chairs, gesturing for Makareth and Isabella to join them. "Territory? There's plenty to go around. The entire cosmos is just waiting for us to conquer it."

Isabella waved over her maidservants, who furnished the area with a new set of silver tableware and a table overflowing with delicacies from the mountains and seas. Only then did she dismiss the servants.

She held a plate of exquisite desserts, her eyes shifting between Leonidas and Orion. From their earlier conversation in the Champions Alliance public channel, it was clear that this dragon invasion was somehow related to the Big bosses in the group.

But as for the specifics, she, Kraken, and Makareth, as mere lords, were the lowest-ranked combatants in the Alliance and weren't privy to such details.

"The enemies this time... yeah, we were the ones who attracted them," Leonidas began.

Everyone's attention, except for Orion who was busy gnawing on roasted meat, was focused on him. Leonidas was the most senior and powerful member here, the 'big brother' of the group. His apprentices were all waiting for an explanation.

This was a war against the Champions Alliance; they would all have to fight together. But it would be wrong to send them into battle without telling them what they were fighting for.

"Some treasure that a dragon demigod had stashed away was discovered by us. Naturally, we had to liberate it, heh heh." He grinned. "So, the owner tracked us to the Emerald Dream Realm. It's as simple as that."

None of the ones who had split the loot would mention the World Dragons. Just in case, the World Dragon eggs had been immediately moved out of the Emerald Dream Realm. Even if that third-stage demigod came looking, it would be a futile effort.

Now that a treasure like the World Dragons had been swallowed by the Big bosses of the Champions Alliance, they had no intention of spitting it back out. So, whatever the dragons threw at them, the Champions Alliance would be ready to catch.

Kraken, Isabella, and Makareth looked at each other, stunned. They had thought Leonidas was about to reveal some earth-shattering secret. They had been waiting with bated breath.

Kraken, especially, had his tentacles waving in anticipation, his big eyes peering at Leonidas through his glass bowl. He knew Leonidas. This wasn't like his usual style.

If this were any other day, wouldn't the usual Leonidas be bragging to the high heavens right now?

Chapter 900: Counter-invasion

West of the Dusk Continent, Dragonflame Island.

This place had once been Sea Race territory, but after the world-changing upheavals, it had become the domain of one of the demigods' servant races.

However, when the dragons of the Uynting Realm descended, those servants were either slaughtered or devoured, and the island was claimed by the dragons.

In a short amount of time, they had constructed countless Dragon Nests of all sizes across the entire island. The sky, the land, and the sea were filled with their silhouettes. The vast ocean surrounding Dragonflame Island provided enough food and resources for the dragon race to thrive and expand.

RUMBLE!

Suddenly, the weather turned. The clouds grew thick, pressing down like a collapsing sky. With them came the roar of massive lightning bolts and the ceaseless howl of a gale-force wind. A torrential downpour began to fall.

A colossal dragon flapped its wings, attempting to punch through the clouds, to battle the heavens and blow away this strange, unnatural storm.

ROAR!

The dragon shrieked and shot into the sky.

But in the next instant, the ascending dragon was struck by a bolt of lightning that looked like heavenly punishment itself. It was instantly turned to charcoal.

This scene was witnessed by the countless dragons on Dragonflame Island. Many of them thought they were hallucinating. They blinked, and looked to the sky again.

All they saw was the smoldering piece of charcoal, still on fire, plummeting back to the earth.

Many of the dragons were dumbfounded, completely unable to process what had just happened.

A dragon, killed by a lightning strike? Impossible!

But the more powerful among them immediately realized something was wrong. This was no natural lightning. This was a magical attack from an enemy.

"Insolence! Who dares to trespass on the territory of the dragon race and slay our people?!" a mighty voice boomed from the depths of the largest Dragon Nest on the island.

Before the sound had even faded, two will projections had already appeared high in the sky.

But it was too late.

High above, a massive eye of the storm had formed. In the next second, lightning flashed madly, and a hurricane was unleashed. The rain turned to blades of ice, which began to rain down upon Dragonflame Island.

In an instant, the island's trees were either bent and broken by the wind or blasted into cinders by the lightning. The dragons that were out hunting—whether flying in the sky or stalking on the ground—were all shredded to pieces by the blades of pure wind that now saturated the air.

In that moment, Dragonflame Island was torn asunder by lightning and shaken by thunder. The sky was chaos, the elements were in a frenzy. The dragon race, having just arrived in this world, was now facing its apocalypse.

"Quick, raise the protective barrier!" one of the demigod phantoms reacted instantly.

With a wave of its hand, the Dragon Nests on the island began to glow, gathering magical energy and rapidly forming a protective ward that enveloped the most critical areas.

The surviving dragons finally snapped out of their shock and fled to the core area, chanting dragon-tongue magic to reinforce the barrier with their own power.

"What despicable vermin are you?!" the other demigod phantom roared, attempting to use sonic attacks to disperse the clouds over the island.

But its sonic wave was met by a descending white bone-forged sword and was instantly dissipated.

Deputy Commander Edward and Arthas's will projections slowly materialized at the very center of the storm, looking down on the chaos below with the indifference of gods.

"You came all this way for us," Arthas's voice was cold. "Don't you even recognize us?"

He swung his sword, and a wave of sinister black energy, like a demonic tide, surged toward the two demigod phantoms.

"Damn it!" one of them yelled. "This is a hybrid magical formation! The weather, the seawater, all the magical elements in the surrounding area are being weaponized by it! Kork, quickly! We have to combine our strength and destroy the formation, or Dragonflame Island will eventually be sunk!"

The two dragon demigod phantoms reacted with incredible speed. They shot into the sky, covering each other as they charged toward Edward and Arthas at the heart of the storm.

In an instant, the heavens were filled with terrifying dragon roars and the flashing of sharp, deadly sword light. The rain of lightning and ice-blades falling on Dragonflame Island only grew more intense.

Outside Dragonflame Island.

An ancient giant-horned whale breached the surface of the water. Orion and Leonidas stood on its back, gazing at the protective barrier that was being relentlessly battered.

"Holy hell," Leonidas said, watching the battle unfold while throwing a jealous look at the whale beneath Orion's feet. "It's not just Arthas who's become unfathomable. I can't seem to get a read on you anymore either. Arthas never converted such a powerful deep-sea monster for me."

"A race that can rule an entire realm certainly has a deep foundation," Orion commented, ignoring Leonidas's sour grapes. "To be able to build up this island in such a short amount of time is quite impressive."

The conversion of the ancient giant-horned whale was only possible because Arthas was a demigod-level undead. If he had tried it back when he was an arch lord, it wouldn't have necessarily failed, but it would have consumed most of his mental and soul power.

For the bros, who all had multiple avatars, it was never worth it to divert so much focus just to control an arch lord undead.

Just as Orion was doing now, using the whale required him to constantly divert his attention to suppress the creature's own raging spirit and soul. Most of the time, he kept it sealed in an urn.

"If that defensive barrier doesn't break, our little sneak attack plan is going to be stillborn," Orion said, a hint of disappointment in his voice as he stared at the distant island.

"What's the rush?" Leonidas retorted. "You have to trust the Deputy Commander. His large-scale magical formations have never let us down."

A ferocious-looking great axe was slung across his back, a custom job. He looked up at the sky, at the roiling thunderclouds and the flashing shadows of the demigod battle. The fact that he, an arch lord-peak, couldn't see through the fight at all left him feeling a bit dejected.

"Just wait," he said with confidence. It was the confidence he had in his Deputy Commander. "As long as the wind doesn't stop and the clouds don't scatter, the battle isn't over."

He grinned. "Bro, be a little bolder. Get your big guy closer to the island. Those crawlers from the Uynting Realm are too busy reinforcing their barrier. They don't have the energy to notice us."

Orion nodded and urged the ancient giant-horned whale closer to Dragonflame Island.

It didn't matter, anyway. They were here to fight an invasion. Whether they were discovered sooner or later made no difference.

The dragons of the Uynting Realm had actively invaded the faction territory of their Champions Alliance. It was a provocation, an act of utter contempt.

Faced with a situation like this, were they supposed to just passively wait for the enemy to come knocking? That was impossible.

According to the Deputy Commander and Arthas, the first step was to punch them in the mouth. If possible, they would annihilate every last one of them. If the enemy was too strong for that, then they would beat them so badly they would never dare to make a move again.

Passivity had never been the style of the Champions Alliance. And so, this counter-invasion, launched by their highest-level combatants, had begun.