

Titan King 211

Chapter 211 Secret

"Chieftain, what should we do now?"

The question came from Thundar, whose excitement was barely contained. The thought of obtaining countless Alpha-level crystal cores from the Bottomless Abyss had his heart racing.

"We'll wait for Rendall and Onyx to return, then discuss assigning an Alpha-level warrior to guard this place alongside Lorelia."

"The candidate will be chosen from you, Rockwell, Onyx, or Rendall. Alternatively, we can rotate the responsibility."

Though Orion framed it as a discussion, his tone left no room for doubt—he had already made up his mind.

From the encounter with the black-armored salamander, it was clear that the creatures from the Bottomless Abyss were adept at biting, highly agile, massive in size, and often protected by scales or armor.

To deal with such Alpha-level monsters, Spider Queen Lorelia alone wasn't enough. A warrior capable of direct confrontation was essential to hold the line.

"Thundar, for now, you'll stay here and guard this place. I'll coordinate with Lorelia to ensure everything runs smoothly."

"Chieftain, rest assured. If any monsters climb up from the abyss, I'll sound the alarm immediately and ensure Lorelia's safety."

Orion nodded, giving Thundar an approving glance. He hadn't expected Thundar to be so perceptive, recognizing that Lorelia was one of the horde's most valuable assets.

Satisfied, Orion gave a few more instructions to Lorelia before leaving the underground fissure with Lilith.

"Any news from outside the city?"

As Orion patrolled the city walls, he turned to Delilah for an update.

"No urgent reports yet, but the beasts in the surrounding areas of Blackstone City are clearly agitated. They're gradually converging in our direction."

"Chieftain, should we consider seeking help from Lord Gareth?"

At the mention of Gareth, Orion fell silent.

Delilah's suggestion stemmed from genuine concern. She was thinking ahead, worried about the unknown dangers the pink seed might attract.

She had no idea how many beasts—or how powerful they might be—would be drawn to the seed's scent. To her, requesting aid from the Legendary-level Gareth seemed like the safest option.

But Orion dismissed the idea outright.

"No need."

"Besides, Gareth might not even help us."

"And even if she did, she wouldn't give it her all."

"On top of that, do you realize what kind of price we'd have to pay to enlist the help of a Legendary-level warrior?"

Orion's voice carried a hint of disdain. He had no fondness for Lord Gareth.

If not for her Legendary-level strength, Orion would have killed her long ago and taken control of the Four Domains himself.

After all, Gareth had indirectly contributed to Clymene's death.

And during the last southern invasion, Orion had seen through Gareth's true nature.

To her, Orion, Soraya, and even Slagor were nothing more than disposable pawns.

The invasion wasn't just a way to weaken Thunderwood Forest—it was also a calculated move to drain the resources of the Four Domains.

Her actions revealed her true intentions: Gareth wasn't as magnanimous as she appeared.

Orion understood Delilah's concerns. She was worried the horde might provoke an enemy they couldn't handle.

Suddenly, Orion turned, and Delilah, caught off guard, stumbled into his arms.

He wrapped his arms around her waist, holding her close.

Delilah struggled briefly but couldn't break free. She ended up leaning against Orion's chest, her face pressed against him.

"I'll let you in on a secret," Orion said softly.

"Even if a Legendary-level warrior were to descend upon Blackstone City, I have the strength to defeat them."

"So don't worry. Focus on managing the situation. If stronger enemies appear, I'll deal with them myself."

His confident, heroic words left Delilah utterly captivated.

Faced with the seductive and alluring Delilah, Orion's desires began to stir.

"You're truly irresistible," he murmured.

Delilah's ever-present smile, combined with her ability to both solve problems and satisfy desires, made her impossible to resist.

Orion, overcome by her charm, couldn't hold back any longer.

Poison Dragon Swamp – Lizardmen Settlement.

In a wooden hut, Slagor was in the middle of an intimate moment with a female lizardman.

"Chieftain, something's wrong!"

A panicked voice interrupted, causing Slagor to shudder. His arousal vanished instantly.

"Damn it! If you don't have a good reason for interrupting me, I'll kill you!"

Slagor pulled up his pants, grabbed his sword, and stormed out of the hut.

"Chieftain, it's the swamp crocodiles! They've gone mad and are heading west!"

"Mad? It's mating season. There's probably a female crocodile over there. What kind of excuse is that?"

Slagor's frustration only grew as he listened to the report.

"No, it's different this time! This isn't normal mating behavior!"

"Several swamp crocodiles have already crossed into the Barren Mountains and are heading toward the Black Forest!"

Hearing this, Slagor's expression darkened.

"What did you just say? Repeat that!"

"Chieftain, several swamp crocodiles have crossed into the Barren Mountains and are heading toward the Black Forest!"

"I suspect something major is happening in the Black Forest. Either that, or..."

The lizardman hesitated, trailing off.

"Or what?"

Slagor slapped the lizardman on the head, nearly knocking him over.

"Or Blackstone City's warriors are using some kind of pheromone-based magical plants to lure beasts for mass hunting!"

Slagor fell silent, leaning on his sword as he gazed toward the Black Forest.

The idea wasn't far-fetched. With Blackstone City's large population and countless spiderlings, it made sense for Orion to stockpile food.

"Fine. Your explanation is convincing enough. I won't punish you for interrupting me during sex."

"But keep an eye on the swamp crocodiles. Don't let any more head west!"

"And as for the ones that already escaped, deny they were ever ours. Understand?"

"Yes, Chieftain! I understand!"

"Good. Now get out of here. Watch the crocodiles, and later, go see the elder for a reward. He'll assign you a female lizardman."

The lizardman's face lit up with excitement as he scurried away.

Northern Abyssal Chasm – A Fiend Serpent Lair.

The lair was a writhing mass of fiend serpents, their bodies tangled together in a scene that would terrify anyone with a fear of snakes.

The air was thick with a nauseating scent—a pheromone released by the female serpents to trigger mating.

Suddenly, a strange fragrance wafted into the lair.

The serpents froze, their movements halting as if someone had pressed pause.

The next moment, chaos erupted.

The serpents abandoned their mating frenzy and began slithering out of the lair, driven by an uncontrollable urge.

From the depths of the lair, massive serpents emerged, each one Hero-level in strength. Their numbers were staggering.

"What kind of scent could make the serpents abandon mating in this season?"

A thin figure stepped out of the shadows, muttering to himself.

It was Ridi, one of Lord Gareth's most trusted subordinates.

During the southern invasion, it had been Ridi who ambushed Orion at the gathering point.

The fiend serpent lair was one of Gareth's cannon fodder troops, housing over 200,000 serpents.

Most were below elite level, but their sheer numbers made them formidable as disposable soldiers.

"I need to see what's causing this commotion."

Ridi had no intention of reporting the incident to Gareth.

In his mind, nothing in the Four Domains could defy Gareth's authority—or his own.

And so, Ridi let the serpents head south, following them closely.

Western Desert – Scorpion Tribe Territory.

The scorpion tribe's countless young scorpions were also in a frenzy, their tails twitching and creating waves of sand.

"Enough!"

From her throne in the underground palace, Soraya let out a roar.

A wave of invisible energy spread outward, instantly calming the scorpions.

"Your Majesty, has something happened in the Black Forest?"

"Why are the scorpions so agitated?"

High Priestess Selenis asked, her own giant scorpion mount also showing signs of restlessness.

"I don't know."

"There's a scent coming from the Black Forest. It's similar to pheromone-based magical plants, which is likely causing the agitation."

Soraya frowned, gazing toward the Black Forest.

"Your Majesty, could Orion be luring beasts to stockpile food for the winter?"

"Possibly. With so many people and spiderlings, they must be running low on supplies."

"But isn't he afraid of triggering a massive beast tide?"

Soraya didn't respond immediately.

After a long pause, she finally spoke, her tone uncertain.

"With so many powerful warriors, perhaps they're deliberately hunting a beast tide."

"That's... insane!"

Southern Thunderwood Forest.

Near the border with the Black Forest, countless beasts were drawn northward by the strange fragrance.

The harpy tribe, stationed in the area, noticed the unusual migration.

But instead of intervening, they welcomed it.

"Go on, go north. Trample those invaders to death. Then we harpies can finally enjoy a few years of peace!"

Chapter 212 Broadskull ravens

"Chieftain, the Sentinel Corps reports that Elder Rendall encountered a small beast horde while sweeping the southern region!"

"The hunting party engaged and wiped out the beast horde!"

Inside the chieftain's tent, Orion sat at the head seat, gazing at the lively scene outside.

He wasn't paying much attention to Delilah's report.

The arrival of a small beast horde was expected and nothing out of the ordinary.

With Rendall, Onyx, and Thundar—three Alpha-level powerhouses—leading the sweeps, as long as it wasn't a massive beast horde, they could handle it with ease.

At this moment, Orion finally felt that his efforts over the past two years were starting to pay off.

The elders he had personally trained were now capable of holding their own in various situations.

For instance, the Bottomless Abyss was guarded by Lorelia and Rockwell, ensuring no major issues.

If any monsters managed to escape, Orion and the succubus twin sisters stationed in Blackstone City could rush over to provide support at any time.

Outside Blackstone City, Rendall, Onyx, and Thundar led the hunting party, cannon fodder troops, and the knights in relentless sweeps against the incoming beast hordes. The situation was well under control.

If Orion had chosen to focus solely on his own strength back then, he would likely be overwhelmed by now.

"Has the beast pen Lilith requested been completed?"

Orion withdrew his gaze and looked at Delilah. She responded with a charming smile, her voice soft and sweet.

"We've cleared out several large caves in Moonshadow Valley specifically for her, and the beast pens have already been built."

"Thundar and the elders also captured some beasts alive, and they're currently being escorted over."

"Lilith is inspecting the pens in Moonshadow Valley. Darling, aren't you going to take a look?"

Orion nodded but said nothing.

Ever since Lilith learned the taming skill, all matters related to taming within the horde had been handed over to her.

Along with this, Elan's Skytalon Tribe had also been integrated into Lilith's subordinates.

This was a good thing. The horde's faction structure was becoming more specialized, a sign that the horde was growing more organized.

"What about the Blood Mushrooms? When will they be ready to harvest?"

The horde had stockpiled a large amount of beast blood, pouring it daily onto the Blood Mushrooms, which had consumed significant resources.

From selecting and cultivating the right soil—mushroom soil, humus, and regular soil—to inoculating the Blood Mushrooms, the tribe had been waiting for a long time.

"That was Violet's responsibility before. I've only recently taken over, so I'm not entirely familiar with the cultivation process yet."

"However, according to Lady Jasmine and Ivy, the first batch of Blood Mushrooms should mature in no more than two months!"

Delilah furrowed her delicate brows. Ever since Violet disappeared, the task of cultivating magical plants had fallen to her.

But because she had been busy organizing the Sentinel Corps to scout the beast horde's movements, she hadn't had time to fully sort out the magical plant situation.

Orion nodded. He understood that Delilah had a lot on her plate. Not only was she responsible for intelligence work, but she also managed the logistics for nearly 100,000 people within the horde.

"This can wait. Once—"

Screech! Screech!

Before Orion could finish speaking, a sharp cry echoed from above Blackstone City. It was the call of a thunderhawk.

Others might not understand the cry, but Orion could.

"You're in charge of Blackstone City for now. I need to head out!"

Leaving those words behind, Orion quickly dashed out of the tent.

Once outside, he contacted the thunderhawk while climbing the city walls.

Moments later, the thunderhawk swooped down and carried Orion into the sky.

Delilah stepped out of the tent, watching the thunderhawk carry Orion westward. She couldn't help but fall into deep thought.

"The west... the desert... Could something have gone wrong there?"

After pondering for a while, she waved her hand, summoning a succubus.

"Tell Dirtclaw to send more scouts around Blackstone City, especially toward the west."

"Understood, Your Majesty!"

The succubus bloodline warrior responded and quickly headed out of the city.

In the sky, Orion narrowed his eyes, his expression cold and murderous.

"Rayden, how many of them are there?"

"Orion, I don't know exactly, but there are a lot!"

Delilah's guess was correct—there was indeed trouble in the west.

While scorpions were the dominant beasts in the desert, they were under Soraya's control and hadn't surged toward the Black Forest.

The enemies appearing in the west were a flock of broadskull ravens, a type of flying beast.

These broadskull ravens weren't strictly desert beasts but rather creatures that roamed the borderlands between the desert, Thunderwood Forest, and Mist Bay.

This region was a no-man's-land, so the invading ravens were unclaimed by any faction.

A few days ago, a flock of broadskull ravens hunting in the desert caught the scent of something enticing. Following the scent, they arrived at the Black Forest.

As Orion's mount, the thunderhawk Rayden considered the Black Forest its territory.

On days without conflict, Rayden would routinely patrol the forest.

Today, during its patrol, Rayden discovered a group of intruders—a flock of broadskull ravens so numerous that even it hesitated to engage.

It wasn't that the ravens were particularly powerful, but among them was an Alpha-level broadskull raven that had ambushed Rayden during its hunt.

"Master, they're heading this way. They want to eat you too!"

Rayden's words didn't surprise Orion. Ever since Violet disappeared, even the thunderhawk had entertained such thoughts.

The seed Orion carried emitted a scent that was irresistible to beasts, akin to their favorite delicacy.

A day later, Orion finally saw the flock of broadskull ravens Rayden had mentioned.

A dense, black mass loomed on the horizon, their sheer numbers creating an apocalyptic scene.

Caw... Caw... Caw...

As they drew closer, the ravens' hoarse cries sounded like a funeral dirge, unsettling to the core.

At a glance, Orion couldn't immediately estimate their numbers.

"Master, should we keep approaching?"

"Yes, keep going!"

As he spoke, Orion pulled several tridents from his back. His body was now covered in Ghostbone Armor and an icy layer of frost armor.

The Ghostbone Armor extended outward, shielding the thunderhawk's more vulnerable areas.

Swoosh!

The thunderhawk, already incredibly fast, accelerated further as Orion hurled a trident with all his might. The weapon tore through the air, slicing violently toward the flock.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The trident's immense power obliterated the first broadskull raven it struck.

After piercing through one, it continued its deadly trajectory, tearing through several more before embedding itself in another raven, which plummeted to the ground.

Screech!

Excited by the carnage, the thunderhawk let out a piercing cry and dove into the flock, releasing bolts of lightning that struck down the approaching ravens one after another.

Orion's hands never stopped moving. One after another, the cheap, disposable tridents in his arsenal were hurled like javelins into the densest clusters of broadskull ravens.

Wherever the tridents passed, broadskull ravens fell from the sky one after another.

Under the relentless assault of the thunderhawk and Orion, the broadskull ravens in their immediate vicinity finally showed signs of fear, scattering to avoid the thunderhawk.

However, this retreat was only temporary.

Once the broadskull ravens regrouped and surrounded the thunderhawk and Orion, countless of them dove in with their sharp beaks, launching a frenzied assault.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Lightning illuminated the sky, and tridents tore through the air. Broadskull ravens were obliterated by the lightning and fell lifeless under the piercing strikes of the tridents.

Despite the carnage, the broadskull ravens remained relentless, continuing their assault.

Gradually, some of the ravens managed to break through the lightning and trident barrage, closing in on the thunderhawk and Orion.

Splat!

Orion swung his trident, Flame of Will, slashing down the ravens that got too close.

Even though he was cutting them down in droves, a few broadskull ravens managed to land attacks on the thunderhawk.

Their sharp beaks pierced through its iron-like feathers, drawing thin streaks of blood.

Though the wounds weren't severe, they were painful enough to make the thunderhawk screech in distress.

There were too many of them!

More and more broadskull ravens broke through the lightning and gathered around, their attacks growing fiercer.

Boom!

Orion's trident, Flame of Will, triggered its Ignite effect, setting one of the ravens ablaze and turning it into a ball of fire.

The ignited raven panicked, flailing wildly in the air and inadvertently spreading the flames to other ravens nearby.

The sudden appearance of fire disrupted the ravens' assault, forcing them to scatter temporarily.

"Rayden, break through now!"

Screech!

With a piercing cry, the thunderhawk unleashed a bolt of lightning that tore through the raven swarm. Spreading its wings wide, it darted through the path cleared by the lightning.

At that moment, a shadow suddenly dove from above, its long, sharp beak aiming straight for the thunderhawk's heart.

"You're courting death!"

Orion roared, grabbing the last three tridents from his back and hurling them in quick succession.

The tridents tore through the air one after another. The shadow, seeing the incoming attack, spread its massive black wings and glided to change direction.

The immediate danger was averted. The thunderhawk let out a sigh of relief and unleashed another bolt of lightning before flapping its wings furiously to escape the encirclement.

"That scared the hell out of me!"

"Orion, I almost got ambushed again!"

Orion turned to look at the swarm of broadskull ravens still chasing after them, his expression dark and grim.

Amid the black mass of ravens, the Alpha-level broadskull raven with the blood-red crest had vanished, leaving no trace.

"These ravens are cunning. That ambush was downright sinister!"

If Orion hadn't been there, the thunderhawk would have been gravely injured—or worse.

"Rayden, pick up the pace. We need to return to the horde and warn the others!"

Leaving the thunderhawk to face such a massive swarm alone was no longer an option.

After giving the order, Orion fell silent.

These broadskull ravens were flying beasts, which meant they would reach Blackstone City far faster than any other beasts.

A thought crossed Orion's mind: What if they could capture the broadskull ravens?

Especially the Alpha-level raven that had tried to ambush the thunderhawk. If the Stoneheart Horde could tame this flock, it would be a game-changer for their development.

Half a day later, Orion arrived ten kilometers outside Blackstone City and relayed the news of the incoming broadskull ravens to Onyx, Thundar, and Rendall, who were leading sweeps outside the city.

After instructing the senior elders to return and prepare for battle, Orion flew back to Blackstone City and sounded the alarm.

"Return to the city and prepare for battle. Things are looking grim!"

Upon receiving the message, Onyx began to think deeply. If the main forces returned to the city now, the situation could indeed become precarious.

"Prophet, is there something wrong with the chieftain's orders?"

Rendall, on the other hand, wasn't one for overthinking. If Orion said to return, he would return without a second thought.

"Arch Elder, if we retreat to the city, there will be no one left to sweep the surrounding areas. The beasts outside the city will only grow in number, eventually forming a massive horde."

Onyx voiced his concerns. He feared that if they abandoned the sweeps, the beasts outside would gather in overwhelming numbers, eventually forming a super horde.

Even with the city walls as a defense, Blackstone City's situation wouldn't improve much.

Even if the horde managed to repel the beast tide, they would still suffer significant losses.

"Well, we'll deal with that when the time comes. For now, let's focus on taking out those damned flying beasts heading our way!"

Hearing Rendall's response, Onyx's eyes sharpened.

"Arch Elder is right. We must first drive off those flying beasts!"

"Otherwise, if the skies and the ground are both swarming with beasts, that would be the real nightmare!"

Rendall nodded, then turned to shout orders at the bloodline warriors.

"Stay sharp! Deliver the latest batch of supplies back to the horde, then gather at the camp near the city walls and await the chieftain's orders!"

Back in Blackstone City, the alarm blared as soon as Orion returned.

With the alarm sounding, all the elders stationed in Blackstone City—except for Spider Queen Lorelia, who was guarding the underground fissure—gathered at the chieftain's tent.

Delilah, Lilith, and Rockwell, all Alpha-level powerhouses, looked at Orion with puzzled expressions.

"The enemies this time are a flock of flying beasts, led by a cunning Alpha-level broadskull raven."

"Your scouts are all on the ground. By the time they spot them, it'll already be too late!"

"At the speed those broadskull ravens are flying, they'll reach us in no more than half a day!"

"Delilah, bring out all the stockpiled throwing weapons and crossbows. We're in for some trouble this time!"

Orion's tone was steady but urgent as he relayed everything he had learned.

Hearing that a flock of flying beasts was approaching, everyone's expressions darkened.

It wasn't that they feared the strength of the flying beasts, but rather the difficulty of dealing with a large group of them.

The problem wasn't just their offensive capabilities. As long as the flying beasts remained in the air, the bloodline warriors defending the walls wouldn't be able to fully focus on the ground-based beast tide.

"Prepare yourselves. Before the beast tide fully forms and surrounds the city, kill as many of those broadskull ravens as you can!"

Orion's voice was cold and filled with killing intent. He knew they had to deal with or drive off the broadskull ravens before the beast tide fully converged.

Chapter 213 Prepare for battle

Half a day later, Rendall, Onyx, and Thundar, the three senior elders, returned to Blackstone City with their forces.

They hadn't even had time to sit down when the broadskull ravens arrived.

Caw... Caw... Caw...

The sound of the flock's cries carried an eerie, hypnotic quality, as if announcing to everyone that their time had come.

As if the grating cries weren't bad enough, the ravens' pitch-black forms filled the sky, a massive, oppressive swarm that blotted out the sun.

The scene was like the dark beast tides arriving ahead of schedule—both terrifying and awe-inspiring.

"These damned death crows!"

Rendall stood inside a tent, glaring up at the endless swarm of broadskull ravens. The cacophony of their cries grated on his nerves, and he couldn't help but curse aloud.

The hoarse, funeral-like cries of the ravens were indeed unbearable, driving everyone to irritation.

With the Arch Elder (Rendall) leading the charge, many of the horde's bloodline warriors joined in, hurling curses at the sky.

Inside the chieftain's tent, Delilah and Lilith stood beside Orion. Orion withdrew his gaze from the sky and turned to glance at them.

"Are you confident?"

"We can give it a try," Delilah replied. Behind her stood a team of elite succubus bloodline warriors.

Orion had gathered the succubi specifically to use their Nightmare Arts to confuse the broadskull ravens' leader.

If they could ensnare the leader, Delilah could use a taming collar to subdue it, and by extension, the entire flock.

But first, they had to locate the leader of the broadskull ravens.

That task, of course, fell to Orion.

Whoosh!

Outside the tent, someone from the horde fired the first arrow, signaling the start of the battle.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Caw! Caw! Caw!

In the sky, countless broadskull ravens failed to dodge the first volley of arrows and projectiles, falling to the ground around Blackstone City.

Boom!

Near the city walls, Onyx hurled a massive boulder, smashing a broadskull raven that was trying to gain altitude.

"Nice! Prophet just crushed another one!"

Even the cannon fodder troops managed to take down several broadskull ravens during the first wave of attacks.

However, after suffering initial losses, the ravens seemed to receive a command and began flying higher, out of range for most of the horde's bloodline warriors.

Only a few warriors with special abilities could continue targeting the ravens at their new altitude.

"Look! It's the chieftain and the thunderhawk!"

Excited shouts erupted as the thunderhawk took to the skies, carrying Orion.

Crackle!

The thunderhawk soared upward, and Orion, armed with an arsenal of spears and tridents, began his hunt.

This time, the thunderhawk was cautious, maintaining a safe distance from the broadskull ravens while allowing Orion to focus on taking them down from range.

Occasionally, the thunderhawk unleashed forked lightning, electrocuting any ravens that dared to approach.

Under Orion's command, the thunderhawk kept just enough distance to stay out of danger while remaining within Orion's effective range.

"Master, shoot them down!"

Rayden screeched excitedly, thrilled to see Orion picking off the ravens one by one with its help.

The thunderhawk's behavior was almost childlike, as if it were reclaiming its pride after being bullied. It was visibly delighted and proud.

"Master, I've found it!"

Suddenly, Rayden's cry grew sharper as it changed direction, heading toward a dense cluster of broadskull ravens.

Hearing the thunderhawk's call, Orion immediately understood—it had located the broadskull ravens' leader.

Crackle!

Without hesitation, Orion hurled a trident to clear the path.

Rayden coordinated perfectly, releasing a bolt of forked lightning that struck down the ravens attempting to block their way.

Caw! Caw!

Two sharp cries echoed through the sky. The broadskull ravens seemed to receive a signal, swarming toward Rayden in an attempt to surround it.

Orion's eyes gleamed with a cold, predatory light.

He pulled out a specially crafted trident coated in burning oils. Striking it against another trident, the weapon ignited instantly.

Orion selected a target among the ravens and hurled the flaming trident.

Boom!

The targeted raven burst into flames, a green fire igniting in the sky.

The green flames, fueled by the special burning oils, served as Orion's signal.

Moments later, two Wind Eagles carrying Delilah and Lilith flew out from Blackstone City.

At the same time, the succubi's song began to echo through the air.

Delilah and Lilith, supported by hundreds of elite succubus bloodline warriors, cast a massive sleep spell over the battlefield.

In the sky, Orion and Rayden continued their pursuit of the Alpha-level broadskull raven.

Suddenly, the succubi's song descended like a dream, and countless shadowy hands emerged from the darkness, extinguishing the chaos and noise of the world.

The shadowy hands soothed the night, lulling all things into slumber.

Among those lulled to sleep were the countless broadskull ravens in the sky.

One by one, the ravens began to fall like rain.

"Fire!"

In Blackstone City, the cannon fodder troops, hunting parties, and cavalry—who had been waiting for this moment—unleashed a barrage of arrows and spears, slaughtering the falling ravens.

Among them was a special unit: the cave spider squad.

From various corners of Blackstone City, large cave spiders spun webs to catch the falling ravens, dragging them into the caves of Moonshadow Valley for storage.

The bloodline warriors of Blackstone City were now busier than ever, working tirelessly after the sleep spell was cast.

In the sky, the Alpha-level broadskull raven Orion had been chasing also began to fall.

This was the perfect opportunity!

Orion directed the thunderhawk to fly alongside the Wind Eagles, picking up Delilah and Lilith.

"Quick, get the taming collar! This is our chance!"

Hearing Orion's command, Delilah and Lilith stopped casting the sleep spell and pulled out the taming collars.

However, the brief pause in the spell allowed the Alpha-level broadskull raven to resist.

Caw! Caw!

The falling raven suddenly opened its eyes, its pitch-black pupils flashing with confusion.

The next moment, something unexpected happened!

Caw! Caw!

Two piercing cries echoed over Blackstone City, and all the broadskull ravens that had been falling asleep or plummeting to the ground suddenly woke up.

Caw! Caw! Caw!

The funeral-like cries of the ravens followed in rapid succession.

Inside Blackstone City, countless bloodline warriors and cave spiders who had been dealing with the grounded ravens were caught off guard, startled and thrown into disarray.

Some unlucky bloodline warriors were even ambushed and killed by the suddenly awakened ravens.

Flap! Flap! Flap!

Above Blackstone City, a massive number of broadskull ravens took to the skies again, their wings flapping in unison, creating a spectacular yet ominous scene.

High above, Delilah and Lilith, who had thrown their taming collars, were unsuccessful.

The Alpha-level broadskull raven had used some unknown mystical ability, splitting its body into countless smaller ravens that merged back into the flock.

With this maneuver, neither Orion nor Thunderhawk Rayden could locate the Alpha-level raven anymore.

Soon after, the flock of ravens seemed to receive a command and began flying westward, retreating from Blackstone City.

"Missed the opportunity... what a shame!"

Orion sighed deeply. He had gone out of his way to borrow an extra taming collar from Rendall for this capture, but it had all been in vain.

"Lorelia's little spiders managed to capture quite a few ordinary broadskull ravens for me. At least we didn't come away empty-handed," Lilith said softly, wrapping her arm around Orion's.

"Rayden, let's head back."

Orion nodded, directing the thunderhawk to return to Blackstone City.

Outside Blackstone City, in a dense forest on a hillside.

Ridi watched the retreating flock of broadskull ravens, a sinister glint flashing in his eyes.

"So, that enticing scent came from Blackstone City!"

Ridi still vividly remembered the scene back at the gathering grounds when Orion had humiliated him in front of all the bloodline warriors, stepping on him like he was nothing.

The memory made his blood boil, his anger impossible to suppress.

"Orion, you'll pay for this soon enough!"

Though Ridi had been close to Blackstone City, he turned and headed south instead.

Ridi wasn't foolish—he knew he wasn't a match for Orion in a direct confrontation.

If he couldn't fight head-on, he would resort to underhanded tactics.

He had already made up his mind: he would head south and drive more beasts toward Blackstone City.

His goal was to create a massive beast tide, one so overwhelming that Blackstone City would be plunged into utter ruin.

Back in Blackstone City, the aftermath of the battle was being cleaned up.

The ambush against the broadskull ravens could be considered a success.

The only regret was failing to capture the Alpha-level broadskull raven.

"What a pity! If we had captured it, the horde's strength would have grown significantly," Rendall said with a sigh as he took the taming collar Lilith handed back to him.

"There was nothing we could do. We underestimated that Alpha-level broadskull raven. No one expected it to have such unique abilities," Lilith replied, unconcerned.

She wasn't too bothered by the failure. Having learned the taming skill, she knew she would eventually acquire a powerful battle pet.

Besides, she still had the frost giant egg that Orion had gifted her, which would soon become the focus of her efforts.

"Everyone, the battle isn't over yet!"

Rendall was about to say more, but Orion's voice interrupted him.

When everyone turned their attention to him, Orion spoke in a calm yet commanding tone.

"Elders, with the return of our forces, the beasts outside Blackstone City will no longer be suppressed. They will inevitably gather!"

"It won't be long before a large number of beasts converge outside the city!"

"Prepare for battle, elders. Drive the beasts toward us and hunt them down to secure more food for the horde!"

With just a few words, Orion laid out the situation clearly.

For many in the horde, repelling the flying beasts had been a morale booster.

But Orion knew that overconfidence could lead to disaster.

"Build defensive fortifications, organize patrols, secure food supplies, inspect and sharpen weapons and armor... all of these tasks take time."

"Elders, make haste!"

In the Bottomless Abyss, at an unknown location.

While Orion was urging the elders to prepare for the next battle, Clymene was locked in a bloody fight.

She and her spiders were under attack by two millipede centipedes.

Millipede centipedes were an evolved form of centipedes, dark subterranean creatures with segmented bodies, each segment armed with sharp, blade-like legs.

"Hold them off! Once I kill this one, I'll come to help you!"

Clymene's voice was low and steady. The two millipede centipedes attacking them were clearly a mated pair, one larger and one smaller, working together with perfect coordination.

No matter how Clymene tried to maneuver the fight, the two centipedes never strayed far from each other.

"Clymene, I can't hold on much longer! We can't break through their defenses!"

Grendel's massive axe struck the armored segments of the centipede in front of him, only to spark uselessly against its tough exoskeleton.

The millipede centipedes' segmented armor was incredibly durable, impervious to anything short of Alpha-level attacks.

"Clymene, get those little spiders of yours to help hold these things off!"

The giant elder Vargrum's shout snapped Clymene out of her thoughts. She suddenly remembered that the 10,000 spiders Orion had assigned to her weren't just there for show.

The last time she had encountered the black-armored salamander, she hadn't thought to use the spiders, which had allowed the salamander to escape.

"All of you, attack!"

At Clymene's command, the remaining spiders swarmed the two millipede centipedes.

Though the spiders couldn't penetrate the centipedes' armor, they managed to distract and occupy them, freeing Clymene to act.

"Terror Rend!"

A surge of powerful energy erupted from Clymene, wrapping around her warhammer and radiating an aura of fear.

Boom!

Her warhammer struck the female centipede, shattering one of its segments.

The armor on the damaged segment splintered into shards, embedding themselves into the centipede's body.

The female centipede writhed in pain, thrashing violently and flinging the spiders off its body.

Those that weren't thrown off were crushed as the centipede rolled over, killing dozens in an instant.

Chitter! Chitter!

The female centipede let out a series of sharp cries. The smaller male centipede shoved aside five giant elders and rushed to its mate's side.

Then, to Clymene's astonishment, the two centipedes intertwined, head to tail, forming a wheel-like ring.

In this formation, they began rolling rapidly toward the upper levels of the Bottomless Abyss.

Their speed was incredible!

Clymene wanted to stop them, but she was powerless to do so.

Chapter 214 Brilliant idea

"Chieftain, what should we do?"

"Yeah, chieftain, those two centipedes are heading back up again!"

Clymene looked up, gazing toward the upper reaches of the Bottomless Abyss, ignoring the questions from Vargrum and Mordak.

First, it was a black-armored salamander, and now two millipede centipedes. To be honest, Clymene was starting to worry about the Stoneheart Horde.

Still, she chose to trust Orion. She believed that Orion would handle everything.

"Forget about them. Let's keep exploring downward!"

"If we don't fully explore what lies below, we won't be able to face returning!"

Hearing Clymene's words, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Grendel—the five giant elders—nodded in agreement. Returning empty-handed would not only leave them dissatisfied but also make them feel humiliated.

Black Forest, Southern Region.

Ridi was ecstatic. As he moved southward, away from the Blackstone City area, he encountered countless beasts from both the west and the south.

Under his Alpha-level aura and the deliberate herding of his serpent swarm, more and more beasts were chasing the enticing scent, stampeding toward Blackstone City.

"With so many beasts, plus my 200,000 fiend serpents, this will definitely form a massive beast tide!"

"Orion, I can't wait to see how your horde survives this wave of destruction. Hahaha..."

Ridi was confident that this beast tide would devastate the Stoneheart Horde.

In his eyes, the Black Forest had already suffered significant damage from the recent invasion.

Now, with a beast tide approaching, even if Orion's Stoneheart Horde wasn't wiped out, they would lose a significant number of bloodline warriors.

Blackstone City, Moonshadow Valley.

While the elders were busy preparing for battle, Orion, accompanied by Lilith and Elan, visited the cave where the captured broadskull ravens were being held.

Inside the cages, the broadskull ravens were all paralyzed by the venom of the cave spiders, unable to move.

"Can you establish a connection with them?"

Orion turned to Lilith. She was the only one who could communicate with the broadskull ravens without barriers—even Elan from the Skytalon Tribe couldn't do it.

"I can!"

"They're agitated, anxious, and scared."

"They're a bunch of bad-tempered little creatures—mischievous, petty, and full of resentment!"

Lilith squinted slightly. Ever since she had learned the taming skill, she felt like she had discovered a whole new world and was endlessly curious about all kinds of beasts.

"Agitated, scared, mischievous, petty, and resentful?"

"Exactly!"

After pacing around the cave, Orion suddenly turned back to Lilith and said:

"I think we should ignore them for now. Let's starve them for ten days or so!"

"Those that submit can be fed. Those that don't... we'll kill them and use them as food!"

"Not only will we withhold food, but we'll also deprive them of sleep. Don't let them close their eyes. Have the spiders take turns 'serving' them for half a month to wear down their wild nature."

"What do you think?"

Orion offered the suggestion after some thought.

Lilith's eyes widened as she looked at her giant husband.

"Darling Orion, that's a brilliant idea!"

"As you wish!"

Lilith kissed Orion on the cheek, a mischievous glint in her eyes.

"It's just a suggestion. How you handle it is up to our taming master!"

Orion smiled as he helped Lilith to her feet and left the cave.

Throughout the entire exchange, Orion didn't ask for Elan's opinion.

After spending so much time observing and waiting, Orion had come to realize that the Skytalon Tribe's method of taming beasts was no better than servitude.

Their approach to taming flying beasts involved offering the best magical plants as tribute to the beasts.

If they encountered a kind and grateful flying beast, they might form a contract with the Skytalon Tribe.

But the chances of this happening were slim. Building an aerial army this way was nothing short of wishful thinking.

When it came to more prideful flying beasts, they wouldn't even acknowledge Elan and his people.

Take Orion's own mount, Thunderhawk Rayden, for example.

No matter how much Elan and Rowena tried to entice or beg it, Rayden refused to form a contract with them.

As a result, Orion had lost faith in the Skytalon Tribe and placed his hopes on Lilith instead.

The only reason he hadn't stopped the Skytalon Tribe from continuing their efforts to tame flying beasts was that having another option couldn't hurt. Who knew? They might get lucky someday.

Shortly after leaving the cave, Orion encountered Elder of Stewardship Delilah, who was approaching him.

Orion knew that if Delilah had come to find him personally, something significant must have happened.

"What's the situation?"

"Yes."

As they walked toward the chieftain's tent, Orion gestured for Delilah to explain slowly.

"Chieftain, scouts outside the city have reported that an uncountable number of beasts are stampeding toward Blackstone City from the south."

"The report also mentioned the presence of a large number of organized, disciplined, and powerful fiend serpents."

"Chieftain Orion, this beast tide might be one of those supermassive beast tides!"

Delilah's face was grim, her mood clearly sour.

Orion, however, remained expressionless. He wasn't particularly worried about the beast tide. No matter how massive it was, it couldn't withstand the relentless hunting of the Stoneheart Horde.

If not for the assistance of the cave spiders, Orion might have been concerned.

But ever since the cave spider population had grown to over 100,000, Orion had stopped worrying about the possibility of a siege.

"When is the beast tide expected to reach Blackstone City?"

"At the latest, by noon tomorrow. At the earliest, by dawn."

"Did the report describe the fiend serpents?"

"Yes. They're pitch black with a golden stripe down their backs. The serpent swarm includes a significant number of elite-level and hero-level beasts."

"Go and prepare. Check what supplies are still needed on each defensive line and make sure the warriors have everything they need."

"Understood!"

After the brief exchange, Orion's eyes narrowed.

"Tell Rendall and Onyx to take the hunting party and cannon fodder troops and restore the traps outside the city overnight!"

Before Delilah left, Orion quickly added the instruction.

Watching her retreating figure, Orion fell into deep thought.

"A fiend serpent swarm... could it be from the Abyssal Chasm?"

"Could it be that Gareth has set her sights on the Stoneheart Horde?"

Orion was no stranger to fiend serpents.

During the last southern invasion, Orion had discussed them in depth with Slagor.

According to Slagor's intelligence, Lord Gareth commanded a cannon fodder troop composed of fiend serpents.

Now, seeing this fiend serpent troop appear as part of the beast tide attacking Blackstone City was troubling news.

"Let's hope that's not the case. Otherwise..."

Chapter 215 Ridiculous scene

At dawn the next day, as the beast tide began its assault on Blackstone City, the two millipede centipedes crawled out of the Bottomless Abyss.

The first to receive the report was, of course, Elder of Stewardship Delilah, who commanded the Sentinel Corps.

At that moment, Orion was already riding his thunderhawk, soaring through the skies to oversee and scout the incoming enemies.

Delilah acted decisively, taking charge of the situation in Orion's absence.

"Send the order: Warden Lilith and Elder of Prophecy Onyx are to head to the underground fissure immediately to provide support."

Currently, only Spider Queen Lorelia and Warden Rockwell were stationed at the underground fissure.

The monsters emerging from the Bottomless Abyss were two in number, and their strength was undoubtedly greater than that of Lorelia and Rockwell. This much was certain.

Thus, reinforcements had to be sent to the underground fissure quickly.

If anything happened to Lorelia or Rockwell, it would be a significant loss for the horde—and a personal failure for Delilah.

Delilah's judgment was correct. At that moment, Rockwell was being overwhelmed by the two millipede centipedes, and the battle was not going well.

Boom!

The male millipede centipede ignored the small spiders clinging to its body, curling itself into a fiery wheel and slamming into Rockwell with devastating force.

Rockwell was sent flying, coughing up blood. Strange runes flickered across his body—these were the symbols of a petrification spell.

The Spider Queen continued commanding her small spiders to attack the two millipede centipedes, but their efforts were largely ineffective.

Rockwell felt frustrated and helpless. Lorelia always had four hero-level cave spiders guarding her at all times.

If Lorelia had sent even one of those spiders to help hold off one of the millipede centipedes, the battle wouldn't have reached this dire state.

But Spider Queen Lorelia followed Orion's orders to the letter.

Orion had once instructed Lorelia that, aside from herself, she didn't need to concern herself with the survival of anyone else in the horde.

It was a harsh and somewhat absurd directive, but Lorelia, who valued her own life above all else, had no hesitation in carrying it out.

Bang!

Rockwell was struck again, this time by the female millipede centipede.

The impact was so powerful that Rockwell's bone armor shattered into pieces.

Splat!

Lorelia wasn't entirely without offensive capabilities. She fired a bolt from her crossbow, which was enveloped in green flames, striking the female millipede centipede in the neck.

Sizzle!

The poisoned bolt hit its mark, and the sound of corrosive sizzling filled the air, alerting the female millipede centipede to the danger.

The creature ignored Rockwell and turned its furious gaze toward Spider Queen Lorelia.

Lorelia, ever cunning, immediately commanded her small spiders to block the area in front of her, creating a dense barrier.

She then raised her crossbow and fired another bolt as a show of defiance.

As a fellow broodmother, the female millipede centipede was enraged by this provocation. It lashed out with its many legs, charging forward like a speeding train.

"Whirlwind Strike!"

At the critical moment, reinforcements arrived. Onyx, seeing Rockwell injured and Lorelia under attack, immediately unleashed his only charging skill.

Onyx spun like a tornado, his stone axe tearing through the air with sparks, colliding head-on with the female millipede centipede.

Boom!

Both Onyx and the female millipede centipede were knocked back. One of the centipede's front claws, which had been reaching for Lorelia, was severed cleanly at the base.

"Rockwell, are you okay?"

Onyx steadied himself and, instead of checking his own condition, immediately turned his attention to Rockwell.

"Prophet, I'm fine. Just a minor injury!"

Splat!

Before Rockwell could finish speaking, he coughed up a mouthful of black blood.

"Lorelia, use your spiders to cover Rockwell!"

"Understood!"

Onyx raised his stone axe, his aura surging as he prepared to face the female millipede centipede again.

At the same time, a unique song accompanied by a beautiful melody echoed through the underground fissure—Lilith had arrived just in time.

The battle's outcome was still undecided, and the fight raged on.

Above Blackstone City, the sky was filled with the cries of eagles.

Orion looked down at the seemingly endless beast tide, his expression slightly grim.

Sensing the auras of Onyx and Lilith moving toward the underground fissure only deepened his concern.

"With the beast tide surging toward the city, for Prophet and Lilith to leave the frontlines, there must be a serious problem at the underground fissure."

The fissure was already guarded by Lorelia and Rockwell. If they still needed reinforcements, the enemy must be both powerful and numerous—at least two strong opponents.

"Rayden, fly toward the underground fissure!"

"As you command!"

With no flying beasts threatening them, Thunderhawk Rayden exuded an air of invincibility, as if declaring itself the undisputed king of the skies.

"Can you sense the enemies' presence?"

"Master, I can sense them, but the underground fissure is blocked. I can't see them."

"How many enemies are there?"

"Two distinct auras!"

Hearing this, Orion let out a quiet sigh of relief.

Four against two—Onyx and the others were sure to prevail.

"Change direction. Fly toward the densest part of the beast tide!"

"And keep an eye on the fiend serpent swarm. Look for anything unusual among them."

Orion's orders were precise. His primary focus was the fiend serpents.

Although the beast tide was massive, Orion's side had plenty of strong fighters.

With the Abyssal Dragon, Thundar, Rendall, and Delilah holding the line, as long as no Alpha-level beasts appeared, the city walls would remain secure.

The Stoneheart Horde was indeed at its peak strength. They had cannon fodder, elite warriors, and even cave spiders assisting in the defense.

Orion was confident in their chances.

Riding the thunderhawk high above the battlefield, Orion served as both a symbol of reassurance for the bloodline warriors and a deterrent to potential threats like Ridi—or even Lord Gareth.

The appearance of the fiend serpent swarm had put Orion on high alert. He couldn't quite decipher Gareth's intentions.

"Rayden, any discoveries?"

"Master, nothing yet. The ground is just full of those 'chips' you mentioned!"

Orion didn't respond immediately. After a moment of silence, he said:

"Lower our altitude and keep searching. Include the weaker 'chips' as potential targets for surveillance."

"Understood!"

Orion felt increasingly uneasy. The longer he and the thunderhawk failed to locate the mastermind behind the fiend serpent swarm, the more his anxiety grew.

This could mean that Lord Gareth herself was coming to Blackstone City.

Perhaps Gareth was arriving in person to eliminate Orion, whom she saw as a significant threat.

Or perhaps it was just a will projection, sent to test the waters.

Either way, it wasn't good news. Orion wasn't yet at the legendary level, and he wasn't ready to face Lord Gareth directly.

Caw! Caw! Caw!

As the beast tide crashed against Blackstone City, Orion never expected the broadskull ravens to return.

From the western horizon, a dense swarm of broadskull ravens flew back, their ominous cries echoing like funeral dirges.

"Rayden!"

Orion called out to his thunderhawk, urging it to climb higher and fly toward the incoming ravens.

Tridents and lightning flashed in succession, and broadskull ravens fell one after another.

"Rayden, can you locate the leader of the broadskull ravens?"

"Master, I can't!"

Orion hurled another trident, killing a reckless broadskull raven that had flown directly toward him.

"Something's not right!"

It was strange. As the two sides closed the distance, the broadskull ravens showed no intention of surrounding or attacking the thunderhawk and Orion.

Instead, whenever the ravens encountered the thunderhawk, they either veered away or changed direction entirely, continuing their flight toward Blackstone City.

"Rayden, return to Blackstone City!"

The unusual behavior of the broadskull ravens left Orion puzzled. He decided to head back to Blackstone City to see what the ravens were up to.

On the ground, amidst the fiend serpent horde, Ridi had transformed into an ordinary fiend serpent, hiding among them.

Watching the thunderhawk chase after the broadskull ravens, Ridi couldn't help but laugh.

"Hahaha... Those ravens came back! Great, the heavens are helping me!"

"Now's the time—launch the assault!"

With that, Ridi drove the beast tide forward, intensifying the attack on Blackstone City.

Above Blackstone City, Orion was stunned by the scene before him.

The broadskull ravens weren't attacking the warriors on the walls or the people inside the city. They weren't even lowering their altitude.

Instead, they were defecating.

Countless streams of green bird droppings rained down from the sky, splattering all over Blackstone City.

The absurdity of the scene was beyond belief. If Orion hadn't witnessed it with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed it.

"So... this is the broadskull ravens' attack?"

Orion muttered to himself, finding the attack symbolic at best and largely ineffective.

He knew the broadskull ravens were vengeful creatures, but he never imagined that their method of revenge would involve... bird droppings.

After finishing their "attack," the broadskull ravens didn't linger. They turned and flew back west without hesitation.

"Master, these ravens are disgusting!"

Thunderhawk Rayden was furious. Even its favorite perch on a nearby hill had been defiled by the ravens' droppings—a humiliation it couldn't tolerate.

"Ignore them for now. As long as they're not attacking, focus your attention below!"

"Keep searching for any suspicious beasts!"

Thunderhawk Rayden let out an eagle cry and stopped paying attention to the broadskull ravens.

In truth, there were simply too many ravens for Orion and the thunderhawk to deal with.

In the underground fissure, the battle raged on.

With Onyx and Lilith joining the fight, the situation had improved significantly.

Under the influence of Lilith's [Illusions: Mind Confusion], the female millipede centipede suffered repeated heavy blows, and much of the armor on its segmented body had been shattered.

However, the millipede centipedes were incredibly resilient.

Despite its injuries, the female millipede centipede continued to roar, its aura still strong.

On the other side, with countless small spiders distracting the male millipede centipede, Warden Rockwell was gaining the upper hand and finally venting his frustration.

The male millipede centipede had also lost much of its armor under Rockwell's relentless attacks.

Additionally, Spider Queen Lorelia frequently fired poisoned bolts from the sidelines, corroding much of the male centipede's armor.

Chitter! Chitter!

The female millipede centipede let out a series of sharp cries, summoning the male centipede.

Hearing the call, the male millipede centipede went berserk, thrashing its body as it charged toward the female.

Seizing the opportunity, Rockwell raised his stone axe and severed an entire row of the centipede's legs, significantly slowing its movement.

"Prophet, watch out!"

Lilith cried out in alarm, warning Onyx as the male millipede centipede barreled toward him.

Onyx swung his stone axe in a wide arc, knocking the female millipede centipede aside before retreating a short distance.

By sheer coincidence, the male and female millipede centipedes ended up side by side.

To everyone's astonishment, the two centipedes intertwined, head to tail, forming a circular ring once again.

The ring began to roll, crushing the small spiders beneath it like a massive tank tread, as it attempted to escape back toward the Bottomless Abyss.

"This isn't good—they're trying to escape!"

Onyx was the first to react, charging forward with his stone axe.

Spider Queen Lorelia was quick to respond as well, commanding countless small spiders to swarm and block the centipedes' path.

The first wave of spiders was completely crushed, their bodies reduced to pulp.

But as more and more spiders piled up like a living barricade, they finally managed to halt the centipedes' advance.

"Rockwell, attack with me! Focus on killing one of them first!"

Onyx's ability to assess the situation was impressive.

Hearing his command, Rockwell hefted his stone axe and joined the attack.

In the next moment, Onyx and Rockwell spun their stone axes like whirlwinds, launching a coordinated assault on the two millipede centipedes.

Back in Blackstone City, the broadskull ravens had left as quickly as they had come.

After defecating all over the city, they flew back west without lowering their altitude or launching any real attacks.

Since the ravens posed no immediate threat, Orion chose to ignore them.

Instead, he focused on finding the hidden enemy, instructing Thunderhawk Rayden to lower its altitude and conduct a thorough search of the surrounding areas.

It didn't take long for Thunderhawk Rayden to make a discovery.

"Master, something's off about the area we just flew over!"

"What's off?"

To be honest, Orion's nerves were on edge. The moment the thunderhawk mentioned something unusual, his heart skipped a beat.

"There's a chip down there—it's emitting a strange, powerful energy!"

"Chip" was their code for fiend serpent.

If it was radiating strong energy, it meant the fiend serpent was highly powerful. This serpent was most likely Ridi, or perhaps the will projection of Lord Gareth.

"Rayden, let's go back and find that chip with the abnormal energy!"

Chapter 216 I'll handle her

Amidst the fiend serpent horde, Ridi felt a surge of tension as the thunderhawk flew overhead.

A beast like the thunderhawk was a natural predator to fiend serpents, and its presence alone was enough to make Ridi uneasy.

However, when the thunderhawk passed without detecting him, Ridi felt a wave of relief and pride in his concealment skills.

But just as this thought crossed his mind, the thunderhawk suddenly turned back.

"This... Could it be that I've been discovered?"

"Impossible!"

In this world, nothing is truly impossible.

A bolt of lightning struck the fiend serpent that Ridi had transformed into, and with a flash of electricity, Ridi's true form was revealed.

From the sky, Orion stared at Ridi's exposed figure, his expression grim.

Was Ridi here on Lord Gareth's orders, or was this his own initiative?

This was the question in Orion's mind.

But regardless of the reason, Ridi's presence on the battlefield made him an enemy, without a doubt.

"Kill him!"

Boom!

Lightning rained down from the sky as the thunderhawk and Orion began their pursuit of Ridi.

Knowing he was no match for them, Ridi had no intention of fighting back. Instead, he fled in desperation, weaving through the beast tide in an attempt to escape.

Ridi constantly changed his path, using serpentine movements to evade most of the attacks.

Sizzle!

The thunderhawk's attacks, however, were precise and predictive. A bolt of lightning struck Ridi squarely, leaving him stunned.

Splat!

Orion's trident followed immediately, piercing through Ridi's chest and pinning him to the ground.

"You can't kill me! I'm Lord Gareth's trusted aide!"

Ridi, gravely injured and barely able to fight back, shouted in desperation.

In the sky, Orion retrieved another trident, his expression cold and emotionless.

Splat!

The trident descended from above, piercing through Ridi's skull and killing him instantly.

Orion, still mounted on the thunderhawk, didn't leave. Instead, he hovered in the air, waiting for something.

Sure enough, five breaths later, Ridi's body suddenly shot up into the air and began to transform.

A dragon's head, a serpent's body, dragon claws, and a pair of fleshy wings unfolded—this was Gareth's form.

It was clear that Ridi's body was now being controlled by Lord Gareth's will projection.

Gareth's will projection raised her head, her cold eyes locking onto Orion, filled with murderous intent.

Without saying a word, Gareth's will projection spread her wings and charged directly at Orion.

Orion didn't back down. He raised his trident, Flame of Will, and unleashed his skill: Eightfold Spear Barrage.

In an instant, a formation of spears surrounded Gareth's will projection, trapping her within.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Energy clashed against energy, spears against dragon claws. For the first time, Orion witnessed someone withstand the full force of the Eightfold Spear Barrage and break through the formation.

Boom!

The thunderhawk, seeing Gareth's will projection emerge from the formation, unleashed a massive bolt of lightning.

But Gareth's will projection wrapped her wings around her body, runes glowing across them, and blocked the thunderhawk's lightning with brute force.

"Master, run! She's coming!"

To be honest, the thunderhawk was terrified. While it had seen Orion fight will projections of Legendary-level beings before, facing one directly was a completely different experience.

"Don't be afraid. I'll handle her!"

Orion remained calm, his expression indifferent.

Lord Gareth's will projection had attacked without a word, clearly intent on killing him.

Roar!

Before Gareth's will projection reached him, her dragon roar struck first.

The roar froze both the thunderhawk and Orion in mid-air, rendering them unable to move.

The roar continued, its soundwaves relentless, as Gareth's will projection closed in.

Her dragon claws extended, aiming directly for Orion's throat with no intention of holding back.

At this moment of crisis, Thunderhawk Rayden was paralyzed with fear, its pupils bloodshot as if it had already accepted its impending death.

In contrast, Orion's eyes burned with a cold, murderous light, like a titan filled with rage and killing intent.

Splat! Splat!

Suddenly, Gareth's will projection froze mid-air, her movements coming to an abrupt halt.

The eerie dragon roar ceased, vanishing without a trace.

Behind Gareth's will projection, two figures identical to Orion appeared, each wielding a trident. One pierced her heart, while the other drove a trident through her skull.

Splat!

Orion could almost see the shock in Gareth's expression, but he didn't stop his assault.

He knew this was a rare opportunity.

In the next moment, Orion raised his trident and drove it into Gareth's will projection's chest.

Boom!

Ridi's body ignited, and Gareth's will projection writhed in the flames.

Roar! Roar! Roar!

The agonized cries of the dragon were the most satisfying melody Orion had heard in a long time.

The flames of the will projection were particularly effective, burning with an intensity that consumed Gareth's will projection entirely.

In truth, Orion felt a lingering sense of fear.

Had it not been for his new skill, Triple Mirror Image, he might have perished under the strange dragon roar.

The Triple Mirror Image skill allowed Orion to create two identical copies of himself, each with similar strength, stored within his body and ready to be summoned at any time.

The downside was that once a mirror image was destroyed, it couldn't be recreated.

The upside, however, was that the mirror images could wield weapons, making them incredibly effective in combat.

Since learning this skill, Orion had kept it as his trump card, and its power had exceeded his expectations.

To Gareth's credit, she remained defiant to the end.

Even as her will projection burned away, she didn't reveal her identity or attempt to use her status to intimidate Orion.

Not a single word was spoken before her will projection was completely consumed by the flames.

Orion collected the treasure chest that Ridi had dropped and nudged the stunned thunderhawk with his foot.

"Rayden, let's head back."

Thunderhawk Rayden, still in a daze, didn't respond immediately.

"Wait... we won?"

After a moment, the thunderhawk flapped its wings excitedly and flew toward Blackstone City with renewed vigor.

Thunderhawk Rayden was immensely relieved to have survived the encounter, though it still didn't fully understand how Orion had managed to defeat such a powerful enemy.

Chapter 217 Plague

The beast tide did not cease its assault on Blackstone City even after Ridi's death.

That alluring scent, irresistible to the beasts, continued to drive them into a frenzy, compelling them to charge at the city walls without regard for their lives.

Orion, riding his thunderhawk, surveyed the battlefield from above and was quite satisfied with what he saw.

Even in his absence, Delilah had commanded the defenses skillfully, holding the beast tide firmly at bay.

However, the absence of Onyx and Lilith's auras left Orion feeling uneasy.

The battle in the underground fissure had reached its critical moment.

With Onyx and Rockwell working together, the smaller male millipede centipede was finally slain.

Now, only the larger female millipede centipede remained, making its last desperate stand.

"Rockwell, I'll take the front, you take the rear—let's finish it off!"

With the male centipede dead, the situation was no longer as dire.

Countless small spiders swarmed the battlefield, constantly harassing the female centipede. Spider Queen Lorelia launched sneak attacks from time to time, and Lilith's illusions disrupted the centipede at critical moments.

This allowed Onyx and Rockwell to fight without worry, fully focused on the task at hand.

"Prophet, be careful!"

Beasts in their final moments of life were often the most dangerous, their counterattacks the most ferocious.

Rockwell gave Onyx a word of caution before circling around to the centipede's rear.

Boom! Boom!

In a coordinated assault, Onyx and Rockwell attacked the female millipede centipede from the front and back, their strikes wide and powerful.

Lilith cast Mind Illusions again, causing the centipede to momentarily freeze in confusion.

However, the intense pain and sense of danger from the stone axes embedded in its body snapped the centipede out of the illusion.

The next second, the female millipede centipede thrashed wildly, trying to shake Onyx and Rockwell off its body.

After a series of violent rolls, Onyx and Rockwell were forced to abandon their stone axes and leap off the centipede.

"Lorelia, this is its final struggle!"

"It's your turn!"

Spider Queen Lorelia snapped her fingers, and countless small spiders emerged from nearby tunnels, swarming toward the female millipede centipede without hesitation.

What followed was a gruesome scene: thousands of small spiders climbed onto the centipede, biting and tearing at its flesh.

Only when the centipede stopped moving did Lilith call off the spiders.

"Stop! Make sure you don't damage the crystal cores inside!"

"Mistress, don't worry—I've already instructed them!"

Lorelia snapped her fingers again, and two larger spiders emerged, each carrying a pitch-black crystal core in its jaws.

"Mistress, here are their crystal cores!"

Lorelia presented the cores to Lilith as if offering a treasure.

With the battle over, Lilith turned to look at Rockwell. After a moment of thought, she made a decision.

"Prophet, Rockwell is injured and needs rest. You'll stay here for now to guard the Bottomless Abyss."

Onyx nodded without hesitation.

Even if Lilith hadn't said anything, he had already planned to stay and watch over Rockwell.

If more monsters emerged from the Bottomless Abyss, Rockwell might not survive another encounter.

"In that case, I'll head outside to assist the others!"

With that, Lilith secured the crystal cores and left the underground fissure with a team of small spiders.

As Lilith exited the underground fissure, she was greeted by the sight of green bird droppings covering the entire city and the nauseating stench that filled the air.

"This... this..."

"Plague!"

Yes, it was a plague.

The broadskull ravens, also known as plague ravens, had unleashed their most infamous weapon.

The reason plague ravens were considered untouchable in the Mist Bay region wasn't just because of the dangers of the bay itself—it was because no lord had ever found a way to deal with the ravens' droppings.

The earlier attack by the broadskull ravens wasn't the joke Orion had imagined it to be.

Their true purpose had been to spread the plague.

Lilith knew this because of her recent interactions with the captured broadskull ravens in the cave. Through her communication with them, she had learned about this unique attack method.

However, she hadn't expected the ravens to launch their attack while she was busy supporting the underground fissure.

"This must be reported to Orion immediately!"

"If the plague spreads, the elderly and children in the horde will be the first to suffer!"

Without wasting a moment, Lilith sprinted toward the southern city wall at full speed.

Upon reaching the southern gate, she relayed the news about the plague to Delilah, who was horrified.

Delilah, after a brief moment of panic, began organizing the tribe to clean up the raven droppings throughout the city.

"Orion just flew past here on his mount. He's headed toward the rear of the beast tide."

"Wait here—I'll have a Wind Eagle take you to him!"

Lilith nodded. In a situation like this, finding Orion quickly required the help of a flying mount like the Wind Eagle.

Half an Hour Later

The thunderhawk and Wind Eagle returned one after the other.

Orion dismounted and helped Lilith down, his expression grim.

"Has the cleanup of the droppings begun?"

"It's already underway!"

Orion nodded silently and headed toward the chieftain's tent.

The plague attack by the broadskull ravens had caught him completely off guard.

Even if he had anticipated it, there would have been no way to stop it—the sheer number of ravens had made it impossible.

"Orion, what do we do now?"

Lilith's voice was filled with worry. The word "plague" was a disaster for any community.

If a solution could be found, they might survive. If not, the horde would lose a significant portion of its members, especially the elderly and children.

Inside the Chieftain's Tent

"Dace, Otho, Beyn, Torba—come in!"

After a long period of thought, Orion summoned his guards into the tent.

"Dace, I have a task for you. From now on, isolate any members of the horde who show signs of illness or plague symptoms. Separate them by severity and confine them to the caves in Moonshadow Valley."

"Remember, keep the elderly and children in separate areas, and isolate the bloodline warriors as well."

Isolation was the first solution Orion could think of.

"As you command!"

Understanding the gravity of the situation, Dace left immediately to carry out the order.

"Otho, go to Elder of Stewardship Delilah and tell her to gather all the magical plants in the horde's reserves that can repel or kill insects."

"Sort the plants and use them to make soups or fumigate the air. Administer them to the elderly and children as a preventive measure against the plague."

This was Orion's second solution. Nature always had plants that could resist plagues.

"Beyn, monitor the horde's water sources. Identify any that have been contaminated by the raven droppings and seal them off."

"At the same time, find Thundar and have him lead a team outside the western walls to collect fresh water from the river."

Controlling the water supply and securing clean water was Orion's way of preventing the plague from spreading further.

Finally, Orion turned to Torba.

"Torba, gather firewood and fire stones. Light bonfires in the square and steam every piece of beast hide worn by the tribe members. This includes the bloodline warriors rotating off the walls."

This simple disinfection method was another measure Orion implemented to minimize casualties.

As a survivor, Orion had one last option: entering the Survivor's Platform to purchase methods or medicines to eradicate the plague.

Chapter 218 Totem Pole

The beast tide continued its relentless assault on Blackstone City, and the fires of war burned without pause.

Orion sat in the chieftain's tent, listening to the reports brought by the succubus scouts from various sections of the city walls. His mood was heavy.

The droppings left by the broadskull ravens had yet to be fully cleaned up, and it was clear that the plague had likely begun to spread, though it had not yet erupted.

At the same time, the battles along the city walls remained stable, with the beast tide failing to breach the defenses. This eased Orion's worries somewhat.

Taking a deep breath, Orion allowed a fatigued expression to cross his face before closing his eyes, pretending to rest.

The exhaustion was a deliberate act, meant to discourage his subordinates from disturbing him.

In reality, Orion had entered the Survivor's Platform.

The Survivor's Platform was the same as always. If one didn't frequently browse its items, it would be difficult to notice the subtle changes that occurred over time.

Orion began searching for medicines and items to treat the plague, meticulously combing through the listings. His efforts paid off—there were quite a few items available that could eliminate the plague.

With a large stockpile of crystal cores at his disposal, Orion went on a shopping spree, acquiring a significant amount of plague-related supplies. This bolstered his confidence considerably.

However, it wasn't until Orion came across a special item that he paused his spree.

The item was called the Plague Totem Pole. It wasn't categorized by grade, indicating that it wasn't a product of the Survivor's Platform's treasure chests but rather a man-made creation.

According to the description, placing the Plague Totem Pole in a settlement or city would allow it to absorb and purify all plague within a radius of one kilometer.

The totem pole was being sold via auction, though the seller had also set a buyout price.

The buyout price was a staggering 10,000 high-tier crystal cores (C-grade crystal cores). The current highest bid was 5,800.

Orion, who wasn't short on C-grade crystal cores, considered for a few seconds before directly purchasing the totem pole at the buyout price.

Less than three minutes after Orion acquired the Plague Totem Pole, he received a message from an unfamiliar survivor.

"Sir, I have another Plague Totem Pole just like the one you bought. I can sell it to you for 8,000 C-grade crystal cores. Are you interested?"

Orion was momentarily stunned.

After checking the name of the seller who had listed the totem pole, he realized it was the same person who had just messaged him. Everything suddenly made sense.

"I've already bought one. I don't need another, thank you!"

Orion replied politely to the survivor, whose name was Artemis. While he was indeed interested, he understood the principle of playing hard to get.

Moments later, Artemis sent another message:

"Sir, I also have a more effective Plague Totem Pole. It can cover a radius of three kilometers—three times the range of the one you just bought!"

Seeing this message, Orion immediately labeled Artemis as a shameless merchant.

Still, he responded seriously, offering a price:

"12,000 crystal cores. If it's more than that, the deal's off."

After sending the message, Orion began to calculate.

Earlier, he had been in a rush and had paid the full buyout price for the first totem pole. However, the actual value of the totem pole was likely around 5,000 C-grade crystal cores.

If the range was tripled, a simple calculation would place the value of the upgraded totem pole at around 15,000 C-grade crystal cores.

By offering 12,000, Orion was already showing sincerity.

After about five minutes of back-and-forth, Artemis finally relented and sent a message:

"Sir, let's do it your way! I'll take a small loss—consider this the start of a friendship. As they say, the more friends you have, the more paths you'll find!"

Orion smirked. Merchant talk—only fools would believe it.

"The more friends you have, the more paths you'll find" was just a fancy way of saying "the more customers I have, the more sales I'll make."

Without hesitation, Orion initiated the trade and acquired the upgraded Plague Totem Pole.

Far away, in an unknown realm, a world filled with plague stretched endlessly.

The skies were shrouded in green, red, black, and purple mists—the plague fog.

The rivers below flowed with colorful, polluted waters, resembling heavily contaminated sewage.

At the end of one such river stood a stone hut.

Outside the hut, a cloaked man was carving runes onto a stone pillar.

The pillar bore a striking resemblance to the Plague Totem Pole Orion had purchased.

The cloaked man was none other than Artemis, a survivor from Earth.

Artemis was a Legendary-level survivor, but his business on the Survivor's Platform targeted survivors below the Legendary level.

After completing the rune carvings, Artemis stepped back to admire his work. A new Plague Totem Pole had been created.

"Not a bad day!"

"Who would've thought I'd sell two Plague Totem Poles in one go?"

"This guy named Hulk—he's so generous. He's definitely an Alpha-level survivor, and his faction must be massive."

"Otherwise, there's no way he'd be this wealthy!"

Artemis chuckled to himself, imagining the power boost he'd gain from the two totem poles he had just sold.

The Plague Totem Poles could indeed absorb and purify plague.

However, they also had another function: they could absorb faith energy.

Both plague and faith energy were sources of power for Artemis.

Under normal circumstances, Artemis would only receive the faith energy generated by the totem poles.

But if he ever had the chance to visit the areas where his totem poles were placed and reclaim them, his power would surge dramatically.

This was Artemis's secret and the foundation of his wealth.

Back in Blackstone City

In the chieftain's tent, Orion finally breathed a sigh of relief after acquiring the Plague Totem Poles.

With the plague issue seemingly resolved, Orion turned his attention to another pressing matter.

The seed condensed by Violet continued to emit its alluring scent, which was the root cause of the beast tide.

Finding a way to block this scent was the key to solving the problem at its source.

However, Orion had already tried every material available to the Stoneheart Horde, and none had been effective in isolating the scent.

Thus, Orion decided to seek help from an old friend: Arthas.

Chapter 219 He really is our savior

"Bro, are you free right now?"

When asking for a favor, Orion's tone became noticeably more casual and cliché.

"Get to the point."

Arthas's reply came quickly, as always—straightforward and to the point.

Orion's lips curled into a faint smile. Conversations with Arthas always put him at ease.

"Bro, do you have any strong tools for blocking scents?"

"If you do, could you spare me a few?"

This time, Arthas didn't reply with words. Instead, he initiated a trade, sending Orion three coffins made of bone.

The pale, bone-crafted coffins had an ancient, weathered look to them.

Orion took out one of the bone coffins and placed the pink seed inside.

"Can you still smell that scent?"

Orion turned to ask a small spider crouched in the corner of the tent. The spider had been borrowed from Lorelia by Delilah to deliver messages.

The spider raised its eight legs, nodding vigorously, its entire body trembling as it did so.

Orion frowned. The bone coffins were from Arthas, and their quality should have been top-notch.

He put the bone coffin and the seed away and returned to the Survivor's Platform.

"Bro, the quality of the bone coffins isn't great!"

A few minutes later, Arthas sent back a flurry of messages.

"Not great? Are you kidding me?"

"Those coffins are what I use to store crystal cores—even magic can't leak out of them!"

"Or... are you trying to block something special?"

Orion couldn't help but admire Arthas's sharp intuition. With just a bit of reasoning, Arthas had guessed that Orion was dealing with a unique item.

"Yes, it's something special. It emits a scent, and I want to block it."

Orion explained his need but kept the specifics of the item's nature and origin to himself.

Arthas went silent for a long time before finally replying.

"3,000 C-grade crystal cores."

At the same time, Arthas initiated another trade, this time sending over an ice coffin.

"This is a Frozen Coffin. If even this can't block the scent, I suggest you give up on that item."

"Something like that isn't something you're strong enough to protect yet."

Orion didn't respond to Arthas's comment. Instead, he immediately took out the Frozen Coffin and placed the pink seed inside.

Turning to the small spider again, Orion asked the same question. This time, the spider's reaction was different. It scurried around Orion in circles, its eight tiny eyes filled with confusion.

Seeing this, Orion's eyes lit up with excitement.

He removed the seed from the Frozen Coffin. Now wasn't the time to hide it away.

The beast tide outside the city wasn't just a crisis—it was also an opportunity.

The beasts outside the walls were food for the horde, which was why Orion and the other Alpha-level warriors had refrained from using their aura to drive the tide away.

"This Frozen Coffin is excellent—truly extraordinary!"

With another major problem resolved, Orion was in a good mood. After chatting with Arthas for a bit, he left a message for Scarecrow, expressing his interest in purchasing food supplies, and then exited the Survivor's Platform.

Back in the Chieftain's Tent

When Orion opened his eyes, there was already someone else in the tent.

"When did you get here?"

"Master, Lysinthia just arrived."

The visitor was none other than Lysinthia. Orion reached out and pulled her into his arms.

Lysinthia was still a bit shy. Orion had told her before that she didn't need to call him "Master."

However, the moment they stepped outside the chieftain's tent, Lysinthia would stubbornly revert to addressing him as "Master."

"Did Lilith send you?"

"Yes, Mistress is guarding the walls. Lysinthia was rotated out and sent to take care of you."

Orion wrapped an arm around Lysinthia's slender waist, listening to her soft voice. He felt utterly relaxed.

Just as Orion's desires were stirring and he was about to undress Lysinthia, Delilah sauntered into the tent, her hips swaying.

"Chieftain, you called for me?"

Orion released Lysinthia. When it came to business, he was always serious.

"How's the cleanup of the bird droppings going?"

"Most of the city has been cleaned, but the forested ridges on either side of Moonshadow Valley are proving difficult. It'll take some time."

Speaking of the plague, Delilah's expression turned grim, her face filled with worry.

"Pile up the droppings and burn them."

Delilah would have done this even without Orion's instruction.

"Take these and store them in the horde's inventory. Treat them as precious resources."

As he spoke, Orion pulled out a collection of bottles and jars from his Bagbird Pouches.

These were all medicines and potions Orion had purchased during his spree on the Survivor's Platform.

"Chieftain, what are these?"

"Special medicines for clearing the plague. I scoured the horde's entire inventory to find them. They're incredibly valuable, so use them wisely."

Orion lied effortlessly.

Delilah, accustomed to such claims, didn't bother questioning the origin of the items.

"I assume you're aware of the tasks I assigned to Dace, Otho, Beyn, and Torba?"

"Yes, I am."

"Isolation, detoxification, water source control, and eliminating the source of the plague—these are no small matters. Take this opportunity to teach the tribe how to properly handle plagues, diseases, and curses. That's the most important thing."

Even though Orion had acquired the Plague Totem Pole, he still wanted his people to learn how to deal with plagues, diseases, and curses.

As the Stoneheart Horde continued to grow, they would inevitably face strange and dangerous enemies.

Plagues, curses, poisons, and hexes were all possibilities. Orion wanted his people to understand what to do to survive, how to respond, and how to administer first aid.

"Go now. The horde still needs you to oversee the bigger picture."

Delilah carefully stored the medicines and potions, nodded to Orion, and left the tent.

Orion's next task was to head to the stone gate near Moonshadow Valley and place the Plague Totem Pole there.

This would ensure that Moonshadow Valley, the underground fissure, and Blackstone City were all within the totem pole's coverage area.

Outside the Chieftain's Tent, Delilah stood outside, watching Orion and Lysinthia's retreating figures. She found herself increasingly unable to see through Orion.

During a moment of life-and-death crisis for the horde, Orion had managed to produce so many plague-specific medicines and potions. This was far beyond the realm of normalcy.

Moreover, Orion's recent behavior had grown increasingly mysterious and unfathomable.

"Perhaps... he really is our savior."

Delilah felt both curiosity and admiration, deeply drawn to Orion's enigmatic charm.

Chapter 220 You'll pay for this

Abyssal Chasm, inside a cavern.

Lord Gareth's eyes suddenly snapped open, a flicker of murderous intent flashing through her pitch-black pupils.

"He's got some skill, I'll give him that."

"So, back at the settlement, when he claimed he had a chance to kill me, he wasn't bluffing."

"Interesting... the giant Orion of the Black Forest..."

Lord Gareth murmured to herself, her eyes gleaming with a sinister light. Those disobedient subordinates of hers would have to be punished. After all, just the fact that her will projection had been destroyed by one of her own was enough to make it impossible for her to hold her proud head high in front of Orion.

"And that idiot Ridi... completely useless, wasting the entire fiend serpent clan!"

To be fair, Ridi's decision to head south had been his own. However, Lord Gareth had noticed his intentions early on but chose not to stop him. She had wanted to use Ridi to test the strength of the Stoneheart Horde and gauge Orion's true power.

Unfortunately, the cost of this test had been steep. Not only had her Alpha-level confidant Ridi fallen in battle, but even a fragment of her will projection had been destroyed. And let's not forget the loss of over 200,000 fiend serpents—a blow that made Lord Gareth's heart ache.

"Orion, just wait. You'll pay for this."

Black Forest, Blackstone City.

The battle raged on. Orion sat atop a massive boulder on the city wall, calmly observing his people as they methodically resisted the beast tide. He showed no intention of stepping in.

In truth, Orion's mere presence was the greatest morale boost for his people.

The beast tide had been attacking the city for three days. Thanks to the rotation system, most of the bloodline warriors who had been pulled back for rest and treated with disinfectant smoke showed no signs of plague infection. Only a small number of injured warriors, whose resistance had weakened, had unfortunately been infected.

However, after dissolving a large quantity of medicinal pills into water and distributing it among the tribe, those infected with the plague began to recover by nightfall. When this news spread, the horde's determination to fight the beast tide grew even stronger.

The legendary plague, which was supposed to bring about the tribe's destruction, had failed to do so. It was almost unthinkable.

So, when Orion appeared on the city wall to oversee the battle, his presence was akin to that of a god descending upon the battlefield. Everyone knew that the medicine that cured the plague had been discovered by their chieftain, Orion.

"Chieftain, our bloodline warriors have been rotating shifts for three days straight. Most of them are completely drained of energy. Shouldn't we consider driving the beast tide away now?"

Delilah stood not far from Orion, her tone calm but firm. As the Elder of Stewardship, she had a clear grasp of the horde's current strength and the limits of their endurance. She could tell that the bloodline warriors were nearing their breaking point. For the sake of the tribe and the horde, Delilah had to voice her concerns.

"Chieftain, I agree with the Elder of Stewardship's suggestion," said Onyx, who had recently been rotated out of his post guarding the underground fissure. In times of peace, guarding the fissure was practically a form of rest. During the last rotation, Rendall had been sent to replace Onyx, allowing him to join the battle.

"Chieftain, as an obsidian golem, I'd like to think my stamina is among the best in the Stoneheart Horde. But even I can see the exhaustion on the faces of many of our warriors."

"This beast tide... it's time to drive it away."

Orion nodded silently, his gaze shifting to Delilah.

Delilah understood Orion's thoughts perfectly. Their tacit understanding was unmatched.

"Chieftain, the caves in Moonshadow Valley are already overflowing with beast corpses. The cave spider clan in the underground fissure has not only eaten their fill but also stored a significant amount of food."

The horde had hunted enough beasts during this tide to secure a substantial food supply—exactly the outcome Orion had hoped for.

"Send the order. At dawn tomorrow, our Alpha-level warriors will take the field and drive the beast tide away."

This announcement sent a wave of excitement through the bloodline warriors. The relentless fighting was finally coming to an end. For some of the more ambitious warriors, however, it also meant that their time to earn glory for the horde was running out.

Take Dirtclaw, for example. Ever since his failed attempt to ascend to Alpha-level, he had been acting like a madman. Every time a battle broke out, Dirtclaw would ruthlessly exploit the cannon fodder troops under his command. By doing so, he could claim a larger share of the credit.

The more merit he earned, the more resources he could exchange with Orion for another chance at Alpha-level ascension. For Dirtclaw, who dreamed of reaching Alpha-level, the end of the battle meant the end of his opportunity to earn merit.

That night, Dirtclaw, like a rabid dog, drove all the resting cannon fodder troops back to the city walls to continue fighting for his glory.

On the city walls, Dirtclaw wasn't the only one with such thoughts. Many others were also pushing themselves to the limit.

Earthshaker, the representative of the Buffalofolk and one of the horde's veteran elders, was also fighting fiercely. Having reached the peak of hero level, he sought to earn enough merit to justify receiving Alpha-level resources in the next distribution.

Similarly, Desdemona, the succubus elder, was also at the peak of hero level. Despite her age, she fought tirelessly for the same resources.

Among the crowd, a striking figure stood out—Lysinthia. With the help of the Twilight Viper, she had already earned far more merit than most of the tribe. However, as a slave and Orion's woman, she was not entitled to the horde's resources. Anything she needed had to be granted by Orion himself.

Lysinthia's unique status made her an exception in the horde. Many tribe members understood this, including Earthshaker. Sometimes, Earthshaker couldn't help but wonder if his own status as a former slave might disqualify him from receiving resources in the next distribution.

By now, Earthshaker's past as a slave was almost forgotten by the tribe. Only a few still remembered. To most, he was simply one of the eight council elders, a figure of great authority.

In truth, even within the council, there were hierarchies.

Tonight was destined to be restless. On the city walls, the sounds of battle echoed endlessly.

The next morning.

Aside from Lorelia and Rockwell, who were stationed at the underground fissure, all of the horde's Alpha-level warriors had gathered on the city walls.

Orion, Lilith, Onyx, Rendall, Delilah, and Thundar—six Alpha-level warriors—stood together, their overwhelming auras unleashed. The sheer force of their presence swept across the battlefield, pushing the beast tide back nearly half a mile. Many of the beasts cowered on the ground, too terrified to move.

This wasn't just because of the Alpha-level warriors' power. Earlier this morning, Orion had cut off the scent emanating from the pink seed. With the source of the strange fragrance gone, the lingering traces in the air were no longer enough to incite the beasts into a frenzy.