

## Titan King 261

Chapter 261 It's your own good fortune

Of course, there was one more thing Orion kept to himself. Earthshaker's power hovered somewhere between hero level and Alpha-level, and during a Heroic Altar inheritance ritual, with transcendent power surging and the altar's surrounding elemental energies heightened, there was a good chance to break through.

Orion hoped Earthshaker might seize this opportunity and step up to Alpha-level. Whether that happened or not, though, depended entirely on Earthshaker.

Orion handed Delilah another batch of C-level crystal cores. About half an hour later, Delilah walked back down from the Heroic Altar wearing a big smile.

"Dear Lord, don't I look pretty?"

Just as she was about to reach the group, Delilah's figure blurred. In the next instant, there were suddenly two Delilahs—one on each side—clinging to Orion's arms, trying to seduce him in that uniquely playful voice of hers.

Orion glanced from left to right, unable to tell which was the real Delilah. Over on the sidelines, Onyx, Rendall, and Earthshaker stared stiffly, completely transfixed.

"Triplets?"

"This Blood Shadow Split is so realistic... I wonder if it works in sex..."

In that moment, Orion's mind was admittedly running in a rather pervy direction.

"Elder of Stewardship, what's this ability you inherited?" he asked.

Both Delilahs, each hanging on one of Orion's arms, let out a charming giggle. "As the three elders can see, I've got myself a clone now. This skill is called Blood Shadow Split."

While she spoke, the Delilah on Orion's right melted into a flash of red light that merged into the Delilah on his left. The two forms fused back into one, causing Delilah's aura to surge dramatically.

The downside of Blood Shadow Split was that splitting up inevitably watered down a person's power and life force. In some situations, it wasn't exactly suited for a straight-up fight.

"Earthshaker, you're up!"

Delilah didn't bother explaining Blood Shadow Split in detail, and Orion didn't pry either. Instead, he handed off another set of offerings to Earthshaker, prompting the final inheritance. Earthshaker accepted them with a face full of excitement and strode toward the Heroic Altar.

Soon enough, the sacrifices vanished, releasing another wave of transcendent power that swallowed Earthshaker in a misty cocoon.

"Dear Lord, what do you think Elder Earthshaker will end up inheriting?" Delilah asked, leaning into Orion's arm and squashing his bicep against her breasts. She looked like she had no intention of letting go anytime soon.

"I have no idea. We'll only know once the process finishes."

With the Heroic Altar completed, the Horde's foundation was now even stronger—it was obvious enough for everyone to see. Although the Stoneheart Horde had a decent number of Alpha-level beings for the region, in terms of raw power, they were on the weaker side—most of them had only just reached that threshold.

Their limited Alpha-level combat experience was evident, which was why, in many previous battles, the Stoneheart Horde's Alpha-level fighters usually relied on tag-team tactics.

Orion often paired them up so they could take down foes together. He hadn't had much choice.

But now things were different. With the Heroic Altar granting new abilities, hand-to-hand warriors like Onyx and Rendall had made huge strides. Orion believed that both of them could now handle serious threats on their own.

While he was lost in thought, the Heroic Altar stirred.

Moo!

A deep, imposing bovine call issued from within the swirling cocoon. Orion heard it and immediately broke into a thrilled grin. That proved Earthshaker's invitation to the inheritance was indeed a solid move.

"Lord... did Elder Earthshaker just break through?" Onyx asked. He and Earthshaker went way back. Along with Thundar, the pair had once fought all manner of dark creatures together, bonding deeply as comrades-in-arms.

Onyx had been delighted when Thundar hit Alpha-level, and he'd fully expected Earthshaker to follow suit once he got the necessary resources. But then the news came that Earthshaker's breakthrough attempt had failed.

Since that day, Earthshaker had grown gloomy and gradually drifted away from Onyx's circle. Even as part of the same race and old battle buddies, there was still a gap between Alpha-level and hero level, in terms of confidence, mannerisms—everything.

But now, all that had changed. Earthshaker had used this inheritance ritual to cross that threshold, returning at last to the center of power in the Stoneheart Horde.

"Whenever the Heroic Altar inheritance is active, that shot of transcendent power makes the local elemental energy run high," Orion explained, beaming as he looked at the cocoon on the altar. "So if the inheritor is on the brink of a breakthrough, they might just succeed."

"Lord, in that case, it sounds like we'll need an additional rule for using the Heroic Altar," Onyx said.

Orion stayed silent and motioned for him to go on.

"Clearly, activating the Heroic Altar means a chance at an inheritance and potentially a breakthrough. In a way, it's basically on par with awarding a big chunk of Alpha-level resources," Onyx said. "We can't afford to waste that opportunity. If we re-open the altar for someone—whether they're an Alpha-level being or a young star—they should really be at or near a bottleneck, so we get the most out of it."

After Onyx finished, Orion and the others fell silent, weighing the merits. Eventually, Orion turned to Delilah.

"Prophet's suggestion, make sure you note it down. When the time comes to choose our candidates, we'll factor all this in."

Delilah nodded seriously, agreeing to handle it.

They all waited for another few minutes in silence. Then the transcendent power dissipated, and Earthshaker stood revealed atop the altar. Moments later, he bounded down to Orion, dropping to his knees in a show of utter devotion.

"Earthshaker thanks my master for giving me this chance!"

Orion nodded and gave a quick wave of his hand. A ripple of transcendent power made Earthshaker rise to his feet.

"You were the one with the resolve to keep getting stronger. It's your own good fortune," Orion said lightly, clearly pleased. Earthshaker blushed a bit at the praise.

"Aw, come on, stop looking all embarrassed," Onyx added with a laugh, taking a step forward to clasp Earthshaker's shoulder. "Spill it—what's your new ability?"

Earthshaker nodded and didn't hesitate. Forming a quick seal with his hands, he summoned a crimson chain from his own body, which snaked straight into Onyx's torso.

Chapter 262 Ambitions growing

After Earthshaker's scarlet chain burrowed into Onyx's body, Onyx's eyes went wide.

"What in the—"

"Blood Sharing," Earthshaker replied.

"Earthshaker, what exactly does this Blood Sharing do?" Onyx asked, sounding both startled and curious.

"Prophet," Earthshaker said, "to put it simply, you and I are now in a kind of shared-life state. Unless either of us loses every last drop of blood, we can't really die."

Standing off to the side, Orion cast a glance at Earthshaker—who was visibly bursting with excitement—and decided to offer a piece of advice.

"Earthshaker, in some situations, Blood Sharing can indeed share life force. But remember, if you or your partner takes an immediately fatal blow, the skill won't do a thing."

Blood Sharing was basically a group-combat ability—a talent that let you share blood (and in some ways, life energy) with an ally.

But it had its shortcomings. A snapped neck, being cleaved in half, blown to bits, or pulverized...in those lethal scenarios, Blood Sharing wouldn't save anyone. Even so, if used against enemies unaware of the skill, it could be a literal lifesaver on the battlefield.

Orion gave a quick look at the four who were now busy comparing their newly inherited skills. Then he headed off alone in the direction of the Military Fortress.

The Military Fortress was actually a bloodline awakening pool. When any of the Horde's bloodline warriors underwent a three-day baptism in the Military Fortress, there was a certain chance their bloodline powers would awaken. Its interior wasn't a training field so much as a place similar to a Bloodline Awakening Pool.

At the same time, activating the Military Fortress required a steady flow of sacrificial offerings—though unlike the Heroic Altar, there was no restriction on the level or rank of said offerings. Crystal cores, magic stones, blood...even corpses would do. However, the quality of the tribute would directly affect how well the Military Fortress functioned.

Upon arriving at the Military Fortress, Orion personally infused it with power. Soon the place was bathed in a new sheen of deep color.

"Lord Orion," asked Onyx, who had come up behind him along with Rendall, Delilah, and Earthshaker, "what does this Military Fortress do?"

"It offers a shot at unlocking bloodline powers," Orion replied. "And it can also help our Horde's bloodline warriors learn to harness something we call 'blood fury.'"

The four stared at him in awe.

"None of these special buildings can just pop out abilities for free," Orion continued. "They all require sacrifices—endless sacrifices. From now on, to keep this Military Fortress running, we'll need to pull from our war spoils. Each of your four armies will have to be prepared for that."

Truthfully, Orion had been thinking about this the moment the Military Fortress was planned. Over the past few years, the Stoneheart Horde had fought dozens of battles, big and small, amassing huge stores of materials.

Since the only truly rare commodity was dark source crystals, Orion typically only took a symbolic cut of everything else. After all, the Horde always had a steady food supply thanks to the Survivor's Platform, so they'd never been short on rations. As a result, he hadn't needed to strict-tax people on materials that weren't in short supply.



"But since our territory is new, we need to shore up a few policies," Orion said. "Now that I'm delegating power to you, managing your armies is up to you. If nothing crazy happens, I won't intervene. Starting next year, though, every army has to turn over thirty percent of its annual haul to the Horde."

With his hands clasped behind his back, Orion continued on toward the Beast Pens, and the four trailing behind him exchanged worried looks.

Onyx, Rendall, and Delilah each headed up their respective forces—the Hunting Party, the Cannon Fodder Troops, and the Sentinel Corps. In the past, none of them could deny they'd each snagged considerable benefits from the wars.

For example, after their recent southern raid, both Thunderhawk City and Stormrage City were picked clean, and the spoils that ended up in Orion's or the Horde's central stockpile were only a fraction of the total.

True, the rest of the goods had gone to the warriors, which still kept them within the Horde overall. But now that the territory was established, Orion's ambitions were growing as well.

He was eyeing a future invasion of the south—or maybe another world beneath the bottomless abyss. Orion needed to start stockpiling weapons, armor, food, crystal cores...anything an army might need.

Piling up those resources wasn't just idle talk; they had to come from each victory's spoils. Clawing that back from the people could stir up some pushback.

Fortunately, the Stoneheart Horde was still in a "survival of the fittest" phase, without many strict rules in place. Most of the tribe could accept the fact that the strongest fist decided who got the biggest slice of the pie.

"Lord," Onyx ventured in his gravelly voice, "are you thinking of pushing south next year?"

Orion sensed the excitement and hope in Onyx's tone. "Not sure yet. It'll depend on how the Horde fares during the upcoming dark beast tides. If we grow enough in that chaos, sure, I'll consider it."

He lowered his hand. As he spoke, he'd already finished imbuing the Beast Pens with power.

"What's their function?" Delilah asked.

"They exist for mount training," Orion said. "In here, it's easier to break mounts in and get them tamed."

At those words, Delilah's eyes gleamed. "Dear Lord, that mean we can handle newly hatched broadskull ravens or icefield snow wolves in here, so the taming rate skyrockets?"

"Exactly," Orion said, then added thoughtfully, "the first batch of icefield snow wolves should be whelping soon, right? Let's keep a small bunch aside for the most promising younglings so they can grow up together."

Onyx, Rendall, Delilah, and Earthshaker all smiled at that. Thundar was in charge of the cavalry, but he wasn't here. That probably meant the young wolves under his care were about to get divvied up.

"From this day on," Orion announced, his voice turning cold with authority, "no outsiders are allowed in Moonshadow Valley. If they're not part of one of the Horde's armies, no entry. Period."

"Understood, Lord," Delilah said. "The ID tokens have been floated around already, so going forward, we'll check both a person and their token before letting them in."

Orion nodded and left Moonshadow Valley with the group in tow.

When Orion got back to his tent, Lilith was nowhere in sight. After taming the broadskull ravens, she'd gotten busy at the western ridge with the magical plants. She was carefully nursing a new crop of Blood Mushrooms that were almost ready for harvest, needing daily attention.

Orion wolfed down a large chunk of roasted meat, then stretched out on a fur pelt and let his consciousness dive into the Survivor's Platform. Arthas, his friend there, had left him a message earlier, asking Orion to contact him as soon as he was free.

Chapter 263 Champions Alliance

"Elf, time to trade!"

By habit, Orion first reached out to Aerin for Pet Pills. But this time, Aerin didn't accept the deal and completely ignored him. Just when Orion was getting puzzled, Aerin's message popped up:

"My dear Hulk, I've raised the quality of my Pet Pills, so the price is going up too!"

"Whoa, the heavens have finally smiled on you!" Orion typed back, suddenly intrigued. "Elf, you've finally had a breakthrough, huh? Go on, then—must be some fancy new product if you're hiking the price twofold?"

A grin tugged at Orion's lips. Truth be told, his response was a subtle attempt to steer Aerin, hinting that if Aerin was set on marking up the rate, Orion considered twofold the absolute cap.

Aerin didn't reply right away. Instead, she initiated a trade, sending over a hundred bottles of high-tier Pet Pills.

Orion inspected them and noted they had an extra effect: once your pets had consumed enough of these pills, they could bump up a minor rank, plus the mutation rate increased a bit.

"So, how about it?" Aerin asked. "Aren't these new high-tier Pet Pills top-notch?"

Orion stashed the high-tier Pet Pills without mentioning the price, casually changing the subject instead. "Weren't you telling me before that you'd come up with a new alchemical product? Show me. I'll see if it's worth anything."

As soon as Orion brought up the new concoction, Aerin became noticeably excited. "It's definitely good stuff. I'm sure you'll need it!"

With that, she initiated another trade, sending three vials of a new alchemical potion. "These are low-level Toughness Potions. They're brewed from bluetree bark and glowgrass, with water drawn from the

Moonwell. On the Survivor's Platform, I'm pricing them at one C-level crystal core for a single vial of low-level Toughness Potion. But since you're an old friend, I'll give you three bottles for two C-level crystal cores!"

Orion didn't immediately examine the potions but instead glanced at Aerin's follow-up messages. She was bursting with a gleeful fantasy about making big money. Right now was exactly the time for Orion to rain on her parade, so he could keep the upper hand when haggling.

"Elf, aren't you forgetting that your Moonwell water has a limited monthly supply?"

Sure enough, Aerin instantly deflated. In her overblown excitement, she'd totally forgotten that crucial detail, having been too caught up in her dreams of scoring a huge payday.

Ignoring her sulking, Orion eyed the low-level Toughness Potions. Once ingested, they provided increased physical defense for about two hours, plus a mild boost in strength. Honestly, for Orion and his Horde, those potions could save some bloodline warriors' lives.

"Elf, I'll stick to your proposed rate: two C-level crystal cores for three bottles of low-level Toughness Potion," he said.

Aerin went silent for a couple of minutes before she finally pushed the trade through. She sent over the Pet Pills, high-tier Pet Pills, and the low-level Toughness Potions all at once—more than three hundred bottles combined. From the look of it, she'd probably used up every last scrap of her materials to brew these in hopes of a big payout.

Orion's guess was dead on. Aerin had indeed used up all the magical plants and Moonwell water she'd been saving, only to suddenly remember her monthly limit after Orion reminded her.

She fell into a deep funk when the revelation sank in. It wasn't until Orion handed over the C-level crystal cores that her spirits picked up again. But once she counted them precisely, she let out a wild shriek:

"Aaah! Hulk, you conned me! I was gonna triple—no, quadruple—the price for my high-tier Pet Pills! Aaaaargh!"

Inside the treehouse, the girl's wail was piercing enough to rattle the windows.

Meanwhile, in the biggest tent in Blackstone City, Orion—done dealing with Aerin—shifted his attention to Scarecrow. Scarecrow had set up a delayed trade and sold Orion a large batch of grain.

"It's fall for me, so Scarecrow must be heading into winter if he's back online," Orion muttered. "Not sure which realm he's in, but I'm kinda curious..."

Orion didn't bother messaging Scarecrow. Their relationship was purely buyer-seller.

"Hey bro, you around? I'm free now," Orion tapped out to Arthas, greeting him.

"Give me a sec," came the simple reply. Orion settled back on his fur blankets, letting his mind wander. Thanks to calming himself down, he noticed a new tab in his stats panel: an Alliance Management section.

One invitation blinked at him:

[Deputy Commander Edward of Champions Alliance has invited you to join the alliance. Accept?]

Orion stared at it for a moment without hitting either button, mind already whirling. Right then, Arthas's message arrived:

"Check your data panel, go into the Allies tab, and accept the invitation."

Relieved it was Arthas's doing, Orion exhaled. Just a moment ago, he'd been conjuring up all sorts of wild scenarios in his head. Satisfied, he sent:

"Got it."

Only then did he tap into the Allies tab and accept the invitation. Instantly, that part of the interface unlocked, the darkness receding to reveal six allies. Including Orion, Champions Alliance now had seven survivors total.

Edward: "Welcome to Champions Alliance, new member!"

Leonidas: "Welcome aboard!"

Alexander: "Welcome to Champions Alliance!"

Kraken: "Welcome, newbie!"

Arthas: "Welcome to Champions Alliance!"

Orion stared, dazed, realizing it was the first time he'd been in a channel with so many fellow survivors—and he was the rookie in the group.

"Quit spacing out, say hello. You'll get a surprise," Arthas privately prompted him, probably guessing how Orion felt. Sobered by the reminder, Orion got ready to speak. With so many survivors here, he figured there was a bunch of intel he could glean from them—an exciting prospect.

Orion: "Hey everyone, I'm Hulk—nice to meet you, and thanks for having me in the Champions Alliance!"

Arthas: "He's the new friend I talked to you guys about—Hulk." Arthas followed up after Orion introduced himself.



Edward: "Hulk, I'm Edward, deputy commander of Champions Alliance. Our commander isn't here right now. If you have questions, ask me or Arthas."

Orion: "Understood, Deputy Commander."

Edward: "Hey, relax. You're in the Champions Alliance now—you're one of us. Speak your mind."

Orion was still unsure how to respond, but seconds later, a prize wheel containing six treasure chests popped up in the Allies tab.

Edward: "Hulk, this is a newbie reward from our commander. Pour in a trace of your transcendent power to spin and get your prize."

Orion: "Got it, thanks for the heads-up!"

He recognized this for what it was—basically a test. The wheel only worked if he used transcendent power, which the deputy commander had pointed out. In other words, they were checking him out.

Everybody in the Champions Alliance, including Arthas, went quiet, clearly waiting to see what Orion was packing.

Although Arthas knew Orion might be at Legendary level, he wasn't one hundred percent sure. The entire channel seemed to be holding their breath.

Orion channeled his transcendent power, letting a spark of lightning-element energy feed into the wheel. Seconds later, the wheel started spinning with a soft whoosh. As he waited for the result, the bolt of transcendent power zoomed back into his body, and the wheel halted abruptly, a single treasure chest glowing into view.

"What a crazy little contraption," Orion mused.

Meanwhile, the rest of the Champions Alliance perked up.

Edward: "Welcome again, Hulk. Now we have seven members in Champions Alliance!"

Leonidas: "Hahaha, finally another new guy! Arthas, did you ask me for all that stuff before because you were hooking Hulk up?"

Alexander: "Welcome, Hulk! I'm stoked to see what you can do!"

Kraken: "Welcome too! At least I'm not the youngest pup anymore!"

While the others were riding that wave of excitement, Arthas fell silent, looking worried. All the way in the Necro Realm, on his Bone Throne, Arthas had stood up, muttering:

"No way I misread that. The Lord's Stone I gave him contained blood-attribute transcendent power, no question. So why did Hulk just channel lightning-attribute transcendent power? Unless...he picked up another Lord's Stone after killing another lord or snagged one somewhere else before the trade?"

"Either scenario means Hulk most likely can already build territory. Wow...he works fast!"

Arthas had apparently figured out a lot based on that snippet of lightning-element transcendence. Only after a while did he sit back down and turn his attention back to the channel. There, Leonidas had been chatting with Orion enough to sniff out something unusual.

Arthas: "Hulk's someone I personally vouched for. Pretty good call, yeah?"

Leonidas: "Sure, your call's not bad—but you, Arthas, are such a shameless jerk!"

Arthas: "Huh? Leonidas, hey now. Watch what you're saying."

Leonidas: "Remember when you asked me for that gear? I gave it away for free! But you took it and sold it to Hulk at a markup. Where's my credit in all this?"

Arthas: "Let's clarify: I used my own connections to get stuff from you, then I sold it to him—it's my personal favor to him. All that matters is Hulk got your gear eventually. Whether or not he appreciates your help—it's got nothin' to do with me."

Leonidas: "Screw you, you slimeball!"

Back in the large Blackstone City tent, Orion was watching the exchange.

So that explained it: the taming scroll, three taming collars, and 3,000 little bells had originally been Leonidas's donation. Leonidas had meant them to be free, until Arthas decided to flip them to Orion at a profit.

Honestly, for Orion—especially at that time—those items had been absolutely critical. Even now, they were invaluable. If some other survivor had offered them, Orion still would've bought them in a heartbeat. Besides, Arthas hadn't been that hardline: he let Orion pay on credit with no set deadline.

Either way, that taming scroll, the collars, and those tiny bells had become an essential piece of the Stoneheart Horde's foundation. Without that scroll, Lilith wouldn't have been able to tame the broadskull ravens so quickly, and the Sentinel Corps might never have matured at its current pace. The little bells also enabled the wolf-mounted warriors.

So yes, Orion was definitely grateful to Leonidas. Now, he had a chance to build a direct link to the guy—an opportunity that could be mutually beneficial in the future.

That notion triggered a moment of introspection in Orion. He typed up a message to give Leonidas a proper thanks, then paused.

"Wait...knowing Arthas, maybe he did this on purpose—handing me a prime chance to connect with Leonidas? Could that be Arthas's plan all along?"

He shook his head. He'd have to give Arthas credit—sometimes the guy came through in unexpectedly brilliant ways.

Chapter 264 Demigod Thresh

"Leonidas, your stuff really came in handy. I love it. I owe you one."

Orion made his acknowledgment to Leonidas in the Champions Alliance channel, immediately scoring points with everyone. As for Arthas—given their relationship, Orion figured it would be better to chat privately if anything needed clearing up.

Leonidas: "Hahaha... I like your style, unlike some boney old coot who's been lurking around for god knows how many years."

Arthas: "Hey, buddy, that kind of insinuation is a nasty habit."

While Leonidas and Arthas were sniping at each other, Orion was accepting trades from Deputy Commander Edward, Alexander, and Kraken.

Deputy Commander Edward sent Orion a magic scroll with a word of caution:

"This thing was difficult to craft. Don't use it lightly."

Orion thanked him and examined the scroll. A glance was all it took to make Orion's hands tremble: the magic scroll contained a large-scale forbidden spell.

"Deputy Commander's not messing around," Orion muttered.

Nor was it just Edward—Alexander and Kraken both sent over gifts, too. Alexander gave him a gold token. Orion studied it for a moment, unable to figure out its use. Still, since it was a gift, he thanked Alexander politely and put the token away.

"I'm not as loaded as the other top dogs in the alliance," Alexander wrote. "Hope you find this useful anyway."

Finally it was Kraken's turn. He sent Orion ten thousand sets of finely crafted armor. As Orion inspected the armor—matching style, well-made—his eyes half-closed in satisfaction.

To be honest, Orion had opened plenty of normal Survivor's Chests, which yielded loads of gear, but the designs and quality were all over the place. This one consistent shipment of top-grade armor from Kraken would fill the Horde's gap in producing high-tier plate.

Not only could Orion equip his ranks right away, he could also hand some sets over to the Bureau of Weapons so the artisans could study the craftsmanship and upgrade the Horde's own production. Of course, to do that, he'd have to push them to track down all the mineral resources in the territory and start mining ASAP.

"These are awesome—I really appreciate it," wrote Orion.

"No sweat," Kraken replied. "It's the rule in Champions Alliance. Every older member has to give a gift to a newcomer."

Hearing "Champions Alliance" and "rules," Orion fell silent.

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Unknown Realm, somewhere on the high seas.

A colossal primeval octopus lurked in the deep, nestled inside a natural undersea cave. The creature's tentacles sprawled out in all directions, sensing its surroundings. It opened its eyes with an uncanny rasping sound.

"Good thing I just knocked over that fleet. Otherwise, I'd have nothing to hand over as a welcome gift. Another ally in the group, recommended by Arthas, apparently with a ton of potential. Maybe in a while I can reach out—see if I can get my feelers on stuff to help build my underwater world. Finally, I'm not the weakest link in the team now!"

This massive octopus was none other than Kraken from the Champions Alliance. Born into the race of giant octopi, he'd been borderline lucky—just hitting adulthood pushed him straight to Alpha-level.

"And now another clueless band of pirates is sailing into my territory... wonder if there's anything valuable on board."

Muttering to himself, Kraken shrank his body and slipped away toward the direction of the pirate fleet, silent as the deep.

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Back in Blackstone City, the Champions Alliance channel soon returned to calm. The verbal sparring between Arthas and Leonidas eventually fizzled out. Leonidas also gave Orion a special present, something clearly valuable.

"Bro," Leonidas said, "I've heard all about you from that damn skeleton for ages. We'll have plenty of time to get to know each other better."

Orion already felt good about Leonidas, not least because of the items that Arthas had acquired from him earlier.

"I appreciate your help when that beast horde was attacking our city," Orion told him.

Leonidas immediately caught on and looked pleased that his gift had been worth it. The two then chatted a while longer, easing into each other's orbits. When they finished, a message finally popped up from Arthas:



"I bet you've got tons of questions. Before I give you my 'welcome' gift, go ahead and ask."

This was exactly what Orion had been waiting for:

"Bro, what is the Champions Alliance, exactly? Now that I've joined, are there specific obligations?"

Arthas promptly sent a reply, explaining the alliance's origins:

"The Champions Alliance is basically a loose coalition. The people and connections in here—use them or don't. No one's going to hassle you. But remember one thing: if you do partner up with folks in the group, you're not allowed to screw your allies over. Otherwise, you'll end up on the alliance's hit list."

He paused, presumably deciding how much inside info to share, then continued:

"It was founded by our commander, Thresh—a demigod. He's probably in some deep slumber right now, so you won't be meeting him. But keep him in mind if you ever think about betraying us or breaking alliance rules. In this age where gods can't manifest in person, demigods are basically the top powers around."

Orion was stunned. So the Champions Alliance commander was a demigod—the absolute strongest beneath the gods themselves.

"One more heads-up," Arthas wrote. "Aside from you and Kraken, who are both lords at the Legendary level, the rest are arch lords. Some might even be borderline demigods."

Orion couldn't help but suck in a breath, suddenly feeling as if his worldview just got another major expansion.

Arthas was basically telling him that beyond Orion himself, plus Kraken, and of course Arthas too, the others—like Deputy Commander Edward, Leonidas, Alexander—were all arch lords, maybe even nearly demigods.

"Thanks," Orion wrote back, pouring all his shock, relief, and excitement into that single word. For him, it was a profound stroke of luck to join such a lofty circle.

"No worries," Arthas told him. "In my world, everything's a two-way street. I could invite you in because there's something about you I find useful—and something you might be able to do for me."

He went quiet for another beat before sending another message:

"So, Hulk... mind if I ask something straight out? How come the transcendent power you used just now isn't blood-attribute?"

Sure enough, Arthas had picked up on some of Orion's secrets.

Orion mulled it over, then decided to come clean.

"In truth, I ran into a stroke of luck before I reached Legendary level. I managed to kill a lord and got my hands on a Lord's Stone."

He wasn't lying; there was no reason to hide it. Arthas, for his part, didn't act suspicious at all. It seemed that wasn't what he really cared about—he had an ulterior motive.

"So," Arthas asked, "you've already started building your territory, right?"

Orion let out a small sigh.

"Yeah, the Lord's Stone I used to build my territory is the one I bought from you."

As soon as he sent that reply, a certain weight lifted off Orion's chest.

"Hahaha, Hulk, my friend, now I have some real hope for you!"

Arthas's message came in alongside a new trade request. The items transferred to Orion were three miniature buildings—two arrow towers and one tavern.

"I bet you need these real bad," Arthas commented.

Orion already understood arrow towers; he'd merged all his existing ones into his territory core earlier. He hadn't expected Arthas to be so generous as to give him two more. The tavern, though, left him puzzled.

"Bro, what's the tavern for?"

If he didn't know, he'd better ask—no sense in stumbling around.

"For you, it's a way to attract outsiders," Arthas explained. "To the rangers or drifters in your world, a tavern might be the perfect sanctuary. Put simply, once you build a tavern in your territory, it'll draw some powerful free agents. But whether you can actually recruit them—I can't help you there. You'll just have to see how good you are at winning them over."

Hearing all that, Orion's heart started hammering. A tavern was basically a magnet for adventurers. He was well aware of how vital that could be.

"This is pretty uncommon," Arthas went on, "but every territory can only host a single tavern. For me, it's basically just another fancy bargaining chip; for you, though, it's priceless. What do you say? Worth owing me a favor?"

Reading that, Orion couldn't help a wry smile. He'd been on the verge of asking why Arthas didn't just use it himself, but before he could speak up, Arthas guessed his thoughts and offered an explanation.

Through that, Orion gained a deeper understanding of this undead ally—and their bond grew stronger.

"Bro," Orion said, "you're joking, right? Of course I'll remember this favor."

"Hahaha, a favor's a favor. But we're buddies, and I'd rather see good stuff go to someone I actually like."

"Thank you."

How many times had Orion said "thanks" today? Each time he genuinely meant it. He could sense that since he joined the Champions Alliance, Arthas had grown way more open and friendly—like he'd taken the initiative to sprint toward Orion.

That was pretty different from his old self: in the past, Arthas never would've gone out of his way to help Orion deal with problems. But now he was just casually teaching Orion all kinds of stuff, like a real friend.

"Alexander gave you a gold token, right?"

After a brief pause, Arthas sent another message.

"Yeah. I'm not sure what it does, though."

"Well, now that you can build your territory—when you decide you're ready to bring in an outside faction, have a chat with Alexander."

"Understood."

From that, Orion more or less figured out the gold token's purpose. At the moment, though, he didn't plan to open his territory up to outsiders. Better to hunker down and get stronger first—that was Orion's most honest impulse. And no matter how friendly Alexander seemed as an arch lord, Orion couldn't just shelve all caution.

He took the initiative to end his chat with Arthas, having gotten more than enough rewards and intel for one day. He needed time to process it all.

---

Necro Realm, the Bone Throne.

Arthas pulled out a crystal core, popped it into his mouth, and crunched it to pieces. Whenever he felt emotionally stirred, he had a weird habit of chewing on crystal cores or other tough minerals. After finishing one entire core, he was calm and stone-faced again.

"An Alpha-level killing a Legendary lord—just some random lucky break? Sure. Only an idiot would buy that."

"Still, never saw it coming that Hulk would truly become Lord and kick off territory construction so quickly. His world must be loaded with resources..."

Arthas was in a good mood. A genuine ally he'd been eyeing and assisting had finally found his footing, instead of getting wiped out halfway like so many other upstart survivors.

Yes, these survivors all had the Survivor's Platform, but other forces in this massive world had their own natural edges.

Getting from zero to Legendary level was a brutal grind, requiring them to risk their lives repeatedly. Arthas and everyone else in the Champions Alliance had gone through that kind of mortal struggle to reach their current status.

Sometimes, you had to stake both your life and future on the line to seize any real chance at tomorrow.

Chapter 265 Dragonscale leather armor

After withdrawing his consciousness from the Survivor's Platform, Orion suddenly found a treasure chest in his hand.

It was a perk for joining the Champions Alliance, obtained through a random draw. This wasn't one of those survivor chests; it was made from precious real-world materials.

Orion opened it and saw a set of leather armor inside. The moment he reached out and touched the armor, it turned into a stream of water that flowed over him. As soon as the water made contact with his skin, it began merging into his body. Moments later, Orion felt a layer of extremely fine scales forming beneath his skin.

"Wow... they really went all out with this!"

"Is this the kind of benefit a demigod provides? This is absolutely mind-blowing!"

Running his hand over his skin, Orion carefully sensed the layer of leather armor hidden underneath.

Champions Alliance commander Thresh's gift was a suit of dragonscale leather armor—an armor of pure condensed dragon hide, concealed beneath the skin to boost defense.

Orion could sense a faint aura of draconic might radiating from it. The armor could stretch and contract, allowing it to shift size within certain limits.

Previously, when Lord Ariel was killed, Orion's Ghostbone Armor was completely destroyed by transcendent power. The arrival of this dragonscale leather armor made up for that equipment loss in a big way.

"The more you gain, the more you'll eventually have to pay back."



Orion wasn't being pessimistic—it was just that nothing in this world comes for free. Down the line, once he became stronger, the Champions Alliance would definitely need him to lend a hand. But knowing that, he still felt at ease accepting these gifts.

After thinking about the future for a while, Orion left the tent with his guards and headed for the Horde Hall.

Once he reached the inner keep's restricted zone, Orion fused two arrow towers and a tavern into the territory core.

"There are still four arrow towers left to set up around the outer city walls, which should be good enough for now!"

Thinking about the outer walls, Orion suddenly felt a bit curious. Leaving the Horde Hall with his guards, he walked toward the outer walls.

Construction of the outer walls was going smoothly, thanks to the efforts of the small spiders and the cannon fodder troops. Except for one section on the west side, the rest was already nearing completion.

"My lord, you're here!"

At that moment, Onyx was supervising work atop the wall. Spotting Orion, he walked over right away.

"Prophet, winter is almost upon us. Do you think we can get everything finished before the dark beast tides arrive?"

Sensing the chill gradually filling the air, Orion gazed at the towering forest in the distance, slightly lost in thought.

"If we stick to the schedule, we can definitely finish!" Onyx replied. "My lord, don't let that long stretch of unbuilt wall fool you—now that we have so many laborers, we can build pretty fast. Besides, our first phase of the outer walls is only 100 feet high, which doesn't take much effort."

Orion nodded as he regarded the 100-foot-high walls, ideas churning in his mind. In this world of countless races, to be honest, walls that height are just a bare-bones starting point.

From earlier discussions, Orion and his allies concluded that 100 feet is hardly a proper city wall at all; it's basically the first defensive trench for bloodline warriors against dark creatures. Surviving this year's dark beast tides will allow them to increase the wall's height next year to around 300 feet, at which point it could actually protect their people.

As they talked, Orion walked along the top of the wall, while Onyx walked below. The pair moved from one section to another, inspecting the newly completed area on the east side.

"My lord, this arrow tower was actually finished, but once I took over the job, I had the workers tear it down and start again," Onyx said, pointing to a knocked-over tower foundation not far away—clearly once an arrow tower. Now, only the base remained.

"Why tear it down?" Orion asked.

"After seeing those arrow towers at the Horde Hall, I realized that for special structures, it's best to use the highest-quality stone you can find," Onyx explained.

Orion nodded. Arrow towers are indeed special structures. Even though the tower would be strengthened when it gets imbued with that special energy, starting with top-notch materials would still increase its maximum durability. Once altered, the arrow tower has a miniaturized core inside that supports the entire structure. The tower's body is basically just protecting that core.

"You made the right move. I'm happy to have you overseeing things."

Onyx shook his head. Now that Orion was a Legendary-level powerhouse, the Blackstone City was gradually being reshaped by transcendent power—a blessing other regions could only dream of.

"My lord, you showed up here in the Black Forest and became the Horde's leader. That's all the honor we'll ever need!"

Orion smiled and said nothing, letting Onyx's compliment slide.

Standing on the wall, Orion looked out at the wind tousling his hair, the sunshine stretching his shadow on the ground. With that lengthening shadow came the steady passing of time.

In the blink of an eye, another month slipped by.

On this new day, the elders were buzzing with excitement—they'd just been notified that the council meeting would begin right before winter set in.

However, their excitement wasn't really about the meeting itself; the real buzz came from the fact that this council session would be held in the Horde Hall. Which meant the Horde Hall was officially in service.

Orion and Lilith had also moved into the inner keep there. Of course, Orion kept his old tent too—he hadn't taken it down just yet.

"Thundar, you got any more of those wolf pups?"

"Right, Elder of Combat, my youngling is just as talented. I can gather more dark source crystals for him this year, so he'll get stronger fast!"

"Thundar, I'd like to reserve one, too!"

"Count me in!"

Hammerhoof, Dirtclaw, Slate, and Samson—four of the council elders—blocked Thundar right after he stepped into the outer fortress meeting hall, all wanting a wolf pup from him.

Once a certain elder had confirmed with Orion that the Horde was getting ready to train a batch of younglings, every wolf pup in Thundar's possession had been snatched up.

"I'm completely out. Not a single one left—y'all gotta wait for the next batch!" Thundar said with a wry smile.

The most precious resource of the cavalry regiment was indeed those pups. As it turned out, Thundar himself didn't even have enough for his own plans, because several senior elders had cornered him for a share.

After all, within the Stoneheart Horde, every elder has a Tribe, a Clan—a whole group counting on them. And in the past few years, with conditions improving, the various races had been having way more younglings than before.

There simply weren't enough wolf pups to go around, and the entire first batch had been pre-reserved by powerful connections well in advance.

As the slower elders also gathered around, hemming Thundar in on all sides, the meeting room suddenly became lively and loud.

Chapter 266 This is our Blackstone City today

When Orion appeared in the meeting hall with Lilith and Lysinthia in tow, all the council members were already gathered.

Orion settled into the main seat, half-closing his eyes as he swept his gaze over the elders. At the same time, he took in everything happening outside the Horde Hall.

On the castle walls, Horde bloodline warriors were patrolling, their expressions vigilant and proud.

At the castle gates and the entrance to the meeting hall, two powerful obsidian golems stood on either side, serving as guards. They wore fearsome bone armor, and at a glance, their presence was truly formidable.

Orion shifted his attention back to the matters at hand and released the overpowering aura of his Legendary-level might, instantly subduing everyone in the hall.

"Elders," he began, "winter is almost upon us!"

"Let us stand witness to the glory from the Stoneheart Horde!"

Rising to his feet, Orion led the way out of the meeting room. Lilith and Lysinthia said nothing, quietly following behind him. With Rendall and Onyx at the forefront, four senior elders and eight council elders also left in silence. Seeing this, the other elders promptly rose and followed them out.

Orion did not travel far. He brought the elders up to the walls of the Horde Hall. Standing atop the battlements at the city's highest point, he gazed into the distance.

It was early winter. Although it was midday, the daylight was waning and the skies were grim. The chilly air, drifting in from all directions, made everyone stand a little straighter and more alert.

"Everyone," Orion said, voice calm but carrying far, "winter is cold, the days grow dark, game is scarce, and the environment is brutal."

His voice carried through Blackstone City, reaching every member of the horde who dwelled there.

"From this day on, darkness shall no longer shroud our Blackstone City. May the dread and fear in our hearts be driven away."

As soon as his words fell, transcendent power surged from the Horde Hall. Every special building in the city began to emit a faint glow. Most notably, a few arrow towers standing tall atop the Horde Hall and the outer walls shone like beacons, illuminating Blackstone City.

In the central plaza, three structures gleamed brilliantly, drawing countless onlookers to pray and give thanks. These were the Hall of Glory, Orion's statue, and the Slaughter Tyrant statue.

The Hall of Glory was dedicated to honoring the horde's fallen heroes. Like Orion's statue, it could gather faith.

The Slaughter Tyrant statue was a rare treasure Orion had once obtained from opening a special chest, capable of summoning a powerful Slaughter Tyrant once it absorbed enough faith energy. At present, it was only at an early Alpha-level, yet Orion had placed it in the plaza to safeguard Blackstone City's interior, preventing enemies from tunneling up from below.

It was a marvel—truly a miracle.

Unlike previous winters when Blackstone City's bonfires couldn't light beyond a small radius, leaving large swaths in darkness, these special buildings now illuminated the entire city. Their brilliance also lit a spark in the hearts of the populace, inspiring many to offer prayers in every corner of Blackstone City.

"Is this a blessing from the Titan God?"

"Mom, look! Our Blackstone City is glowing!"

"Dad, do you see it? There will be no more polar night in the winters to come. The sky is bright again!"

"Check it out—the Horde Hall and the arrow towers are radiating light!"

"It's the lord's doing, a miracle has arrived!"

"Yes, it must be the work of our lord!"

...



Standing on the battlements, Orion could sense his faith energy steadily growing. However, part of that faith energy vanished into the void, beyond his grasp. He sighed, somewhat resigned.

By now, Orion was no longer clueless. He understood that the missing portion of the faith belonged to other gods or ancestral spirits worshiped by various races—energy he could not intercept.

"The reason," Orion reflected, "is that I'm not strong enough yet. If my power were greater, my light would overshadow and suppress those gods and ancestors entirely."

He cast a glance over the now-illuminated Blackstone City, then turned and led everyone back toward the meeting room.

Inside, some elders still wore stunned, uncertain looks. Orion, however, said nothing. He retrieved two boxes from his storage ring.

"Starting today, I will open this wooden box. It will release a strange aroma that attracts beasts and dark creatures. Elders, prepare for battle against countless dark creatures."

He did not elaborate further. Picking up the other wooden box, he opened it to reveal a jet-black Alpha-level crystal core. It immediately drew the keen interest of everyone present.

"After the dark beast tides," Orion continued, "I will reward whoever achieves the greatest battle merits—and is part of our resources hierarchy—with this Alpha-level resource."

By showing them something as tangible as an Alpha-level prize, Orion ignited the horde's passion. Sometimes, talk alone isn't enough; actual, immediate benefits are far more motivating.

With a satisfied tilt of his lips, Orion no longer had to persuade people with more words. He passed the responsibility of running the meeting to the four senior elders, while he and Lilith took their positions in lofty seats, quietly awaiting the final decisions.

The council meeting lasted an entire day. It covered logistics, patrol duties, defensive zones, and mixed-unit tactic assignments. Watching his people grow step by step, while the horde's institutions and regulations gradually improved, Orion felt a swelling pride and sense of accomplishment.

For some reason, he suddenly remembered the name Arthas had mentioned—Commander Thresh. Compared to them, Orion still had a long road ahead.

"I'm still not strong enough," he mused. "And I'm not satisfied with the horde as it is."

When evening arrived and the elders dispersed from the meeting hall, nothing outside had changed from midday. The polar night in Blackstone City was truly gone. Many elders looked up at the still-bright sky, shaken once again.

"The lord was right. Cold and darkness will never again blanket our Blackstone City!"

"Is this what a Legendary-level supernatural miracle looks like?"

"We're on the rise now!"

"Mom–Dad, do you see it? This is our Blackstone City today!"

...

Different people felt different things. Some reflected in awe, some were moved by the good life they now enjoyed, and others sighed over loved ones who weren't around to witness this shining moment.

As for Blackstone City's lord, Orion, he had already taken Lilith and Lysinthia into the inner keep of the Horde Hall to enjoy their private life for the night.

Chapter 267: Making love is truly a wonderful thing

The next morning, Orion opened his eyes in the inner keep to find both Lilith and Lysinthia sprawled across him, fast asleep. Lysinthia in particular still had Orion's cock in her mouth, as though she'd grown used to holding it even while dozing.

Orion got dressed and walked over to a window, feeling a slight heaviness in his chest. The sun had set, and it never rose again. That meant winter in the Black Forest had officially arrived, ushering in the Long Night.

Dark beast tides could break out any day now.

After calming the now-awake Lilith and Lysinthia, Orion headed out of the inner keep. Outside, four guards were already waiting.

"All right, let's head out. The Long Night is here, so we need to inspect the territory."

A chorus of four howls echoed through the air. Orion glanced at the four Frost Wolves seated next to the guards and joked, "Well, look at that—finally showing some spirit!"

In the past, these four Frost Wolves only ever buried their heads in their food, waiting passively for Orion to feed them. This time, however, their howls sounded both ingratiating and cautionary. Smiling wryly, Orion tossed four bottles of high-tier Pet Pills to his guards and reminded them, "Just one pill each time. These are better than the old ones!"

Dace, Otho, Beyn, and Torba each ruffled their Frost Wolf's head as they followed behind Orion, smiles on their faces.

Beginning on the western wall, Orion made his rounds all the way to the east, finally arriving at the underground fissure. Sensing Orion's presence, Spider Queen Lorelia hurried to the entrance to greet him.

"Master!"

Leaving his guards outside, Orion followed Lorelia down toward the bottomless abyss.

"Any new activity in the bottomless abyss lately?"

"None so far."

Starting yesterday, Orion had removed the seed Violet had turned into, causing a faint strange fragrance to permeate all of Blackstone City. It would undoubtedly attract beasts, and those lurking in the bottomless abyss would smell it too, making them restless.

"Keep your guard up. It won't be long before something crawls up from below."

"Don't worry, Master. With Rockwell stationed here, I'll sound the alarm the moment anything happens!"

Orion couldn't help but twitch slightly at that remark. He still remembered how, the first time Lorelia fought alongside Rockwell, she'd practically left him for dead. It was partly because Orion himself had instructed her to prioritize self-preservation, but Lorelia's fear of dying had been a bit too obvious.

"So, how's that nesting site working out?" he asked.

"It's... great! Lorelia absolutely loves the nesting site Master gave me."

"What's so special about it?"

At Orion's question, Lorelia wrinkled her brow thoughtfully, one hand supporting her chin.

"Well, for starters, my spiderlings have a higher survival rate, and we've seen two mutant hatchlings in a row. Plus, Master, every one of us—myself included—loves sleeping inside the nest."

Orion nodded, silently praising Leonidas's gift. On the day Orion joined the Champions Alliance, Leonidas had given him that very beast nesting site, now claimed by Lorelia. He'd never told anyone else about it.

From Lorelia's account, the beast nest had numerous functions: boosting hatch rates, increasing the chance of mutation, offering a place to hibernate, and providing protection.

Especially that last bit—while it had no offensive capabilities, its defense was extremely high. If Lorelia hid in there, even an Alpha-level powerhouse would have trouble rooting her out.

"The dark beast tides will descend soon," Orion said. "Send more of your little spiders to the outer walls to help defend Blackstone City."

"Understood, Master. Lorelia will do that!"

"Good. Stay on alert—I'm off."

Orion took one more look at the bottomless abyss before leaving the underground fissure. Deep down, he harbored a slight concern about that cross-realm teleportation array. But if Lorelia had heard nothing, the underworld was likely still at peace.

When Orion returned to the inner keep, it was already bustling with activity. Ten or so maidservants from the Succubus tribe had appeared.

The inner keep was massive—no simple tent like before—and Lilith could never manage it alone. Besides, the Horde Hall was no ordinary castle; it felt more like a small garrison. Its purpose was always to be a fortress of war standing in Blackstone City.

Delilah of the Sentinel Corps oversaw the outer fortress, in charge of security and patrols. Every bloodline warrior rotating into the Horde Hall had to sign a contract ensuring absolute loyalty. The same went for the inner keep, and even the succubus maidservants were no exception.

Yet even with ten or so of them around, the enormous inner keep still felt a bit deserted.

"Dear Orion," Lilith called, stepping into the bedroom and moving to the windowsill. She wrapped her arms around his waist from behind. "This castle is huge—bigger even than the old palaces of my tribe."

"Don't rush," Orion replied, drawing his gaze away from Blackstone City below and letting Lilith hold him. "Things take time. Blackstone City wasn't built in a day, either."

Truth be told, Orion, too, was a bit let down with inner keep life. It wasn't as richly decorated as he'd once imagined. There was no lavish garden or grand fountain. They didn't even have a decent cook; he was still eating mostly roasted meat every day. And that devoted old butler you hear about in stories? Nowhere to be found.

"That area over there," he said, pointing to the small courtyard in the middle of the inner keep, "I set aside that space so we can plant some magical plants—or any flowers you'd like."

That courtyard was originally reserved for growing food, so the inner keep staff could be self-sufficient. However, Orion didn't lack for crops; what he truly needed were magical plants. Ever since his ascension to Legendary level, his demand for them had skyrocketed.

"What do you want me to plant, sweetheart?" Lilith asked, resting her head against Orion's back while savoring his warmth.

In response, Orion pulled her into his arms and tore off her clothes. Stirred by Lilith's teasing, his desire had flared, and now he was already hard.

"Whatever you feel like planting. In fact, every part of this place—halls, attics, kitchen, altar, barracks, stables—needs plenty of work and resources to fill them."

Leaning in, he murmured, "My dear Lilith, you're going to be very busy indeed."

Lilith gazed deeply at Orion before turning her back and leaning against the edge of the bed. Under the bright lights, Orion watched as Lilith bent down, twisting her hips to shed her clothes. With a few graceful movements, her two breasts were fully exposed before Orion.



Her breasts were full and round. Especially her nipples, resembling enticing purple grapes, made Orion eager to taste their flavor.

Accentuated by Lilith's long, beautiful legs, her hips possessed an inexplicable allure. Orion reached out and grabbed her buttocks, giving them a squeeze.

"Hmm... It's not the first time, but I have to say, they feel really nice!" Orion exclaimed eagerly as he leaned in closer.

In fact, this was their second time being intimate that day. Orion pulled down his pants, supported his cock with his hand, and expertly positioned himself over Lilith's honey hole. Their bodies began to meld closely together.

"Ah... it's so full! My vagina is completely filled by your cock..."

Orion started thrusting his cock in and out of Lilith's vagina, each movement driving deep inside her.

"Ah... darling, this feeling is just wonderful..."

Lilith's pants hadn't come completely off; they were pulled down to her knees, making it impossible to spread her legs. Instead, her legs pressed closer together, forcing her to firmly grip the meat rod inside her.

This tightness made Orion feel even better. As he thrust, he bent forward and cupped Lilith's breasts, his fingers circling around her soft nipples, squeezing and flattening them, toying with her ample bosom.

Lilith let out soft moans, turning her head to kiss Orion affectionately. However, due to their size difference—Lilith being much smaller—she found herself only able to reach Orion's chest. Instead, she kissed his nipples.

Using her long tongue, Lilith licked and teased Orion's nipples, causing him immense pleasure. He responded by thrusting harder and increasing his pace.

"Oh yes, darling, you can go even faster... Making love is truly a wonderful thing..." Lilith's eyes shimmered with a certain longing as she lazily swayed her body. Find adventures at NovelBin.Côm

Orion played with her breasts, smiling, "Hmm, whenever you're free, I'm up for it. I have no objections."

Hearing this, Lilith laughed and kissed Orion's nipple again, saying, "Alright, as long as you like it. I look forward to you fucking me every day... Oh oh... a little faster."

Orion gave Lilith's buttocks a pat and exclaimed, "I'm—coming!"

"Oooh..." Lilith breathed heavily, extending her palm to gently support Orion's cock, allowing him to thrust with ease.

With each deep thrust, Lilith shook her head vigorously, her contracting vagina offering Orion a unique sensation.

Waves of pleasure traveled from her spine to her brain, prompting Orion to remark, "Lilith... your vagina is getting tighter... This feels amazing... It squeezes me so comfortably!"

"Oh yes... darling... your cock feels so good to me too..." Lilith fully opened herself up, her beautiful figure swaying uncontrollably with Orion's thrusts, savoring the sensation of being conquered.

Orion's breathing grew heavier, and he began to pick up the pace. As his thrusts quickened, Lilith's responses became more intense. "Hmm... so good... oh..." Every deep insertion made Lilith frown slightly and emit lascivious moans.

Each thrust caused Lilith to tremble, her butt cheeks twisting left and right. Her breasts bounced up and down with each movement, her lascivious reactions further igniting Orion's desire.

"Ah... mmm... oh... I'm so satisfied... darling... faster, faster..."

To facilitate deeper thrusts, Orion pulled Lilith's pants down, spreading her legs slightly to allow for more vigorous movements.

He continued to thrust rapidly, the tip of his cock continuously hitting the top of Lilith's vagina, almost breaking through her cervix, yet providing Lilith with immense satisfaction. Her eyes sparkled with lustful fire.

Throughout the process, Orion kept fondling her nipples, gripping her elastic breasts without mercy. Under the intense thrusting, Lilith was nearly unconscious, her mouth open, jaw slightly trembling, continuously emitting lascivious moans and incoherent screams, "Oh! Darling Orion... I'm flying, oh god..."

Lilith's entire body suddenly stiffened and arched upwards, her hands releasing and then gripping tightly again as she let out climaxing moans. She bit her lip for about a minute, then forcefully shook her slender waist and collapsed forward, her body becoming limp. However, strong aftershocks lingered as her limbs continued to tremble slightly.

Orion felt the walls of Lilith's vagina tighten around his cock, her vagina instantly secreting a large amount of love juices. The succubus's vagina differed from that of other beings, especially the royal succubi.

Every time a succubus reached the peak of orgasm, not only would they secrete a significant amount of love juices, but their vagina would also generate a unique suction. This suction felt like having the tip of his cock being licked and sucked, drawing him in and pushing him out, providing his cock with extreme pleasure.

"Hold tighter—just hold on a bit longer—I'm almost there... ah!"

In this state of extreme bliss, Orion released his thick semen deep into Lilith's body.

After making love, Orion held Lilith close, her body nestled against him like a cat snuggling in his arms, and spoke about his hopes for the castle.

Regarding the management of the inner keep, according to the horde's rules, Lilith had the highest authority.

Chapter 268: Dream illusion

The next day, just as Orion finished dressing and stepped out of the inner keep, ready to inspect Blackstone City, the dark beast tides descended.

How did Orion know the dark beast tides had arrived? It was a sudden intuition that hit him out of nowhere.

At the same time, his pupils contracted sharply—he sensed an irresistible, immensely awe-inspiring force that landed on Blackstone City in that instant and pulled him away.

Thankfully, that power didn't seem hostile. But Orion found himself whisked away by this colossal, mysterious force to an unknown place.

Dace, Otho, Beyn, and Torba stood right behind Orion. They watched him vanish before their eyes in the blink of an eye.

"My lord!"

"Where did our lord go?!"

...

All four guards called out in alarm. They scoured the area, only to find no trace of Orion.

There was no lightning overhead, which meant he hadn't left of his own accord. Usually, whenever Orion departed with his guards, he'd leave some sort of message. This time, he gave them no warning whatsoever. His disappearance happened so suddenly that the guards were thrown into a panic.

"Otho, you go find Rendall and Onyx. Tell them what happened and have them call a meeting in the council chamber."

"Beyn, you notify the Elder of Stewardship and the Elder of Combat, and get them to come too."

"Torba, you go alert the Wardens so they can join the council discussion."

Among the four, Dace was the quickest to react—he gave orders immediately, then hurried off toward the Horde Hall's inner keep, clearly to inform Lilith.

Meanwhile, Orion had arrived in a void-like space, drawn here by that strange force. A rift hovered in his field of vision, resembling a half-open, pitch-black eye.

[Two-world battlefield... Void passage...]

The moment Orion saw that void passage, a holy, majestic voice echoed in his mind. It felt elusive yet reverent and commanding, and Orion got the distinct impression that whoever spoke might be some sort of god.

"So this is where the dark beast tides come from?"

He had a sudden realization, as if simply being here enlightened him to the fact that the void passage before him was the direct source of the dark beast tides.

Muttering under his breath, Orion took a step toward the void passage. Abruptly, a familiar voice sounded behind him, making him pause.

"Master... is that you?"

Unsure, Orion spun around in search of the source.

"Master!"

"Violet!"

He gasped in surprise. Why was Violet, who had already turned into a seed, standing here before him in human form? Orion carefully probed the familiar contract bond that connected him to Violet. It was definitely her.

He rushed up and pulled Violet into a tight embrace, as if afraid she'd slip away again.

"Violet, why are you here?"

"Master, I came with you!"

Orion frowned, recalling clearly that after extracting the pink seed, he'd handed it over to Lilith for safekeeping.

"Did Lilith put the seed back on me without my knowing?"

That thought flashed through Orion's mind as he steadied Violet, gazing at her irresistibly beautiful face before kissing her deep and hard.



Violet was gorgeous, and Orion was a man who adored beauty. Yet the moment he kissed her, he realized something was off.

Orion knew Violet had a curious habit she always displayed when kissing him: she'd wrap her arms around his waist. But right now, her arms hung limply by her sides—she wasn't responding at all.

"Crap!"

In that split second, Orion regained perfect clarity.

Crackle!

A surge of transcendent power burst from deep within him and flowed into the Violet in his embrace. She let out a pained wail under the assault of Orion's lightning energy. With that anguished cry, the surroundings appeared to shift. The void was still the void, but now there were countless specks of star-like radiance floating all around.

And the Violet in Orion's arms changed: she morphed into an entirely different woman. This one had butterfly wings sprouting from her back, her eyes shining with a rainbow-like glow. Something about her looked strangely familiar, though Orion couldn't recall where he might have seen her.

Then, in a flash, that woman disintegrated into countless sparkles of light, drifting away in the void.

"How did you see through my dream illusion?"

"What the heart desires is real. In my dreamscape, she was real. Why were you able to tell she was fake?" Stay updated via NovelBin.Côm

A bewitchingly lovely face materialized in the void passage, and the voice rang out again—rich with a maternal warmth.

Orion recognized her at once.

"It's you?"

"Dark Butterfly!"

Hearing Orion address her, the woman at the other end of the void passage let loose a gentle, tinkling laugh.

"Heh... 'Dark Butterfly,' what a unique name. Too bad it's not my real one."

"I remember you too, the one who killed my will projection!"

"Who knew you'd advance to Legendary level and become the guardian of this new passageway?"

"How unfortunate for you—you woke up too late!"

"My subordinates and minions have already flooded into your territory!"

When she finished, the woman laughed quietly again.

Orion frowned. A quick sensory check told him she was telling the truth. While he'd been stuck under her illusion, countless dark creatures had already swarmed into his land via that void passage.

Among them, Orion could sense four beings marked by a powerful energy presence, most likely four Alpha-level dark creatures.

Orion glared at the woman on the other side, letting his transcendent power flare. A streak of lightning flashed into existence near the void passage, wiping out the horde of dark creatures crowded there and crackling continuously to guard the portal.

"Ha... Mysterious, familiar lord... can I at least know your name?"

Realizing she couldn't send more dark creatures through, the woman paused and struck up a conversation.

Orion stared back at her without a word, lost in thought. The last time he'd seen her, she had only been a faint will projection possessing the body of Dark Butterfly, serving as bait to draw Orion and the thunderhawk away so she could devour Blackstone City. She'd underestimated the city's might, and her plan had failed.

Now that he was seeing her again, her true nature appeared to be that of a Legendary-level powerhouse from another world.

"So that's it," Orion reflected. "The dark beast tides—this phenomenon that obliterates all life that isn't one of their own—is just another world's method of invasion."

"In this world, there's never been a single truly peaceful place. No safe haven."

"Not then, and not in times to come."

Chapter 269: Emerald dream realm

Learning the truth behind the dark beast tides made Orion's resolve grow stronger in an instant. Yet, his mind was also flooded with countless questions.

He stared at the lightning crackling and streaking across the entrance to the void passage, feeling both relieved and slightly at ease.

"Who are you, anyway?"

He finally spoke, opting to respond with a question when he had no desire to reveal anything about himself.

"Heh heh... Such a clever male."

There was something in her tone and choice of words that made Orion suspect this being belonged to a race other than the typical demi-humans.

"You can call me Sophia, the most powerful Butterfly Mother in the Emerald Dream Realm."

"So then, Orion from Titanion Realm—you do go by Orion, don't you?—who exactly are you?"

Butterfly Mother Sophia's voice was relaxed, even gentle. Long as Orion blocked the void passage, she stood no chance of transporting herself through it, because if she tried, he could unleash a full-force assault and snuff her out mid-transit.

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Furthermore, Sophia was weaving some other dream illusion elsewhere, so all she could do was chat with Orion, hoping to distract him.

Orion stayed silent for some time, though inwardly he was stunned. Up until now, he'd never known his world was called Titanion.

After a long pause, Orion finally replied, hoping to glean some useful info through trivial conversation.

"You can call me Orion, a king of giants."

After his words, Butterfly Mother Sophia's voice grew even softer.

"So, Orion, back in my dream illusion, you were tempted, weren't you? Didn't you want to mate with me?"

Her voice was warm, though her words carried a lurid bite. Yet from her perspective—perhaps among her butterfly race—mating was perfectly natural and not the least bit shameful.

"Orion, the dream illusion may have been a dream, but the mind-mesmerizing butterfly there is my avatar. She was real."

"I think we'd be a great match, wouldn't we?"

Orion locked his eyes on Butterfly Mother Sophia at the far end of the passage, his first time encountering someone who could speak with such divine maternal warmth yet utter such brazenly erotic ideas. And she was far from shy—if anything, she almost reveled in it.

Boom, boom!

Without a word, Orion charged more transcendent power into the void passageway, layering it with additional defenses.

"Well, aren't you a cold one," she teased.

"We were just a hair's breadth away from mating. I heard your heart pounding. I could sense just how big and hard your cock is."

"Hmm, I wonder: if a giant and a butterfly mother had a child, would it have an even more extraordinary bloodline?"

"... .."

Her lilting maternal tone was more seductively mature than even Delilah's, as Butterfly Mother Sophia continued to probe Orion's state of mind.

Orion had been so easily pulled into her dream illusion mainly because his heart held a vulnerability—his lingering guilt over Violet, who had become a seed after conceiving his offspring. That had affected Orion deeply. Seizing that emotional weakness, Sophia had dragged him into the dream illusion in an instant.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Relentless thunder reverberated, drowning out Sophia's voice and helping Orion's mind regain its calm.

Meanwhile, back in Blackstone City, inside the Horde Hall:

All four senior elders—Onyx, Rendall, Delilah, and Thundar—were present. The Wardens—Lilith, Lorelia, Rockwell, Slagor, and Earthshaker—had gathered as well.

"Dace," Rendall said in a rough, heavy voice, "explain again exactly what happened earlier. What do you mean the lord just vanished?"

Centering his hard stare on Dace, Rendall's irritation was obvious. Based on Dace's account, their lord had disappeared before their very eyes without making a sound.

If something out there could just hide away—or worse, instantly defeat—a Legendary-level being, that was deeply unsettling.



"Elder Rendall, our lord honestly did vanish just like that!"

Surrounded and under pressure from these Alpha-level powerhouses, Dace and the other three guards had no idea what else to say. They were telling the truth, but the oppressive aura bearing down on them made it hard to speak.

The four senior elders exchanged glances, each of them frowning before turning to Lilith. Lilith was scowling too, but after a moment's thought, she formed a seal with her hands. From her brow, she drew out a sliver of Orion's will projection.

A flash of lightning flickered, and Orion's silhouette—though indistinct—appeared inside the Horde Hall. Before anyone else could speak, Orion's projection spoke first:

"This all happened so suddenly, so let me be brief. The dark beast tides are upon us!"

"My disappearance isn't Dace's fault or his squad's. I was whisked away by a massive force."

"I can't join you in fighting the dark beast tides this time, so you'll have to handle this yourselves."

"Elder of Stewardship Delilah, you're in charge—take command. Lilith will assist you, and Thunderhawk Rayden will back you up."

From somewhere deep within Moonshadow Valley, a high-pitched hawk screech echoed—Thunderhawk Rayden responding to Orion's call.

"Lorelia and Rockwell, keep watch over the underground fissure. The bottomless abyss is sure to cough up dark creatures soon. Remain vigilant—the defense of Blackstone City is up to the others."

"Rendall, Prophet, and Thundar, have the Hunting Party, the cannon-fodder units, and the cavalry all stay in the city. For these dark beast tides, we're focusing on defense."

"Rockwell, Slagor, Earthshaker—you three Wardens act independently. Stay flexible and move wherever you're needed."

That last command delivered, Orion's will projection transformed back into lightning before returning to Lilith's brow.

Everyone in the meeting room glanced at one another. After a long moment, Delilah's solemn voice rang out:

"It's clear Lord Orion's mysterious disappearance is tied to these dark beast tides. That said, he's assured us he'll be fine."

"It's we who might be in trouble."

She swept her gaze around, landing on Rendall, Prophet, and Thundar.

"Rendall, Prophet, Thundar—raise Blackstone City's defense and alert systems immediately. Our three main armies must stay ready for combat at any moment."

Then she turned to Lorelia.

"Warden Lorelia, send your little spiders outside the city. We need to sacrifice some of them to gather intel as early as possible."

Lorelia nodded, agreeing to the plan. Thanks to the abundant resources she'd received, she had a huge spider population by now—losing a few wasn't a big deal.

"Also, keep a close watch on the underground fissure. If Orion specifically mentioned it, then something's bound to happen there. Lorelia, you and Rockwell stay sharp. If you run into any trouble, sound the alarm right away, and I'll send backup."

Chapter 270 Don't you want to have sex with me?

Near the void passage, Orion kept half of his attention on the entrance and sent the other half into the Survivor's Platform.

Orion opened the channel linked to the Champions Alliance. After a brief moment of thought, he drafted a message.

Hulk: "Hey guys, have any of you ever run into a void passage?"

No one responded right away. A few minutes passed before someone finally spoke up to answer Orion's question.

Edward: "A void passage? That's some high-tier stuff. Anyone who can open that must be at least demigod level or higher!"

Hulk: "Is there a way to destroy a void passage?"

Edward: "Technically, yes. But it's formed and sustained by godly power and the laws of the universe. Even most arch lords would find it tough to tear one down."

After reading Deputy Commander Edward's explanation, Orion dropped the idea of destroying the void passage.

Leonidas: "Is the one you found a forward passage or a reverse passage?"

Hulk: "It's reverse—every year, a ton of Dark Beasts come swarming out of it!"

Leonidas: "A reverse passage with Dark Beasts... every year... So your world is being invaded by another world?"

Hulk: "Looks that way."

There was nothing much for Orion to hide on this subject; he needed more information and answers.

Edward: "Then it's simple!"

Edward: "Most likely, there was a divine war between demigods or gods from both worlds, which opened up a battlefield between them."

Edward: "Since you've just reached Legendary level, you must've been drawn to the nearest passage node by godly power. As long as you guard that Void Passage and keep other lords from descending on your world, you'll be safe and sound!"

Orion stared at Deputy Commander Edward's message, reading it over several times before typing another question that had been on his mind.

Hulk: "So is the Void Passage basically the battlefield between the two worlds?"

Leonidas: "Heh... If you want to step onto the battlefield of two worlds and actually join the war between gods, you'd better have at least old-school Legendary power."

Edward: "Leonidas is right. The Void Passage you're dealing with is probably just one node. Chances are, your world has quite a few of these passages."

Leonidas: "Hulk, in plain English, you're basically a guard dispatched by a god to safeguard that passage—slightly better than cannon fodder, that's all."

Leonidas: "You get what I'm saying?"

Hulk: "..."

Suddenly, Orion understood. It made sense that Gareth and Jorik had never made a move to invade during winter because they needed to protect the Void Passage.

It also cleared up another lingering question Orion had: during those winter Dark Beast tides, no lord existences had ever shown up, nor had they offered any support.

"So it turns out that the Alpha-level Dark Creatures that arrived in the Black Forest a few years back were most likely let in by Gareth herself."

"And the purpose was to have the Stoneheart Horde absorb some of that pressure!"

"In other words, before any Alpha-level beings showed up in the Black Forest, those Alpha-level Dark Creatures just weren't being herded over here."

Maybe that was Gareth's way of protecting the Black Forest.

Orion sighed, realizing that being a lord truly wasn't easy.

"The stronger you are, the heavier the obligations and responsibilities on your shoulders, and some responsibilities aren't exactly optional."

"Maybe, in the eyes of those gods and demigods, someone at Legendary level is just a slightly bigger ant."

With that in mind, Orion felt a surge of complicated emotions.

Edward: "Hulk, a divine war between two worlds is incredibly dangerous, but it's also chock-full of opportunities!"

Leonidas: "Yeah, for sure! Bro, let me remind you—always have a backup plan for yourself."

Leonidas: "If your world loses this divine war, none of you natives are gonna have a good time."

Leonidas: "On the other hand, bro, make sure you kill as many monsters or beasts descending on your world as you can."

Leonidas: "They're carrying a trace of their world's essence. If you take them out, there's a real chance you can gain some serious benefits."

World essence, huh?

After reading Leonidas's words, Orion immediately thought of Dark Source Crystals. The energy inside them was so pure and could directly boost one's power—no doubt because it held the essence of another world.

By the same token, the crystal cores and bodily crystals of Orion's own world must be a priceless resource for Dark Creatures.

With that train of thought, Orion finally understood why Dark Creatures wanted to slaughter all living beings in this realm.

Their ultimate goal was to harvest world essence.

As for this world's gods, the reason they allowed the Void Passage to appear must be that they hoped to consume or absorb more of the Emerald Dream Realm's essence in return.



Orion felt like he was brushing up against something crucial. Perhaps world essence was the ultimate prize that gods in every realm vied for.

Hulk: "There's a lot of info to process here. I'll take some time to digest it. Besides, the enemy just made a move!"

Pulling his consciousness out of the Survivor's Platform, Orion focused on Sophia, who stood at the other end of the Void Passage.

At that very moment, Sophia was channeling her power, trying to tear apart the defensive measures Orion had set up at the passage's entrance.

"Orion, don't you want to have sex with me?"

"Even though I'm the Butterfly Mother, I'm still a virgin. I've never had any sexual experience!"

"I can see the desire in your eyes. Based on your sense of beauty, you must find me irresistible, don't you?"

"Heh heh heh..."

Even as Sophia tried to seduce Orion, her hands never stopped working at the defenses.

Orion waved his arm, sending a few bolts of lightning crashing down on the Dark Creatures swarming through the Void Passage. Each one was struck dead.

But among their falling bodies, a dark silhouette suddenly leapt out and lunged at Orion.

Boom!

In a flash of lightning, Orion brandished his trident and struck the figure down in a single blow.

"Orion, welcome to my dreamy world!"

When that voice rang out, Orion's nerves went on high alert. His expression grew grim and incredulous.

Why? Because right at the passage entrance, Sophia was strolling out, clad only in a sheer garment. Every step brought her closer. Her body radiated a sensual allure—her perfect breasts, her flawless figure, and her exquisite features.

"Orion, why don't we have a nice, long chat about life? Or your ideals?" she said softly, still closing the distance between them. It was as if Orion wasn't her enemy at all.

Only when Sophia was near did Orion notice that she matched his height almost exactly. Their proximity left her naked body fully exposed to his eyes. Her pubic area flashed in and out of view with each step, a blatant temptation to just about any male creature.

"What exactly do you plan on doing?" Orion demanded.