

## **Titan King 331**

Chapter 331 It's not exactly the same as last time

Orion shook his head, sharing the concerns on his mind.

"It's not exactly the same as last time. Back then, those two were basically friends of mine, and they treated us kindly.

"But this time it's different. We really don't know where we stand with the white dragon Frostsire.

"Granted, we'll all be heading south, which means our goals are aligned. But beyond that, anyone else we come across, consider them the enemy."

A brief silence fell over the group. Everyone could imagine how once the army marched south, if trouble arose, they would have no one to rely on but themselves. No outside force was about to come running to their aid.

"My lord, how many troops are we bringing?"

That was Delilah's concern. Orion thought for a moment, then swept his gaze around the room before answering with utmost seriousness.

"This time, I plan to take half of our cave spider armies—that's five hundred thousand spiders.

"We'll also take all the cannon fodder troops. The Hunting Party and cavalry regiment will stay behind in the Horde to rest and defend Blackstone City.

"Delilah, Onyx, Rockwell, Earthshaker, Slagor—you five come with me. Everyone else stays home and holds down the fort."

Several who weren't chosen opened their mouths as if wanting to protest but said nothing in the end. They knew Orion rarely went back on a decision once it was made.

"Once I leave, Lilith will oversee everything. Lysinthia will assist, and Arch Elder will keep close watch. Thundar will maintain order both inside and out, leading any battles that arise."

"Yes, my lord!"

"Yes, sir!"

"..."

After everyone voiced their agreement, Delilah brought up another issue.

"My lord, are we really departing in half a month?"

Orion shot her a puzzled look, signaling her to continue.

"My lord, if you head out, and the army from the northern ice fields happens to pass through our territory—maybe even pillages Blackstone City—what then?"

"After all, we don't exactly have good relations with that northern lord."

This problem hadn't crossed Orion's mind yet. Almost immediately, someone else proposed a solution.

"My lord, we can still leave in half a month, but adjust our marching speed as we go."

"If that white dragon is heading south, the ice-field lord will be the first to catch wind of it. It's likely his army is already on the move toward the south."

"All we have to do is slow our pace. Once we spot the ice-field troops, we just fall in step and head south together."

It was Slagor who spoke up. Orion wanted him along for his cleverness and meticulous thinking.

"Then we'll do it Slagor's way. We march out in half a month, heading south slowly and waiting for the ice-field forces."

"Yes, my lord!"

So half a month later, Orion led the main army out of Blackstone City, moving at a relaxed pace toward the south. Their flying beasts—thunderhawks and Four-Winged Blood Bats—were sent out in both directions to scout for enemies, continually going back and forth.

Up north, at Abyssal Chasm, Lord Jorik had spent two years letting his icefield snow wolves and snow monsters rest and multiply, building up a fresh army. A blast of icy wind whipped past, and Gustalon appeared within the swirling breeze.

"My lord, a thunderhawk and a Storm Vulture have been spotted near Abyssal Chasm. Looks like they're trying to track our movements. Should we kill them?"

Between thunderhawks and Storm Vultures, Gustalon had had more than one bad run-in.

Standing firm against the frigid wind, a giant sword strapped to his back, Lord Jorik shook his head.

"No need. We're entering the Abyssal Chasm and passing through the black forest. They won't attack, and we don't want any trouble, either."

At the moment, Lord Jorik felt a pressing urgency. His ancestor, the white dragon Frostsire, was awake, and Jorik still needed Orion to help with the southward invasion. Stirring up conflict now would be a waste of time and could easily derail his ancestor's plans.

"Gustalon, keep scouting. Feel free to venture farther this time.

"I've already sensed Lord Orion's presence—he's heading south.

"Go take a trip to the Desolate Plains and see if that centaur horde is making any moves."

Gustalon nodded. Without further ado, he shifted with the wind toward the Desolate Plains.

Meanwhile, in the southern reaches of the black forest, Orion was nearing Thunderwood Forest. Rather than cut straight through it, he angled east, planning to pass through the Half-Moon Lake region to continue southward.

After realizing that Lord Jorik was merely marching obediently through the black forest, Orion felt much less worried.

Upon entering the Half-Moon Lake area, Orion sensed Gareth's presence from afar.

"Keep moving ahead. I'll be right back."

In a flash of lightning, Orion sped off toward the spot where Gareth had previously arranged to meet him. Half a day later, the thunder faded, and Orion landed alongside a small river.

Gareth was already there, calmly seated on her abyssal dragon, waiting.

"Lord Orion, your 'messenger' really came with quite a punch!" she teased with a wry grin.

Orion gave an awkward laugh. He knew Gareth was joking, but it wasn't exactly funny. An arch lord at the peak level serving as a mere envoy? Orion couldn't pull that off in his wildest dreams.

"Lord Gareth, you can still joke at a time like this? Looks like that white dragon didn't give you any trouble."

He was feeling Gareth out for intel. Unfortunately, she shook her head.

"One reason I'm here is to see if you have any intel for me."

Orion shrugged, indicating he knew absolutely nothing.

"So if neither of us knows anything," Gareth said, "we'll just wait for him here. I already sent someone to invite him."

Orion's expression brightened. Gareth was obviously referring to Lord Jorik. Orion, Gareth, and Jorik were all acquainted. Getting the three of them together would be way easier than grilling a white dragon for answers.

"Lord Gareth, you think that insect lord will just bow down this time?" Orion asked.

Gareth didn't respond—clearly, she thought that was a pretty naive question. Of course, Orion wasn't looking for a real answer.

Orion just wanted to be sure Gareth's relationship with that insect lord wouldn't screw up any joint plans. Obviously, every lord Frostsire passed during his push south was going along for the ride. On the surface, at least, they were all in the same boat, sharing the same fate and interests, needing to move forward together.

#### Chapter 332 Alliance

From the look of things now, Orion and Gareth are naturally the best allies for each other. Both of them had come here with the intention of forging a partnership. After that would come Jorik and Ironhoof—those two were also potential allies.

Among them, Lord Jorik had a blood tie to that white dragon. As a core figure in this, there was no way they could just leave him out. And so Orion and Gareth waited by the river for Jorik for half a month.

Finally, on a certain day, a dragon roar came from the sky and landed on the opposite bank of the river.

"You've asked me here—what do you want to know?"

Lord Jorik wasn't dumb; he'd already guessed some of what Orion and Gareth had on their minds. Orion and Gareth exchanged looks.

Orion spoke calmly, though there was a serious note in his voice.

"Lord Jorik, we'd like to know what the ultimate goal is for this southward campaign. Where exactly are we headed? Who's the enemy? When does it end?"

Time, place, and enemy—those were the questions Orion and Gareth cared about most.

Once Orion finished, Jorik went quiet for a while. Maybe he was deciding how much to say. Eventually, he spoke in a subdued tone.

"Our goal is to keep pushing all the way to the far south. If you reach your limit along the way and want to pull out, I don't think my ancestor will force you to stay."

"As for the enemy, down in the south there's a group of humans called the Utessar Kingdom. As for how long this war will last, nobody can say."



"But here's one thing you can count on: as long as the war keeps going, the dark beast tides won't hit. That's what my ancestor and a demigod have agreed on. This southward march is an opportunity for all of us. The land down there is far more fertile, and I imagine you don't want to stay in these frigid northern regions forever, right? It's cold, and resources are scarce."

Orion fell silent, frowning slightly, eyes half-closed. Jorik had laid out so much new information that he didn't quite know where to begin. Orion had originally assumed that Frostsire's territory wouldn't be too far, and that maybe the fighting would only last through four or five territories. Clearly, he had underestimated both Frostsire's determination and his abilities.

From what Jorik shared, Orion could already visualize that the coming conflict was basically a sprawling north-south war, involving everyone on this continent. No race or realm would be able to avoid it.

Across the river, Gareth was likewise stunned. She remained speechless for a long time.

"Lord Jorik," Orion said at last, "to be blunt, even if the three of us join forces, we can probably punch through three to five territories before losing too many troops and having to turn back."

He was probing for information on whether other allies might join them. Jorik shook his head, responding in a firm, almost exuberant tone:

"It's not just you. Any lord who doesn't want to remain in the north will sign on for this war. As long as we reclaim my ancestor's territory, you can seize whatever else you want to the south."

"This is an opportunity for us all—think of it as a giant wave, and we're just drops of water within it."

The more Lord Jorik spoke, the more excited he became, as if he could already see himself back in his ancestral land, slumbering in a field of blossoms.

"Lord Jorik, if that's the case, we propose that the three of us form an alliance," Gareth chimed in. "We stand or fall together. That'd give us a better shot at survival while cutting down on our losses when wiping out enemy forces."

This was exactly what everyone had in mind. Orion and Gareth wanted Jorik as an ally so they wouldn't be on their own.

Meanwhile, Jorik needed them as allies because, in all honesty, both the quality and quantity of the troops he could muster were lacking. He needed solid partners to reinforce his status as a direct descendant of Frostsire.

That, in fact, was why Jorik had come all this way and shared intel with Orion and Gareth.

"I don't object. I came here precisely because of you two."

Lord Jorik agreed to the alliance.

"I'm also in," Orion said. Having Jorik serving as a link between them and the white dragon Frostsire was clearly a good thing. In such a massive war, not having allies would likely mean an early exit—and the loss of any potential benefits.

Thus, beside that little river, Orion, Jorik, and Gareth signed an equal contract. Afterward, their three armies began drawing closer to each other, gradually merging forces.

Meanwhile, over on the Desolate Plains, the centaur Khan Ironhoof sensed that Orion, Jorik, and Gareth were converging. He, too, made his way toward them.

Ultimately, before this group had even left Thunderwood Forest, the centaur Khan Ironhoof joined up.

Now four Legendary level leaders were working together: a giant, a centaur, a half-dragon, and a glacial dragon. They brought a lot of troops, too.

Orion had his cannon fodder troops and cave spider armies; Gareth had her scorpion squads and fiend serpent forces; Jorik had his icefield snow wolves and snow monsters; Ironhoof had his centaur armies and ogre cohorts. Notably, the centaur armies had some aerial combat ability, which made for a neat complement.

Seeing these three Legendary plus one glacial dragon stand united—amassing an army of nearly 3000K troops—Jorik's confidence surged. As they neared the insectoid territory, Jorik almost hoped that bug-lord would put up some resistance, so this allied force could show off its strength.

But Lokiviria, the insectoid lord, turned out to be quite tactful and had already prepared to head south with them. However, Lokiviria was at middle Legendary level and refused to follow Jorik, who was weaker. So the insectoid lord did not actually join this alliance.

Insectoids never form alliances with those they view as weaker. From Lokiviria's standpoint, he was following Frostsire, not Jorik.

Which explained why, in a temporary tent soon afterward, Jorik looked anything but pleased.

Chapter 333 Dwarf and blood elf

"Lord Jorik, think of the bigger picture. Letting the insectoids lead the way might actually be a good thing."

It was Gareth who spoke up. Lokiviria had badly injured her once, so she certainly had no fondness for him. Right now, the fact that Lokiviria wasn't interested in teaming with Jorik was the best outcome as far as Gareth was concerned.

Seated off to the side, Orion exchanged glances with Centaur Ironhoof, spotting a flicker of understanding in each other's eyes.

Frankly, Jorik's current predicament was precisely what they'd hoped for. If Jorik's faction were too strong, he might eventually swallow up their armies as well and gain total control.

But the stance Lokiviria was taking only confirmed that the farther south you went, the stronger and more arrogant the local lords—but it also meant these southern lords wouldn't simply fall in line under Frostsire.

Meanwhile, Orion had learned a few things from everyone's discussions. Most of the northern-based lords would indeed heed the white dragon Frostsire's call and head south.

However, not all would obey him completely; some would band together to guard against potential subjugation by Frostsire and retain some independence while still forming combined armies.

That was exactly what Orion, Gareth, and Ironhoof had done among themselves: ally up as partners rather than hamper each other. That was surely the kind of arrangement most lords preferred.

"Damn that insectoid! In the eyes of dragonkind, he's just a pathetic bug!"

Lord Jorik spat in frustration, but none of the three other lords spoke. Sometimes, not getting involved was the safest bet.

Fortunately, Jorik wasn't truly reckless. He accepted Gareth's suggestion: let the insectoids march out front and test the strength of those southern lords. And so, they traveled straight through Lokiviria's territory without waging war on the insectoids.

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Far to the south, in the Utessar Kingdom.

Two dwarves were strolling through the streets of the human royal capital. The alliance between humans and dwarves was no secret, so nobody paid them much attention. In fact, there was already a dwarf-owned weapons shop in this bustling part of the city, so dwarves weren't exactly an oddity.

"Master Harbek, shouldn't we head back to the lodging arranged by the human diplomats?"

This speaker was another dwarf, addressing Harbek, whose full name was Harbek Bronzebeard. In dwarf society, the Bronzebeards ranked just beneath the ruling Silverbeard clan.

Harbek had come here with the dwarf prophet Dain to negotiate the alliance between humans and dwarves. Truth be told, he was there mainly to protect Prophet Dain, although right now, Dain was occupied in the royal palace and didn't need Harbek tagging along.

With a pair of small hammers dangling from his belt, Harbek made it clear he was also a smith.

As he walked, Harbek kept an eye out for a certain tavern he remembered.

"Tordek, just come with me—and don't get in the way of my fun."

Then he looked at Tordek and went on,

"Tordek, you know something? In a dwarf's life, only the hammer and a good brew cannot be neglected! Wahaha!"

Still talking, Harbek finally found the tavern he'd been searching for in his memory. With a hearty laugh, he strode straight inside.

"Damned rabble, if anyone can beat Master Harbek at arm wrestling today, I'll cover their drinks!"

Harbek roared as he entered, ignoring the stares. Most patrons cast a glance at him, then resumed their own business.

Everyone knew dwarves were short but incredibly strong—their prowess with hammers and forging was widely respected. Nobody jumped in to answer Harbek's challenge. He didn't care. He marched right up to the bar and yelled:

"Gimme the strongest drink you got... Nah, make it a barrel of it!"

Dwarves love their booze. The pretty human waitress smiled and called another server to fetch the barrel from storage.

"Honored dwarven warrior, anything else you'd like?"

Harbek took a big swig of the strong liquor the waitress handed him and exhaled in satisfaction.

"Master Harbek, what about me—and my drink?" came Tordek's voice from right beside him.

Harbek let out a hearty laugh, ran a hand through his beard, and pointed to his young dwarf companion.

"Fair maiden, get the lad here your stoutest brew as well! Wahaha..."

The bartender nodded, smiling politely at Tordek as she served him a cup of the same fiery liquor.

This tavern was run by the Mercenaries' Guild, so most drinkers here had seen a wide variety of folk and didn't bat an eye at dwarves or elves. But a few sharp-eyed patrons noticed the pair of small copper hammers at Harbek's waist and perked right up.

Sure, dwarves were known for their metalwork, but not every dwarf was a master smith—only recognized experts were permitted to wear hammer ornaments.

Several curious sorts looked as if they wanted to approach and introduce themselves, but just then, a beautiful elf—specifically, a ranger—stepped into the tavern. The elf, Elanor, walked in as if she didn't even notice the human men casting glances at her long, slender legs.

She strolled over to the bar, snapping her fingers.



"I'll have a Sunny Breeze, please."

The bartender looked surprised that an elf ranger would know about a particular sort of off-menu concoction—"Sunny Breeze" was a subtly salty drink and not something they simply handed out at the counter.

"Understood, please wait a moment," the bartender said, then slipped into the back. "Sunny Breeze" had to be decanted and properly mixed, so it wasn't available on the spot.

"Elanor, strong liquor is the best!" Harbek called out. He wasn't the least bit shocked by this blood elf ranger's arrival—he'd come here precisely to see her.

"What dwarves love, elves don't necessarily share," Elanor replied lightly.

Harbek said nothing, just drained his cup in one swig.

"Still, an enemy of the dwarves is bound to be an enemy of the elves, too."

Elanor didn't comment on that. Among the major races living in the far south, dwarves, elves, and humans claimed the best parts of the land. And to defend it, they'd have to take up arms when any invaders from the north marched down.

As for this dwarf, Harbek, he was a friend of the elf ranger Elanor.

Alliances between entire races often came down to friendships between a few individuals—that's how it's been throughout history.

Chapter 334 This war is inevitable

"My clan's old man recently used mithril, crystal cores, and sacred wood vines to forge some incredibly tough, razor-sharp arrows. I'm guessing you'd be very interested," Harbek said, clutching the barrel of strong liquor he'd just purchased and taking a swig.

This was an invitation—dwarves and blood elves had been allies for generations, so just hinting at it was enough.

"Once I've escorted our elder back, I'll visit the dwarves," Elanor replied. She took the drink the bartender handed over—a "Sunny Breeze"—and licked it lightly, almost like she was sampling blood.

"I still need to stop by the Mercenaries' Guild to turn in a few missions, so I won't stick around."

With that, the blood elf Elanor downed her drink in one go, displaying a boldness most blood elves didn't usually show. Then, without a trace of reluctance, she turned and left.

"Master Harbek, who was that blood elf just now?" the young dwarf Tordek whispered once Elanor disappeared.

"Who is she? Just a pretty elf ranger," Harbek said. Then he hoisted his barrel, took another long gulp, and burped.

"Buurp... A bloodthirsty blood elf... A tough customer," he muttered under his breath.

"Ah... hah... Master Harbek, this strong liquor here is amazing... I want more!" Tordek exclaimed eagerly.

Harbek took one look at Tordek, who'd already finished his first cup, and said flatly, "That one was on me, kid. If you want more, you'll have to pay for it yourself."

Tordek patted around his pockets. He hadn't grabbed a bag or any coins.

"Master Harbek, I... I..."

"..."

Compared to the rowdy tavern in the street outside, the meeting in the royal palace was much quieter.

In the kingdom's conference room, only King Harold, dwarf Prophet Dain, and blood elf Elder Lireesa were present. Even the king's personal guards had been dismissed.

"The white dragon Frostsire has broken free from his seal. We three races all took part in that pact a millennium ago. This war is inevitable—unless we decide to go back to that other continent, where fighting is even fiercer," King Harold said, his voice measured and slow.

"There's no going back," Elder Lireesa interjected. "Six thousand years ago, the teleportation arrays linking the two continents were destroyed. Unless we recover the original schematic and rebuild one, we're stuck here."

Six thousand years may not be terribly long for blood elves—who can live for a millennium—just a few generations, really. And especially for a scholar of history like Lireesa, those events were well-documented. But when it came to dwarves and humans, six thousand years was a span most had forgotten.

"Why be so pessimistic?" Prophet Dain, who had inherited the dwarves' legendary hot temper, insisted. "Even if Frostsire is free, he's not unstoppable. A thousand years ago, our ancestors sealed him away, and if we unite now, we can do the same again."

"We occupy the most fertile territory on this continent, and our combined strength is nothing to scoff at—certainly enough to match whatever those northern creatures bring."

"So how many races can we unify?" King Harold asked. "It's been a thousand years since that seal, and besides our three races, only the half-dragons and merfolk haven't been at odds with us. Over time, we pushed everyone else farther north. If I had to guess, at least eighty percent of the non-human races up there will join the invasion."

He wasn't jesting. After the news broke that Frostsire had escaped, human scouts had flooded the northern territories. Reports poured in that many domains were mustering forces, preparing to march south.

"Even with the support of our saints," King Harold went on, "I'm certain we humans can't hold off so many invaders alone. We need you."

No one in this meeting bothered with empty niceties or attempts at stalling—everyone here outranked most of their kind, people who actually shaped the fate of their races.

"The dwarves can handle invasions on the eastern front," Prophet Dain declared.

"The blood elves will secure the western front," added Lireesa.

All three sides nodded in agreement. Once they reached an understanding about fighting together against a common foe, the conversation shifted to how to divide any future rewards.

"According to our plan, once we beat back these northern armies, we'll move the boundary line three territories north," King Harold said. "First, that'll generate more resources for our alliance. Second, those extra territories can be bartered to win over a few more allied races. Third, it'll force the northern tribes to cram into the far north, competing among themselves. Fourth..."

He continued to list the benefits. Dain the dwarf prophet and Lireesa the blood elf elder both found his ideas appealing. Not only did they stand to reap extra gains, they could also draw in other subordinate races, strengthening their hold on power.

The palace meeting went on for a long time. It was three days before Prophet Dain and Elder Lireesa left the palace.

Meanwhile, across the human territories, in every city and all noble households, official summons from the king were sent out, mobilizing forces.

In the Utessar Kingdom, at a local blacksmith's shop, a knight named Galahad walked in. He pulled the single-handed sword from his belt, along with one grade-A crystal core and two grade-B crystal cores.

"Garrett, I've made my decision—I want these embedded into my sword," he said.

The shop's master came out from behind the forge, accepted Galahad's sword and the crystal cores, and studied the knight intently.

"My friend, do you know what it means to embed these things?"

Galahad nodded solemnly.

"Humility—no arrogance."

"Behind every powerful foe, there's a reason not to fear."

"I must show kindness to the weak, and I must never yield to violence. I'll stand against every wrongful act..."

He recited the ancient knightly vow, the one last remnant his family had left—perhaps the only thing of worth they still possessed.

Garrett studied Galahad for a moment, then gave a grave nod. "All right."

He walked to the front of the shop, shut the doors, and hung up a sign that read "Closed for Seven Days."

"My friend, I'll need your help here. Forging and rebuilding your sword and armor is more than I can handle alone."

Garrett returned to the forge and pushed forward a massive bellows, gesturing for the coal knight to take the handles.

Galahad sat down and immediately threw himself into the work.

For a second, Garrett glanced at Galahad's sword and silently pledged,

"I will fight to protect those who have nothing.

"I shall answer every call for help..."

It was the spirit of "sacrifice," one of the Eight Tenets of the ancient knights—and it was their creed.

Chapter 335 Shoot your cum deep inside my pussy

Northern Coalition, makeshift tent.

A crackling electric current sizzled and popped as Orion manipulated his transcendent power to lock down the tent, ensuring no one outside could overhear the conversation within.

Inside the tent sat five Alpha-level beings—Delilah, Onyx, Rockwell, Earthshaker, and Slagor—as well as Gronthar, Gort, Dirtclaw, and Ursa, four council elders.

Orion explained the Four-Faction Alliance situation in detail, leaving the elders utterly speechless.

"Lord, are you saying this southern invasion drags our entire continent into war?"

Even as Delilah asked, her lips parted slightly, showing just how shocked she really was.



"Yes," Orion replied.

"And not only that—until this war ends, there won't be any dark beast tides on this continent. Clearly, there's someone at the demigod-level pulling the strings from the shadows."

Orion narrowed his eyes. His tone was grim. If this conflict could delay the appearance of the dark beast tides, it signaled something far more complicated at play—something that even he could not fully grasp yet.

Anything related to demigods was enough to rattle him. A part of him feared losing control over events that spiraled beyond his reach. Yet at the same time, a massive temptation stood right in front of him.

Orion was more than eager to seize territory in the south. He had the Lord's Stone in his possession, which could form a new base. Such a prize drove him relentlessly onward.

Now, Orion and his forces had pushed past Lokiviria's territory and entered land governed by a band of ogres.

The lord of this territory was a two-headed ogre, a formidable mid-Legendary-level fighter—but neither of his heads seemed particularly bright. This two-headed ogre had no proper name; everyone simply called him "Bluehide."

Seeing how Orion's army boasted considerable troops and multiple Legendary-level powerhouses, Bluehide joined them without hesitation. Lord Jorik welcomed strong ogres with open arms. So the combined army managed to get a bit of rest in Bluehide's domain.

"Lord, I don't think we can rush mindlessly into the battles ahead," Onyx spoke, snapping Orion from his wandering thoughts.

Orion nodded, already aware of the dangers.

"This type of conflict could easily get us all wiped out if we're careless," he cautioned. "If you charge too recklessly, you'll just wind up as cannon fodder."

His words were no exaggeration. While Alpha-level was powerful compared to Hero-level or elite units, Alpha-level was still not on par with Legendary-level. Enough sheer numbers—or strong foes lurking among countless warring races—could wear down any Alpha-level being. If the army split up, the chance of casualties only grew.

"Therefore, without my orders, Onyx, Rockwell, Earthshaker, and Slagor are not to take matters into your own hands." Orion's gaze swept over them.

One by one, they nodded, understanding how serious he was.

"And one more thing."

Orion's voice drew their attention again.

"From here on, we split the cannon fodder troops into five units."

"Delilah, Onyx, Rockwell, Earthshaker, and Slagor, each of you will lead those original cannon fodder members, promoting them as managers. During the coming war, I want all of you to expand the cannon fodder troops. There's no limit to how many we can add for now."

"Remember—every one of these new recruits must sign a contract. We'll use slaves to manage slaves."

Orion's voice was cold as ice. For the next phase of the war, he planned to deploy cave spiders to the front lines.

His logic was simple: use cave spiders as the vanguard, followed by cannon fodder troops that would keep growing in size. After all, cave spiders were a renewable resource for the Stoneheart Horde—losing them wasn't the end of the world. But the slaves in the cannon fodder troops provided a continuous influx of population; Orion would not casually discard them unless he had absolutely no choice.

This desire to strengthen the cannon fodder troops was part of Orion's broader strategy to build up the Horde's population for the future. In this massive north-south war, the greatest resource was land, followed by manpower, and then all those precious mineral and magical plant reserves.

He couldn't take land with him if they lost, but he could always retreat with a significantly boosted population. More people meant faster development for the Horde and quicker generation of faith energy.

"Lord Orion, how should we handle the other allied forces?"

Slagor broke in with a question. He was the sort who always seemed to raise crucial points when people least expected it.

"Tell me your thoughts," Orion prompted, not fully grasping Slagor's implication yet.

"My Lord, forgive my boldness, but I predict this north-south conflict will see massive casualties—possibly even Legendary-level casualties. If one of those top fighters falls, should we try bringing their subordinates over to our side?"

Orion's eyes narrowed further. He had to admit Slagor's thinking was both far-reaching and a bit daring.

At that moment, Delilah also spoke up.

"Honored Lord, I suggest a few of us make contact with the various Alpha-level beings out there, under the banner of this coalition. We can get to know them, maintain selective relationships, and if, or when, someone important dies, we'll already have contacts in place."

Orion nodded, deciding it was worth planning ahead. He also knew that if he died in battle, the same process would grant Delilah and the others a fallback plan.

He understood the logic, and in his own way, he accepted it. After all, if Orion were gone, what path would the Stoneheart Horde take? He didn't like dwelling on that question, so he let them sort it out.

"Fine," Orion said, giving Delilah a meaningful look before he spoke calmly.

"You'll take charge of this. The rest of them will give you their full cooperation."

He glanced at Onyx, Rockwell, Earthshaker, and Slagor in turn. They all let out wry smiles and nodded.

The meeting continued a little longer. Then Onyx, Rockwell, Earthshaker, and Slagor left the tent one after another.

In the end, only Delilah stayed behind. She approached Orion, stripped off every piece of clothing, and used her breasts and her vagina to pleasure him, allowing him to relieve his lust.

"My dear, you're not mad at me, are you?" she whispered.

Orion didn't answer. He knew she was referring to the whole "finding a safety net" issue. And he also knew betrayal from those like Delilah was very unlikely; they were merely considering the future of the Stoneheart Horde.

If, for some reason, the Horde lost Orion, they needed to find a way forward. Orion didn't dwell on the scenario; he simply entrusted it to Delilah and the others.

"Darling," she breathed, "fuck me hard. Shoot your cum deep inside my pussy. I want to bear your child!"

Accepting her invitation, Orion leaned down and kissed her lips. Then, in one swift thrust, he drove his cock into Delilah's vagina and began pounding away with rapid strokes.

Chapter 336 I won't back down

In the Utessar Kingdom, in a territory located in the kingdom's northern reaches, a magnificent castle stood tall.

Inside that castle, in a richly furnished study, a father and son were deep in discussion.

"Father, what do we do now? The king's conscription order arrived in our territory this afternoon."

The speaker was Torin Ashvale, son of Earldom Falkor Ashvale.

"What else can we do?" Falkor replied. "We must obey. We'll rally our knights and militia as best we can. Our territory is on the far outskirts of the human kingdom. Under normal circumstances, we do well trading with other races, and the big nobles see us as a juicy target. But now that war's upon us, look how fast they all run off."

Earldom Falkor Ashvale stood by the study window, gazing at the city he'd long called his own. His tone carried both complaint and worry. He couldn't help but ache inside, knowing his land would soon be engulfed by a conflict sweeping across the entire continent.

His family had spent four generations, from their first ennoblement to the present, pouring heart and soul into building all this. And now, with war imminent, its prosperity was already fading. Even the people were trickling away.

"Daddy," Torin said, "a large-scale conflict is unavoidable. We should plan for our family's future... have a backup plan."

He fixed his eyes on his father, concern evident in his gaze. Torin knew full well the blood and sweat his father and grandfather had invested in this hard-won territory. Now, not only was it being pressed into military service—it was set to become a frontline. After the war, everything here could be reduced to rubble.

Yet Torin Ashvale's ambitions ran even deeper than his father's. He wanted to become a Grand Duke... maybe even the king. Because he, too, was a survivor.

"Daddy, what if we just—"

"Are you out of your mind?" Falkor cut him off with a furious roar before Torin could finish. "Have you forgotten your oath when they granted you your barony? Or how you swore your knightly vows?"

Torin stayed silent; he had no wish to butt heads with his father in a moment of rage—at least, not yet.

As for the baronial ceremony, who really cared about some dusty old pledge? Torin knew that many of the lords who'd elevated him were bloated aristocrats who spent their days feasting and whoring. What right did they have to be called nobles?

"Go on, leave me be," Falkor grumbled. "Our family worked far too hard to get where we are. We can't take the wrong path now. Follow the king's order, and we won't go astray."

He shooed his son away and remained in the study, lost in gloomy thoughts. The Ashvale earldom wasn't strictly hereditary; each time a title needed passing down, an inspection team would come, and they were a pack of hungry wolves you couldn't easily satiate.

Now, after much maneuvering, he'd at least gotten his son ennobled, and a brighter future had seemed within reach—until war arrived and threatened to send the territory hurtling back to square one.

Outside the study, Torin Ashvale departed with a serious expression. Of course, if their family's land could ride out this storm, that would be ideal—it would remain the cornerstone of his future rise to power. But current events suggested that, before long, this place would be demolished. Sticking around for that would be disastrous.

"Still, I won't back down," he muttered. "Let this tidal wave wash away those old factions one by one. Meanwhile, I'll rise from the chaos."

People with grand ambitions are never afraid of turbulent times. And Torin Ashvale's much-awaited time of chaos was nearly at hand.

...



Far to the north, in the ogre territory, Orion received a request from Lord Jorik's messenger to come to a temporary command center.

By the time he arrived, Gareth, Ironhoof, and the two-headed ogre Bluehide were already there.

Lord Jorik looked both solemn and excited, and he kept silent until Orion was seated. Orion could tell that Jorik was forcing himself to remain composed.

"My ancestor has sent me important news of the war," Jorik began. "Right now, the north-south conflict on this continent is split into three fronts: the eastern region, the central region, and the western region. We're in the western region."

He took a measured breath. "My ancestor's subordinates are handling the eastern region, while a draconic warrior, Zephyros, also serving my ancestor, oversees the central region. As for the western region, that's under my watch."

Lord Jorik's voice trembled slightly, a sign of his excitement.

"Lord Jorik," spoke the two-headed ogre, who looked simple-minded at first glance, "this so-called supervision—can we really command those who march south?"

"My ancestor has sized up the current situation. Those uncooperative lords are only interested in looting food and resources. There's no need to fuss over them. If we successfully invade the southern

territories, that bunch will be green with envy. Then they'll lend their own strength and be our cannon fodder, scouting the path for us."

Silence fell over the command center as each lord weighed Jorik's words, waiting for him to continue.

"Based on my ancestor's reports, the faction blocking us in the west is the Blood Elves. They're on friendly terms with the humans and have carved up the lush southern lands together. Our main objective is to tie down the Blood Elves so they can't spare any reinforcements for the central or eastern fronts."

Orion frowned. That final bit implied the true main battlefields might lie in the central or eastern regions, not here. But on second thought, that might be a good thing—this area could be less hazardous.

Just then, the smaller of Bluehide's two heads spoke again. "Honorable Lord Jorik, I think our war may be starting sooner than we expected. I've just gotten word from our people down south: Lokiviria's insectoids are in a fierce battle with the boarfolk. And by my reckoning, the insectoids are likely to lose."

Bluehide shrugged. "The boarfolk are formidable, and they breed like crazy, so they've got the numbers to mount a powerful counterattack."

The gathered lords felt a twinge of surprise; the two-headed ogre, who initially seemed dimwitted, was actually far from dumb.

Then again, Orion noticed a telling detail: it was the smaller head doing the talking. Each head had its own distinct tone and demeanor. Possibly one was dull, but the other was quite sharp.

Either way, the war was moving swiftly, and one thing remained certain: nothing about these battles would be simple.

Chapter 337 Who's our enemy?

"Bluehide, are you suggesting our next opponents will be the boarfolk?"

Gareth immediately seized on the key point and asked the question outright.

Bluehide nodded and spoke earnestly:

"A huge number of foreign races are pushing south. I think the Blood Elves are definitely prepared!

"The boarfolk are basically a subordinate race bred by the Blood Elves. They not only have Legendary-level powerhouses of their own, but they might also get help from the Blood Elves.

"If Lokiviria tries to invade boarfolk territory alone, they'll suffer heavy losses.

"That's why, in the western battlefront, I still suggest, Lord Jorik, that we pull Lokiviria and the insectoids onto our side. After all, they have a huge population—a perfect source of cannon fodder. And they're tough."

Lord Jorik frowned. It wasn't certain Lokiviria would agree to an alliance, given he hadn't done so before.

"Insectoid is a race that admires strength," Bluehide continued. "I think I can give it a shot. After all, I once beat him so badly he was picking his teeth up off the floor!"

Obviously, Bluehide's last comment was meant to flex his own accomplishments.

"I support Lord Bluehide's proposal," Orion said at that moment, stepping forward to speak. He appreciated Bluehide's idea. "Lord Jorik, right now, the stronger we are, the better. Any lord with real power is worth us approaching. It'll reduce our overall losses."

Lord Jorik's gaze swept around the group. Picking up on Orion's words, he continued, "All right then. We'll leave the task of recruiting Insectoid race to Lord Bluehide. Next, let's talk about how we're going to handle the boarfolk for this battle..."

...

The meeting went on for three days. After all, this operation called for several armies from very different races to fight side by side, and hammering out the details took time.

During these days of discussions, Orion and the other lords were occupied, but his subordinates were already taking action.

Delilah, for one, didn't struggle to find anyone she set her mind on meeting. In this season, the southern lands had no snow. So the only place covered in snow was Lumi's stomping ground.

"Well, my friend," Delilah said as she stepped into the swirling white, letting a snowflake land on her palm, "aren't you going to come out and greet me?"

She blew lightly on the flake, scattering it, and spoke with a playful smile.

"What do you want from me?"

A gust of snow-laden wind whirled by, and Lumi appeared amid the swirls of snow.

Looking up at the vigilant figure hanging in midair, Delilah took in Lumi's beauty—a stark contrast to the succubus kind of allure.

Lumi possessed a pure, pristine loveliness, while Delilah's was all seductive temptation. They are two opposite extremes.

"Life in a big makeshift camp—I don't know many other women here," Delilah said. "It's hard to find someone decent for conversation. But you... I wouldn't mind sharing a few words with you."

She didn't reveal her true motive. Instead, she chattered about casual topics that might interest women.

"You may be powerful," Lumi replied, "but I have no interest in you."

With that, Lumi's form vanished back into the snow. Delilah stood there in the swirling white for a moment, then let out a gentle laugh and turned away.

As far as she was concerned, that Lumi had agreed to meet at all was already progress. Some relationships, and the emotions that come with them, need time to grow.

Compared to Lumi's aloof stance, another woman managed to surprise Delilah: Soraya of the Scorpion Tribe. Without any invitation from anyone, Soraya strolled into the Stoneheart Horde's makeshift camp looking to chat with Delilah.

They had crossed paths a few times in the past, so their conversation flowed freely. They didn't hold back, talking about everything from the invasion of Thunderwood Forest to the details of their personal experiences back then—even going so far as to ask Delilah how it felt making love with a giant.

Over time, Soraya and Delilah became close friends. However, once the meeting ended and Orion returned to his own camp, Soraya had already gone back to her people.

"The war has begun."

Those were the first words Orion spoke upon entering his tent, making all his subordinates perk up with interest.

"Lord, who's our enemy?"

The question came from Rockwell, who, unable to contain his curiosity, raised a large hand to rub his own head.

Orion paid little heed. "We'll be up against the boarfolk first, but after that, we'll face races like the gnomes, beastmen, and giants!"

At Orion's opening mention, everyone seemed enthusiastic—until he mentioned giants. Right away, the mood turned grim.

"I just got this intel," Orion went on. "That unknown tribe of giants might be from Starveil or Shadowabyss. Neither are as large and muscular as my own kin, and they both have tusks and pointed ears. For some reason, they're in league with the Blood Elves. That's just my hunch—we'll have to see them in person to know for sure."

Despite keeping a calm demeanor, Orion felt inwardly astonished. He hadn't thought the southern region would harbor a giant lineage of any significant size.

According to Bluehide's descriptions of these two types of giants, Orion had promised he'd personally handle them without outside help. The other lords, sensing his resolve, readily agreed.

"Let's set aside the giants for now," Orion said. "Once we actually run into them, I'll make the call. For now, it's the boarfolk we need to worry about. We'll deploy 200K of our small spiders from the Horde.

That should earn us some gains once the fight's done. I want our five cannon fodder troops to capture as many boarfolk as possible after we succeed in the invasion."

Delilah, Onyx, and the others nodded in agreement. Orion then laid out a few more operational details, explaining the current situation in full.

When they heard there were dozens of northern lords caught up in this growing conflict, they couldn't help but gasp. This north-south war involved so many lives that one could hardly keep track.

"Remember," Orion cautioned. "Once the battle starts, stick together. No going off on your own. Anyone who fights solo will be expelled from the Horde. Nobody is allowed to rescue a lone wolf."

His tone held a grave finality. Orion was clearly worried that his subordinates might underestimate the battlefield's brutality and cause unnecessary casualties.

Now, the war was set in motion—and any misstep could be fatal.

Chapter 338 Rose Knight Regiment

Utessar Kingdom.

The headquarters of the Rose Knight Regiment.

This was the domain of the Kingdom's eldest princess, Ava. Arthur, the embodiment of "Honor," served as her guardian knight.



"Your Highness, the king's orders have come through. We're commanded to depart for the front lines in three days."

Ava was a blond beauty—though "princess" might be less fitting than "dauntless female knight." She cared little for perfumes or fancy dresses, preferring horses and swordsmanship instead.

Long ago, her strong bond with the king, her brother, had prompted him to grant her permission to form this protective cavalry regiment. No one had expected it to flourish so greatly, but now the Rose Knight Regiment had become a formidable military force in the imperial capital.

"Arthur, do you think we'll die on the front lines?"

Princess Ava wore a gleaming silver outfit that clung to her figure, a sight that made Arthur's heart pound.

"Your Highness, I have no way to predict that," he said solemnly. "But I promise you this: if anyone is to die first, it'll be me. I swear I will keep you safe."

In his mind, Arthur silently repeated the words he dared not speak out loud: "My love for you is deathless." A future where he might marry Princess Ava was more than 70% likely, given his status as her guardian knight.

Ava gazed at him, reading his stalwart yet principled nature. If only he had a bit more audacity, a bit more romantic flair, they might already be husband and wife. Unfortunately, the outbreak of war was pushing everything else aside.

"So," she said, "besides my brother's orders, is there another reason you've come?"

A faint smile graced Ava's face as she regarded her guardian knight. Arthur never hid anything from her; he was straightforward and honest in her presence.

"Your Highness, I want to introduce you to a friend of mine. I'd like him to join the Rose Knight Regiment."

Ava didn't immediately agree. She was intrigued. She knew Arthur's standards for people were sky-high, and he was cautious about their character.

"Sir Arthur, who is this friend you're recommending?"

Her curious smile showed no signs of being concealed.

"His name is Galahad, Your Highness. Some folks, misguidedly, call him the 'Coal Knight.'"

"Ha! 'Coal Knight'? That's a strange nickname," Ava said with a laugh. "Kind of rings a bell, though!"

Arthur's mood dimmed at her words.

"Sir Arthur, I mean no offense to your friend," Ava assured him. "This 'Coal Knight' has certainly caught my interest."

Arthur gave a curt nod and spoke in a serious tone. "Your Highness, 'Coal Knight' is just another person's misunderstanding. My friend Galahad is humble, but he's also a knight—just like me."

Only then did Ava's smile fade. She adopted a more earnest look. "Honorable knight, I'll be here at the Rose Knight Regiment headquarters for the next three days, waiting for Galahad to arrive."

Arthur bowed with a knight's salute and took his leave.

---

Elsewhere in the city, in a blacksmith shop...

With the final clang of the hammer, a burst of flame flared from the blade in Garrett's hands, shining with a dazzling glow.

"Your sword is finally done."

As that fiery glow subsided, Galahad's sword once again looked plain and ordinary. Yet the gemstone in its hilt suggested it was anything but mundane.

"Garrett, thank you."

"Tomorrow, I'm joining the Rose Knight Regiment; I'll be heading to the front with 'Honor.' If I fall in battle, then this is our final farewell."

Sheathing his sword, Galahad allowed it to appear wholly unremarkable. Garrett stared, wanting to say something, but no words came.

"Well then, my friend—goodbye. If I come back victorious, I swear I'll treat you to drinks at the tavern!"

Garrett watched him leave the blacksmith's forge, still caught in indecision. By the time he made up his mind and ran out, Galahad had already disappeared.

"I will fight for those who cannot protect themselves!"

"I will help any who ask me for aid!"

"... .."

While the human kingdom was still in the midst of mobilization, the subordinate races outside its territory had already begun their own wars. Orion's forces, for one, had plunged right into the fighting.

The scene before them defied easy description—both awe-inspiring and brutal. The boarfolk stood guard atop the city walls. They had long ears and wide mouths, walked upright, and boasted not only strong bodies but also razor-sharp weapons.

There were two types of boarfolk in every litter, which numbered at least a dozen newborns.

Some were humanoid—able to stand and walk on two legs and possessing greater intellect—while others were beast-like, growing into bigger, burlier adults who fought with ferocious abandon.

The humanoid boarfolk often used their beast-type siblings as mounts. This gave rise to formidable boarfolk cavalry.

And right now, Orion was watching those very cavalry charge at his troops. Massive boar-knights tore through insectoids, sand-scorpions, snow wolves, and small spiders, stamping them into the dirt.

At last, when the little spiders spat webs and wove them into hindering barriers, the momentum shifted. The sand-scorpions, burrowing from beneath, emerged to strike with venom, and one boarfolk after another collapsed.

Then the centaur armies and ogre armies joined the battle, forcing the boarfolk cavalry into dire straits. Farther back, the boarfolk on the city walls began firing crossbow bolts and arrows in a desperate bid to buy time for their cavalry.

"Damn it! Devour those blasted boarfolk!"

The one shouting in fury was the newcomer, the insectoid lord Lokiviria.

Though he had aligned himself with the alliance, he only bothered to show politeness to the ogres. To Jorik, Gareth, Ironhoof, and Orion, Lokiviria wore an expression of lofty indifference. Now, flailing in anger, he made Orion, Jorik, Gareth, and Ironhoof exchange glances, each secretly amused by his tantrum.

"If we take out these boarfolk knights, their 'Boar City' is ours for the taking!"

Bluehide roared with laughter. He knew all too well how savory boarfolk meat could be. With so many boarfolk living in that city, he was itching for a feast.

"This city has three Legendary-level presences inside," Orion observed calmly. "Should we step out and greet them?"

He was the most sensitive to such power among them, and at his words, all eyes turned his way.

Chapter 339 I wanna smash her tits

"Orion, are you absolutely certain there are three Legendary level beings in there?"

"I'm sure of it."

The question came from Jorik. When Orion fixed him with a serious look and nodded, everyone else frowned—Lokiviria and Bluehide included.

"Well, I only sense two Legendary-level energies," Lokiviria said, sounding less than pleased. He wasn't doubting Orion per se; rather, he was worried that whoever was hiding in the shadows was already stronger than both him and Bluehide.

They were all smart enough to know Orion wouldn't lie about something like this, especially on a battlefield.

"The blood elf use secret techniques to mask energy signatures. This is no surprise," Bluehide remarked. "However, I suspect that the hidden lord among them may have reached upper Legendary-level. That would explain why neither Lokiviria nor I can pick up his presence."

Judging from the logical deduction, it was clearly the smaller of Bluehide's two heads doing the talking.

"Who cares if they're upper Legendary," Lord Jorik growled, his voice cold and bloodthirsty. "It's six against three—nothing to be afraid of."

"Three Legendary-level foes, with one possibly at upper Legendary..." Lokiviria added, "We'll have to attack together and probe their strength. Once we figure them out, we can decide how to split up and take them on."

Though arrogant, Lokiviria wasn't stupid.

"I agree with testing them."

"Me too."

"Count me in..."

Orion also agreed. Since both armies' cannon-fodder units had already clashed on the outskirts, he was dying to know just what the southern lords were truly capable of.

---

Boar City was once known by a far prettier name—Whitecloud City—but most people now called it Boar City, after the boarfolk who ruled there: Boarion.

At present, though, Boarion wasn't up on the walls directing his troops. He stood instead atop a watchtower alongside two cloaked Blood Elves.



"Ms. Elanor, the enemy is too numerous. Boar City won't withstand them for long!"

Truth be told, Boarion sounded nervous. However, it wasn't the fate of his people he feared—he was anxious about saving his own skin.

The boarfolk were a subordinate race of the Blood Elves, and a while back, they'd already sent a batch of boarfolk infants away from the city. Even if every single boar here died, enough food would let them breed back to full strength in almost no time. Boarion, meanwhile, was bound by contract with the Elf King, who needed boarfolk as cannon fodder to drain the invading races from the north. Boarion had no say in the matter.

Added to that, Boarion had already sensed the six Legendary-level auras from afar; he was terrified he might lose his life before this was over.

"Ms. Elanor, shouldn't we get out of here now?" he pleaded. "If we wait until they realize what's happening, we might not make it out."

But it was already too late.

"They're here," said the Blood Elf, Elanor, her voice calm. "Don't be afraid, Boarion. As long as I'm around, nobody will hurt you."

Elanor was the same Blood Elf who once escorted an Elder to the human kingdom to negotiate their alliance. Her friend, the dwarf Harbek, was currently locked in fierce combat on the eastern front.

Elanor's reason for heading to Boar City with a fellow elf was simple: reconnaissance. She wanted to size up these six lords invading from the west. Nobody else could easily gather such intel except the Elf King and Elanor herself. Once they had a read on these lords' abilities, the Blood Elves could arrange their troops—or decide whether they needed to help reinforce the embattled central front.

"When the fighting starts, don't stray from my line of sight."

Zip!

Crack!

No sooner had Elanor finished speaking than Orion's spear and Ironhoof's flaming arrow streaked through the sky, tearing the air with a shrill roar.

She didn't flinch. Smoothly drawing the bow from her back, Elanor loosed two arrows in quick succession. Red-fletched projectiles flew with absolute precision, intercepting and extinguishing Orion's spear and Ironhoof's firebolt.

Boom! Boom!

Thunderous explosions rocked the sky, but the ground battle raged on, unaffected by the clash of Legendary-level fighters high above.

War would not wait simply because the strongest combatants were trading blows.

Zip!

Crack!

The probing attacks continued. Orion and Ironhoof unleashed another volley—the spear and the flaming arrow once again arrowed straight for Elanor.

Eyes narrowing, Elanor pulled back her bow, this time releasing four arrows in one fluid motion. Two of them met the spear and the firebolt, knocking them off course, while the remaining pair flew straight at Orion and Ironhoof.

However, before either arrow could land, Bluehide and Lokiviria stepped in.

Bluehide slammed one giant spiked club down on the arrow headed for Ironhoof, causing the air to wail around it. Lokiviria opted for brute force, swinging a punch through the air and blasting the arrow to pieces.

"Looks like she really is upper Legendary-level," Lokiviria snarled. "Hey, that big ogre—team up with me."  
"

"Okay, let's crush her! I wanna smash her tits!"

From the roughness in Bluehide's tone, it was plainly the slower of his two heads in charge right now—dull-witted maybe, but every bit as dangerous in a fight.

"Orion, you and I will tag-team that boarfolk lord," Jorik ordered. Seeing Lokiviria and Bluehide move to take on the upper Legendary Blood Elf, Jorik instinctively turned to Orion to deal with Boarion.

As for the remaining Blood Elf, Gareth and Ironhoof would take on that one.

Roar!

With a thunderous sound, Jorik shifted into his draconic form: a Glacial Dragon spreading its wings across the sky. A rush of awe-inspiring dragon power washed over the battlefield, making weaker creatures on both sides shudder in fear.

Crack!

Before Jorik could close in on the boarfolk, Orion hurled spear after spear, each throw meant to disrupt the defenders' rhythm. The instant Jorik's Glacial Dragon form reached the enemy lines, Orion finally paused his barrage.

He glanced at the other two battles, where combatants were already locked in furious conflict.

Then Orion drew his trident, the Flame of Will, and charged straight for boarfolk Lord Boarion.

Orion activated Swift Charge. While Boarion dodged the Glacial Dragon's claw attack, Orion seized that brief opening to launch a surprise strike from behind.

Boom!

Boarion's defense was nothing short of bizarre. A few spines suddenly sprouted from his back, shooting out like toxic needles. Not only were they treacherous, but they also forced Orion to halt his ambush.

"Are those boar bristles?"

Orion swept his trident wide, knocking aside the needles with ease. Peering more closely, he saw they were thick, stiff quills resembling a porcupine's spikes.

Roar!

Lord Jorik unleashed his power at full blast, hurling a chunk of ice-element energy that slammed Boarion backward, sending the boarfolk flying a short distance.

"My turn!"

A flash of killing intent flickered in Orion's eyes. Lifting one hand, he created an Eightfold Spear Barrage, trapping Boarion inside.

"WAAAGH!"

With a roar, Orion raised his trident and stabbed down viciously at Boarion.

"Ms. Elanor, help! Save me!"

At the critical moment, Boarion shielded his vital areas. Quills as stiff as steel needles burst from his body, all angling in one direction and forming a rough, layered barrier—something like a spiked shield.

Rumble!

Blood magic and lightning clashed together in a barrage of blasts.

Screeech!

Nine harsh shredding sounds rang out in quick succession. Off in the distance, Elanor wielded a longsword infused with supernatural power, driving back Lokiviria and Bluehide, who had been double-teaming her. Then she drew a bow, knocked nine arrows at once, and fired, forcing all six of the Legendary-level beings—including Orion—to retreat.

"Fall back!"

Even as Elanor spoke, she spun on her heel and tore off southward. The male Blood Elf who'd come with her darted away as well, fleeing the battlefield. Boarion, too, made use of Orion's brief stumble to slip out of the Eightfold Spear Barrage.

"Running, huh? Not so fast!"

Though Orion had been forced back by that sudden volley of arrows—briefly losing control over the Eightfold Spear Barrage—the array itself hadn't vanished.

"Stay right where you are!"

Orion urged the floating spears back into action. Their shapes shifted instantly into tridents, growing far more lethal the moment they transformed. Then they shot straight at Boarion, tracking his every move.

Splurt!

Boarion left an arm behind in his flight. Using the backward thrust, he turned into a streak of blood-red light and managed to escape the battlefield.

"Should we chase them down?"

Gareth's question made everyone glance around at one another, then turn their eyes to Lord Jorik. He looked excited, clearly tempted to pursue the wounded Boarion—taking out a lord at that moment seemed too good to pass up.

"No, we can't!"

Sensing Jorik's eagerness, Bluehide spoke up, explaining his view.

"And why not?"

Reverting to his human form, Jorik strode over to Orion. He'd grown a bit fond of Orion after seeing the giant choose all the right moments to strike and almost finishing off a rival lord.



"Lord Jorik, the main part of this war is still raging down below. All we did was a test run. Our objective in that skirmish is fulfilled.

"As you've all seen, that Blood Elf woman is crazy tough," Bluehide's smaller head continued, speaking with calm clarity.

"He's right," Lokiviria said. "She fended off both of us, then still managed to rescue her ally. That puts her at upper Legendary-level for sure. Not to mention, she's handy with both a sword and a bow. If we keep chasing, there's a chance we'll get split up and picked off one by one."

Orion and crew knew they only had the upper hand because of their numbers. Elanor clearly hadn't expected to face six Legendary-level opponents working in perfect unison. If they went after her now, their varying speeds could scatter the group. That might give Elanor the chance to kill a couple of them.

"I think this all worked out fine," Lokiviria went on. "Let's capture Boar City. Our armies can rest here—and feast!"

Orion gave a quiet nod; Lokiviria's analysis was right on the mark. He was an arrogant insectoid, but definitely no fool.

"Orion, what do you think?"

Lord Jorik turned to him. The other lords also looked his way. He might've been the only one to nearly take down that fleeing enemy just now, so they were inclined to trust his judgment.

"I agree with Lokiviria and Bluehide—no sense chasing a cornered foe. Boar City is right in front of us. Once we seize it, our troops can rest before we head further south. Besides, if we leave this place unprotected and some hidden Legendary-level being sneaks in to attack, that could be disastrous."

Everyone nodded, seeing the sense in Orion's words. If their armies got wiped out, even conquering a huge territory would be worthless.

At length, Lord Jorik regained his composure. "Since we're on the same page, let's talk about how we'll carve up the spoils of Boar City!"

Eyes brightened all around. As the seat of a lord, Boar City had to have some worthwhile loot. Even if Boarion served under the Blood Elves, Boar City was richer than any place up north.

"I don't mind taking fewer resources if I can have more of the boarfolk themselves," Orion declared. "I need slaves. My little spiders also need extra food stock."

Nobody much objected. After all, in most of their eyes, the boarfolk were nothing but slaves—or convenient meat. Lokiviria and Bluehide, in particular, regarded them more as a savory meal than anything else.

"For fairness sake, let's all head inside together and take a look around," Ironhoof said at last. He'd been quiet up until then but spoke now that the group had hammered out a plan for sharing the spoils.

Orion glanced at Ironhoof with a level of caution. Truth be told, he didn't fully trust him yet—but with their forces on the move, it was time to enter Boar City.

## Chapter 340 Staying means certain death

Giant City—despite the name, it actually belonged to the gnomes.

Blood Elf Elanor arrived here with boarfolk Boarion and another Blood Elf in tow, all of them fleeing from the north.

"Ms. Elanor, this way!"

King Brimli of Giant City made a welcoming gesture, guiding Elanor and the other two into a massive palace.

"Ms. Elanor, what's the situation in Whitecloud City these days?"

The gnome king's question left Elanor impassive, though Boarion's expression darkened. After all, Boarion was missing an arm—clear evidence of what had happened back in Whitecloud City.

"Hmph!"

There was no way boarfolk Boarion could hide his suspicion that Gnome Brimli was just rubbing it in.

"It's not looking good," Elanor said. "For some reason, the invading races from the north have banded together like glue, and there are way too many of them."

She fixed her gaze on Brimli. "Boar City has fallen. Giant City is next. I suggest you take your best troops and your people out of here. We'll make a stand together in the Blood Elves' City of Blessings."

Gnome Brimli knitted his brows. "Ms. Elanor, why not defend Giant City instead? I have countless subjects, a legion of ballistae, and a lot of arrow towers..."

Elanor shook her head calmly. "There are six Legendary-level beings in that coalition, plus dozens more at Alpha-level. Giant City's walls won't hold. Brimli, take your elites and your nobles—follow me out."

Still, Brimli refused to give up so easily. He tried to press the point. "What about everyone else? Can we evacuate all of my people?"

Another shake of Elanor's head, plus a sigh. "There's not enough time."

"Ms. Elanor, are the invaders really that strong? With me, boarfolk Boarion, Faelar, and you, we'd have four top fighters. Can't we hold them off?"

Truth be told, Brimli's question made Elanor waver for a moment. But reason quickly clamped down on any such idea. Memories of how she'd been double-teamed by Lokiviria and Bluehide—and how Orion nearly killed Boarion—left her edgy and frustrated.

"When did those northern races get so freakin' strong?" she muttered under her breath. "Even if I can hold off two at once, it's still not enough. Boarion almost died just the other day. And there are too many of them. Gnomes alone can't block that kind of force."

Elanor paused, then glanced at the other Blood Elf. "Faelar, pass the news back to our people. Tell our king to be ready for a defensive counterattack."

"Yes, Ms. Elanor!"

Gnome Brimli watched them, a flash of regret and dejection in his eyes. Such is the curse of being a subordinate race; at crucial moments, you don't get to call the shots.

"Ma'am, I need to go make some preparations," Brimli said. "Otherwise there's gonna be chaos."

Elanor gave a brief nod, her face as blank as ever. Given the current situation, much like the boarfolk, a large chunk of the gnomes would be left behind. They'd serve as a rear-guard distraction to buy time for everyone else to evacuate.

As for Elanor herself, she had zero pity for other races. She knew perfectly well how this world worked: the strong devour the weak. That's just how it is.

"Boarion," she said, turning, "how's your injury?"

She needed to know if Boarion could still fight effectively. If not, they'd lose a major power.

"Ms. Elanor, I'm good!" Boarion boasted. "Once I get back to the City of Blessings, I'll chop off one of my brother's arms and have it grafted onto me. Give me half a month, and I'll be back in peak shape."

That was the beauty of being boarfolk—they multiplied like crazy and boasted impressive regenerative powers.

"Glad to hear it."

Elanor moved to the window and gazed northward, toward Boar City. Her eyes narrowed slightly.

"Those six lords are deadly at both close and long range, and their attacks pack a punch—plus, they've got a Glacial Dragon. A dragon... could it be connected to that White Dragon I heard about?"

...

Boar City was drowning in a twisted kind of celebration. The moment Orion stepped inside, he heard a bone-chilling chorus of chewing noises. Insectoids, ogres, cave spiders, snow wolves, serpentfolk, and scorpions were all feasting on boarfolk flesh.

By comparison, the centaurs were a bit more reserved—though not by much. The centaurs only ate the boarfolk's internal organs. After finishing one, they moved on to the next, clearly enjoying themselves all the more if it was still alive.

"Everyone, this is just the beginning," Lord Jorik called out with a hint of excitement in his voice. A great victory in the opening battle had left him itching to reclaim all the dragon territory he'd lost.

"This definitely isn't the real south," another chimed in. "Once we break through the boarfolk lands, we'll hit the gnome territory, then the giants. Finally, we reach the Blood Elves' domain—that's where things really get juicy, and where we can all carve out our share."

"Yeah," said Bluehide. "And even juicier than that is the human Utessar Kingdom. Now that's prime pickings."

While speaking, Bluehide's smaller head used both hands to blow at the drifting clouds of smoke, as if blowing bubbles.

All of a sudden, Earthshaker hurried over to Orion. "Lord, the prophet over there just ran into some trouble."

"Who's the conflict with?" Orion frowned, about to say something, when an alpha-level insectoid also jogged up, looking agitated.

Earthshaker glanced at the insectoid. Orion raised a hand to calm Earthshaker, signaling him to wait.

Just then, Lokiviria himself strolled up, cutting Orion off mid-question. "Orion, my people say that's their food. Food is fair game. If your folks can't get it, then you'd better move on."

Lokiviria let out a sinister laugh, his tone dripping with menace. He was just doing business the way his kind always did.

Orion's gaze flashed cold, but he said nothing. After a moment, he merely nodded, agreeing with Lokiviria's perspective.

"You heard him—whoever's got the bigger fists wins the food."

Turning his head with a faint smile, Orion looked at Earthshaker.

Earthshaker hung his head, muttered a dispirited "Got it," and shuffled away.

As soon as Earthshaker and that Alpha-level insectoid were gone, Jorik, Gareth, Ironhoof, and Bluehide all burst out laughing, joking as they walked that food didn't really need to be fought over since it was there for everyone.

Of course, these jokers hadn't spoken up a moment earlier—now they were all buddy-buddy, and Orion could tell they didn't have the purest intentions.

Meanwhile, across the city, Onyx, Rockwell, and Slagor were in a tense standoff with a few hundred boarfolk knights and some insectoids.



Having received Earthshaker's update, all three showed a glint of savagery in their eyes. The insectoid troops across from them looked just as bloodthirsty.

"Charge!"

Nobody could say who shouted it first, but both sides clashed in a wild brawl. After a bloody scuffle, the Stoneheart Horde—who had activated Blood Sharing—emerged victorious, and Onyx took those few hundred boarfolk knights under his own cannon-fodder command.

Scenes just like this were playing out all over Boar City. In the northern coalition, every race had its own customs and approach, so scuffles were inevitable.

However, with Orion and the other five Legendary-level powerhouses camped here, nothing got too far out of hand. Any dispute that reached those six ended the same way: whomever was stronger got first dibs on the loot.

In the early stages, Orion more or less shrugged off those incidents. He chalked it up to differing ways of doing things. But as the bickering and infighting ramped up, he suddenly realized this was how internal strife began—this was a recipe for disaster.

Still, even understanding the problem, he couldn't stop it. Each of the six lords was technically on equal footing yet might as well have been miles apart in temperament. Unless they could find some fair, balanced way of splitting spoils—and there wasn't one—violence over loot was bound to spiral.

They hadn't even fought that many battles yet, and already folks were at each other's throats over spoils. That was not a good sign.

Right then, Orion felt any grand hopes of conquering the south slipping away.

"If that's how things are gonna be," he thought, "the best I can do is steer clear of trouble and grab as many resources as I can."

...

Utessar Kingdom.

Within the Falkor Ashvale Earldom.

"Father, we need to leave here and take everything to the royal capital!"

Torin Ashvale was seething inside. He found his father's stubbornness downright maddening. Earl Falkor Ashvale would rather die where he stood than abandon the land his family had built up over many generations.

"Go, Torin," Falkor said, slumping back in his chair, exhaustion lining his face. "Take the family's gold and leave."

The central region's war had already spread at a terrifying speed, and in just a few days, the fighting would reach this territory, turning it into a slaughterhouse.

Torin Ashvale did want to leave, but not empty-handed. Sure, his father was letting him take all the gold—but without troops or territory, Torin would hold no sway back in the royal capital. So if he left, it had to be with both money and an army.

He walked behind Falkor's chair and gently massaged his father's shoulders, his voice soft and convincing.

"Daddy, please. If we stay any longer, the invaders will arrive. Every soul here will be butchered. Blood will run in the streets. If we go now, we can start over!"

But Falkor merely stayed quiet, letting his son knead the tension from his muscles. Only after a long silence did he murmur the kingdom's classic vow of fealty:

"When foes appear, face them without fear... remain brave and true..."

That was Falkor's reply—his way of refusing his son once again.

Splurt!

"Fueled by integrity... unbowed even in death..."

Falkor never got to finish. A blade was suddenly pressed to his neck.

"You... how dare you..."

Splurt!

Torin didn't speak a word. Another stab finished his father off. Falkor Ashvale was gone for good.

"Father, I tried to warn you many times, but you refused me over and over." Torin's voice was calm.

"If I'd been the earl, our family would've risen to dominate this kingdom long ago. Rest in peace, Father."

That very night, news quickly spread that Earl Falkor Ashvale had been assassinated by enemy scouts. Baron Torin Ashvale took over the earldom's reins and seized total control.

In the study, Earl Falkor's body had already been laid to rest in a coffin. Torin gazed out into the darkness of the north, his mind awash with conflicting thoughts.

"I can't believe I actually killed my own father."

Torin Ashvale was a "survivor" who retained memories of a previous life on Earth—where he had a father of his own. And while he respected Falkor Ashvale, he never felt a deep bond with him.

So despite feeling some pangs of remorse, he was also grimly excited by what he'd done. It was a strange, tangled mix. He treated this world like a giant game—no laws, no morals, no rules. So why hold back?

"Now that I've got the earldom's army, I'll rebuild the Ashvale family bigger and stronger than ever! First, though, I need to bail on this place—staying means certain death."

At dawn the next day, Baron Torin Ashvale left the territory his family had nurtured for generations, taking with him all the household's assets and the earldom's troops.

A lot had gone down the previous night. Falkor Ashvale's personal guards and high-ranking officers were accused of colluding with the enemy and were executed on the spot. Ruthless and cunning, Torin's purge kept the rest of the knights and militiamen too scared to step out of line.

"Royal capital, here I come!" he declared under his breath. "I can't wait to see how you'll treat us 'cowardly nobles' once faced with a horde of invaders."