

Titan King 421

Chapter 421: Bloodmoon Clan

"Mentor, I can sense that Mogash isn't weak at all. He's hardly inferior to the other giant younglings."

"But I can't figure out why he couldn't even withstand a single attack from me. Did he lose on purpose?"

Orion gave a faint smile and extended his hand, causing the Bloodthirsty Trident behind Rolan to fly straight into his grasp.

"This weapon used to be mine. That orc youngling was armed with nothing but a pile of scrap metal—what right did he have to beat you?"

Orion swung the Bloodthirsty Trident a few times, savoring the familiar, comfortable feeling in his hand.

"I'll hold on to the Bloodthirsty Trident for now. Once you've finished this training, I'll give it back to you."

With those words, Orion placed the Bloodthirsty Trident into his storage ring and tossed a plain trident to Rolan.

To be honest, it was indeed a bit unfair for Rolan to use a hero-level weapon against the various tribes' younglings.

"Please believe me, Mentor. Next time, I will defeat those younglings honorably."

Orion pressed his palm against his forehead, his mouth twitching slightly. The straightforwardness so common to the Giant tribe clearly ran in Rolan's veins, too.

Orion pondered for a moment, then spoke earnestly.

"Even if you had the advantage in weapons, a victory is still a victory."

"Rolan, on any battlefield, in any fight, using every possible method to secure victory is in itself a fair way to win."

Rolan gave a quick nod, looking as though he understood.

"Mentor, your disciple understands!"

Inwardly, Orion scoffed quietly: "You're still so young—how could you truly understand? Maybe once you've grown a bit more and faced real dangers, you'll grasp what I mean."

"Dace, how far is the next tribe from here?" Orion turned and asked Dace about their next destination.

"My lord, next up is the Bloodmoon Clan."

"At our current pace, we'll reach the valley where they reside in about seven or eight days."

"How large is this Bloodmoon Clan?"

"..."

Stoneheart City, on the fourth floor of the Mysterious Tavern.

The Mysterious Tavern has five floors in total. The first floor is a public space, but entry requires meeting one condition:

Only those who have reached at least hero level in strength may set foot inside the Mysterious Tavern.

Of course, the tavern's service staff do not fall under this rule.

Accordingly, the second through fourth floors are reserved for Alpha-level, Legendary-level, and Arch Lord (somewhere between Legendary and Demigod) individuals.

The fifth floor remains the most secretive place, and so far only Orion can go there.

On the second floor of the Mysterious Tavern, the twin sisters Delilah and Lilith sat by a window.

Delilah was dressed in a semi-transparent gauzy robe that concealed her curvaceous figure in soft shadows. The alluring effect was both sexy and understated.

Delilah lifted the small goblet on the table in front of her and downed the wine in one swallow.

"This is the little goblet Orion delivered to the Mysterious Tavern. It doesn't hold much, but it's quite exquisite—very tasteful."

"Don't you want to try the floral wine our tribe brews in the south?"

Lilith remained by the window, her gaze falling on the various buildings still under construction outside.

"No need. There's plenty of it back at the castle."

She neither turned around nor pulled her attention away from the window, making it unclear whether she was referring to the little goblet or that rare floral wine in the tavern.

Delilah laughed softly, not finding her sister's response worth arguing over.

"You asked me to come here. What is this about? Or is there something you want to say?"

Lilith finally pulled her eyes away from the window and cast a sidelong glance at her sister. Looking at the face identical to her own, Lilith felt a certain weariness.

Ever since they were born, Delilah had often surpassed Lilith in many aspects. Even among the elders of the Succubus Tribe, who had weighed in on the contest for the queen's throne, Delilah was the favored choice.

Delilah inclined her head and looked at Lilith with a calm expression.

"Ever since Orion became lord, Soraya, Lumi, and Sylvana have each arrived at his side, becoming his women."

"As the twin sister of the Succubus Queen, doesn't that embarrass you?"

"Or should I say, is your charm fading?"

Lilith remained unmoved by Delilah's teasing. She turned her gaze back to the buildings under construction.

"Aside from those three, there's also that human princess he's been keeping under house arrest. Orion has fucked her, too."

Lilith stayed at the window, her voice cool as she spoke.

"So what if he has? As the Giant King, it's perfectly natural for Orion to have many women."

Delilah laughed again, but the sound didn't carry on for long. Gradually, the air on the Mysterious Tavern's second floor fell silent.

"That Blood Elf has also reached Legendary level. If she becomes Orion's woman, do you realize what the consequences might be?"

No one knew how much time passed before Delilah finally broke the quiet, her voice carrying no more mockery but instead genuine concern.

By the window, Lilith at some point had drawn her attention away from outside. She didn't look at Delilah—her eyes were fixed, unfocused, on the stairs leading up to the third floor.

"The Blood Elves didn't need to send a Legendary-level warrior just to form an alliance. Do you really think Lycanor came only for an alliance?"

"Don't tell me you're that naive?"

Delilah's voice sounded again, softer, like a sister earnestly sharing her thoughts.

Lilith said nothing, remaining quiet.

To Delilah, her sister's silence was proof Lilith felt powerless—the situation was beyond her means to handle.

"Right now, there are only two ways to secure your place here in Stoneheart Horde, as well as that of our Succubus Tribe."

"First, one of us—either you or me—must advance to Legendary level."

"Obviously, that's not terribly practical. Neither you nor I have the chance to reach Legendary level anytime soon."

"Of course, I don't doubt Orion would help us if the conditions are right by giving us a Lord's Stone to aid our progress."

"But that approach is too slow."

Delilah stared dreamily out the window. Lilith, meanwhile, found her gaze drifting to her sister.

A short while later, Delilah sighed and turned away from the view of Stoneheart City.

"The second way is to bear Orion's child, securing the Succubus Tribe's standing through the child."

"Don't deny it. Here in Stoneheart Horde, your status in Orion's eyes is closely tied to our tribe's interests."

Lilith still held her tongue, though her expression grew more forlorn.

Seeing the look in Lilith's eyes, Delilah let go of any urge to mock her sister further.

"It's not your fault. The Succubus Tribe does not blame you."

"But we can't ignore the fact that our tribe's standing in Stoneheart Horde—and in Orion's eyes—is under threat."

"That's what the elders think, and it's how I feel, too."

"I don't need to tell you just how many beautiful women in this world are eager to offer their bodies in exchange for the support of a powerful figure."

"Love is wonderful, but love and shared interests must coincide if you truly want to carve out a place in someone's heart."

Chapter 422: The succubus tribe's kindness

Lilith's eyes showed a flicker of confusion and disorientation, like a little girl who had just been wronged.

Delilah set down her goblet and pushed a wooden box across the table toward Lilith.

"This is a Cupid Fruit. Next time you have sex with Orion, eat it beforehand. Also, make sure he ejaculates inside your vagina—rather than in your mouth or on your breasts."

"Cupid Fruit is an extremely rare magical plant that only produces one piece of fruit every ten years. It can increase the chance of getting pregnant."

"Don't worry. It has no side effects. Our people looked into it from multiple sources."

Lilith stared at the wooden box, her eyes glinting with a brief flash of light.

She reached out and opened the box, catching sight of the Cupid Fruit—a fruit about the size of a strawberry.

"I will remember the Succubus Tribe's kindness."

Lilith could imagine just how many resources the tribe must have mobilized to get their hands on this fruit.

After putting the box away, Lilith cast a glance at Delilah, then turned and left the Mysterious Tavern.

Watching Lilith's departing figure, Delilah curled her lips into a slight, satisfied smile.

Meadowland Plains, Bloodmoon Clan.

The Bloodmoon Clan's settlement lay in a gourd-shaped valley. It was an easily defensible location, with the advantage of terrain—so long as the narrow outer pass was held, the clan remained very difficult to defeat.

Back when Dace captured this place, it was thanks to Thundar's mount, the Dark Fiend, that the attack succeeded.

Now, in the square at the heart of the valley, two young warriors stood facing each other from a distance. They were Steelblade from the Giant Tribe and Zargoth from the Bloodmoon Clan.

Bloodmoon Clan Orcs were easy to spot: they bore two horns on their heads, and their eyes were a dark red, shaped like half or crescent moons.

"My lord," the Bloodmoon Clan chieftain said respectfully to Orion, gazing at the two young fighters in the square with anticipation burning in his eyes. "If the youngling's victory truly exempts us from three years of tribute, is that correct?"

"Feel free to send out your clan's strongest youngling to challenge Rolan or Steelblade. As long as you can defeat either of them, you'll be free from three years of tribute."

Orion shot the chieftain a sidelong glance. The clan's older leader lacked full confidence in Dace's assurances and had insisted on hearing Orion say it himself.

"Thank you, my lord. Your mercy and grandeur shine upon the Bloodmoon Clan!"

Compared to the Warhammer tribe, the Bloodmoon Clan was considerably larger, and its younglings, on the whole, were stronger.

Steelblade's match was about to begin, and Orion had no wish to say more.

When the fight began, there were no underhanded tricks—both younglings charged at each other in a burst of rowdy passion.

Steelblade and Zargoth each bellowed, releasing the power in their bloodlines. Their massive sword and trident collided with a harsh metallic clang. Both warriors pushed forward with every ounce of strength, hoping to overpower the other.

Gradually, both of them pushed so hard that their faces grew crimson with exertion.

Watching from Orion's other side, Rolan, Dace, and a few others frowned at what they saw.

"Steelblade's way too reckless. He's letting the enemy get close, but that's not to his advantage."

Dace, who had switched to using a trident as well—ever since developing a fanatical admiration for Orion—wasn't too impressed by Steelblade's headlong tactics.

"His opponent is wielding a greatsword. Steelblade should be using the trident's reach, keeping some distance to mount his attacks."

With that, Dace gave a quick glance to his friend Otho at his side.

Otho briefly looked at Dace, then cast a careful glance between Orion and Rolan. Seeing no sign of objection from Orion, Otho cleared his throat and followed up on Dace's assessment.

"A forward thrust with a trident is comparatively quick. If Steelblade kept his distance and steadied his assault, he'd have a much better chance of winning."

"But right now, it doesn't look so good."

Dace and Otho aimed their comments at Rolan. With Orion leading this expedition, none of them wanted to see Rolan and Steelblade fail in their challenge.

Standing nearby, Rolan heard their every word. Fixing his eyes on the raging duel, he silently cheered Steelblade on.

"If that were me, how would I quickly defeat Zargoth?"

At the same time, Rolan mentally rehearsed what he would do in Steelblade's place.

Clang!

From the center of the square came another resounding collision. Orion, who had been watching calmly, sighed inwardly with regret—he had already foreseen Steelblade was destined to lose.

Exchanging blow after blow, Steelblade and Zargoth gradually revealed which of the two was stronger. Zargoth landed a solid strike against Steelblade's trident with his greatsword, sending a tremor through Steelblade's hands.

"WAAAGH..."

Sensing that his blow had made an impact, Zargoth gave a furious roar and gripped his sword in both hands. With a swift, whirling slash, he brought the blade crashing down, striking Steelblade and knocking him clear off his feet.

Steelblade's trident clattered to the ground. He landed hard, with blood oozing from both hands.

"Steelblade, are you okay?"

Rolan reacted quickly, rushing into the square the moment he saw Steelblade thrown back.

Orion turned, shooting Dace a look. Dace got the hint and immediately followed.

At the same time, an elder from the Bloodmoon Clan hurried forward as well.

Standing next to Orion, the Bloodmoon Clan chieftain watched the scene, his eyes alight with excitement. Yet the look was soon replaced by concern.

"Steelblade, how do you feel—are you hurt?"

Steelblade glanced down at his bloodied hands, his eyes dark and dejected.

"I lost... I lost..."

He did not respond to Rolan, but simply repeated those words, still seated on the ground.

Seeing Steelblade so disheartened, Rolan felt miserable as well.

That momentary sadness quickly turned to anger.

"Then come and fight me!"

Rolan spun around and shouted at Zargoth.

"Hahaha... Fight you? You think I'd be scared?"

Eyes bloodshot, Zargoth raised his massive sword and aimed it at Rolan, his fighting spirit surging without the slightest hint of fear.

Dace furrowed his brow, propping Zargoth up while looking at Rolan. He was about to turn to Orion for guidance when—

"If he wants to fight, then let him fight."

Orion's cool voice floated over, offering Dace relief.

Meanwhile, the Bloodmoon Clan elder, who had also approached, withdrew to the sidelines.

"Give him some medicinal herbs. It's just a small injury; nothing serious."

Orion shot a glance at Steelblade—who now kept his head low, avoiding Orion's gaze.

"I'll handle that."

Shaman Grulbane stepped forward, channeling his inner power as he pressed his palm against Steelblade's hands. As magical energy flowed, Steelblade's wounds began healing right before their eyes.

"Blood magic healing is the most basic form of magic among our Giant tribe. Watch carefully—this is how you weave the spell."

While treating Steelblade, Grulbane instructed the disciples who had followed him, taking the chance to teach them the proper casting technique.

Chapter 423: Orion's invitation

Seeing Steelblade gradually recover, Orion shifted his gaze back to the square.

"Lord, that orc youngling has gone berserk. Are we really letting them continue the fight?"

Dace approached Orion and quietly offered his warning.

"Why wouldn't we?"

In truth, Orion was a little pleased—Zargoth's talent was quite impressive. Even after going berserk, this kid had remained rational, which wasn't an easy feat.

Orion's reply instantly snuffed out Dace's notion of halting the duel.

"Steelblade, lift your head. Watch Rolan's fight. Look closely at your opponent."

"Think about it. Why did you lose?"

"Your sister—your father—both of them are warriors on the battlefield."

"Do you want to become a coward who can't face failures or mistakes?"

Orion spoke calmly, but the words reached Steelblade's ears like a bolt from the blue, shaking the youngling out of his disheartened state.

"No... I want to be a giant as powerful as my father and sister. I'm no coward!"

Suddenly, Steelblade raised his head, eyes locked on Rolan and Zargoth in the square.

Orion nodded in satisfaction; though Steelblade had lost, his morale remained unharmed.

In the square, Rolan gripped his trident, watching Zargoth closely.

With a thunderous roar, Zargoth brandished his greatsword and attacked first, charging forward.

Just as Zargoth neared Rolan's striking range, Rolan pivoted sideways, taking a big step with his right foot and stabbing his trident directly at Zargoth's waist.

Although Zargoth's slash came swiftly, Rolan's dodge was equally sudden.

Splurt!

The trident pierced Zargoth's waist, tearing through his leather hide and drawing a bright surge of blood. But in his berserk state, pain only doubled Zargoth's fury, fueling his fighting spirit further.

He let out an enraged howl, gritting his teeth and swinging his sword in a vigorous spin aimed at Rolan.

Facing that fearsome blow, Rolan didn't dare block it head-on. He darted hastily backward in retreat.

With a thud, the spot where Rolan had just stood was gouged out by the descending greatsword, forming a gaping pit.

Despite the sword missing its mark, Zargoth's offensive didn't end. He stepped forward, pushing off with his leg and leveraging the sword's momentum for another charge at Rolan.

Retreating, Rolan saw Zargoth barreling toward him. Instead of dodging again, he suddenly flared up with ferocity in his eyes and counterattacked.

Splurt!

Crunch!

Both Rolan and Zargoth stopped dead in their tracks. In that instant of mutual onslaught, the battle was decided.

The next second, Zargoth's greatsword clattered to the ground, and he fell heavily after it. The duel had ended so swiftly that the onlookers barely had time to react.

Rolan sank the butt of his trident into the ground in front of him, propping himself against it while gasping for breath. Truth be told, it was his first time experiencing true fear of death.

That feeling sent chills through him—yet it made his blood surge with excitement.

"Grulbane, go take a look!"

Orion's voice brought everyone back to their senses. Grulbane rushed to the square, releasing twin arcs of blood-colored magic from his hands onto Rolan and Zargoth.

Moments earlier, Rolan's trident had run Zargoth through the heart, yet Zargoth's greatsword had also slashed deep into Rolan's shoulder—nearly severing it.

With a flow of potent blood-based magic surging through them, each young fighter's wounded body drew in the energies of its own bloodline, knitting together the damage.

Only after Grulbane had spent a little time healing both youths did the rest of the Bloodmoon Clan realize what had happened and rush out onto the square.

Moments later, several orcs poured in.

"My lord, they—"

The Bloodmoon Clan's chieftain sounded both anxious and frightened, deeply worried about Zargoth's safety. Of course, he was just as concerned about Rolan—afraid Orion might take out his anger on the Bloodmoon Clan if Rolan suffered a serious injury.

"They'll be all right. Both of them were wounded badly, but Grulbane got to them in time. Their lives aren't in danger."

Hearing this, the chieftain immediately crouched low, kneeling before Orion.

"My lord, your mercy is as boundless as your territory itself."

"We of the Bloodmoon Clan shall follow your radiance forever!"

Orion cast a look at the elderly chieftain, knowing full well the old Orc liked flattery and grand gestures. Orion therefore had little interest in engaging.

After a moment, Grulbane finished up. He and an elderly Orc carried Rolan and Zargoth before Orion.

Orion gazed upon the drained and weary Zargoth, a faint hint of admiration in his expression.

"Zargoth defeated Steelblade, so the Bloodmoon Clan is exempt from three years of tribute."

Upon hearing this pronouncement, the chieftain dropped to his knees again. The surrounding Orcs also sank down in succession.

"Zargoth may have fallen to Rolan, but his valor remains. He fought well."

"Zargoth, you have real talent. If you're willing, come to Stoneheart City and join the youth camp under the Stoneheart Horde."

With those words, Orion tossed a beast fang that landed in Zargoth's hand. It was Orion's invitation. The young Orc's fearless fury had impressed him.

But Zargoth and the chieftain of the Bloodmoon Clan had no idea of the benefits the youth camp offered. They froze in place, not knowing what to say.

"Chieftain, why are you standing there? Hurry and thank the lord for his generosity. Only the finest younglings of each tribe(clan) get to attend the Stoneheart Horde youth camp."

"At the youth camp, there are Alpha-level mentors offering hands-on guidance, as well as advanced martial disciplines available for study. The Horde also provides high-tier magical plants to strengthen the body."

"All of it is free!"

Dace reminded the chieftain, who was both delighted and eager to shower Orion with praises.

"My lord, your generosity—"

Before the chieftain could finish, Orion had already risen and was leading the way out of the valley.

Human Kingdom, Soaring Bird City.

"Viscount, please rest assured. The princess is the jewel of our Human Kingdom. Seeing her safely back truly involves the honor of our nobles. I will do my utmost."

Outside his makeshift tent, Torin was seeing off the knight Lambert, who had come visiting.

Once Lambert entered the temporary encampment to rest, Torin narrowed his eyes and stepped inside the tent.

Mike and Wyatt followed him inside.

"Master, that knight in white armor—he's also a noble?"

"Yes, he's a viscount in the Southern Region."

"So he has his own territory?"

"No. However, his father is an earl with a fief under his control."

Mike and Wyatt exchanged a knowing glance. That explained exactly why Torin had treated Lambert with such politeness.

Chapter 424: Dying isn't what you should fear

"Master, I've got the information. Along with Viscount Godfrey, three knights have entered our camp."

"Among them are two knights of unfathomable power. I suspect they might be Alpha-level fighters."

Torin's eyes widened at the news.

"What? Are you sure they're Alpha-level?"

Wyatt nodded, very seriously. "I'm certain. The moment I got near their tents, they noticed me right away. Their presence was terrifying—I once felt something similar when I encountered an Alpha-level beast."

Torin frowned, looking more and more grim. He himself had yet to advance to Alpha-level, and now there were two unfamiliar Alpha-level experts in his camp. Naturally, he was extremely uneasy.

"Master, are these knights also here to welcome the Princess back?"

Torin nodded silently and began pacing around the tent, pondering the relationship between Lambert and Princess Ava.

"Master, this might be a good thing, don't you think?"

Torin looked up and stared intently at Wyatt, waiting for what he had to say next.

Wyatt stepped closer, speaking in a respectful tone. "Master, think about it. Sir Samuel of the envoy arrived here at our camp a few days ago. Now another noble and two Alpha-level knights have turned up, and there's also the official kingdom envoy that hasn't arrived yet. It's certain they've come to bring the Princess home, and it stands a great chance of succeeding."

"Master, as you said before, there's a good chance we can keep our share when it's time to divide the spoils."

Hearing this, Torin's gloom lifted a little. Inspired by this idea, he then devised a quick plan to build up his territory.

He would take the initiative to share the benefits with the major nobles from the kingdom, in return asking them to sponsor the construction of Soaring Bird City. Of course, he would seek these funds under the guise of "sponsorship." Then, depending on the size of their contributions, he'd allocate portions of Soaring Bird City's land to those nobles.

Though Torin would lose full control over his territory this way, at least he could still manage certain aspects of it. Later, once he became powerful enough, he could gradually reclaim what truly belonged to him.

With that thought, Torin's mood brightened, and his confidence returned.

"Go fetch the good wine I've been saving. Then prepare some roasted meat and dried fruit. Tonight, I'll host a banquet for Sir Samuel and Sir Godfrey. Invite all their companions too!"

Having made his decision, Torin was ready to befriend everyone interested in bringing the Princess home.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Soaring Bird City, Lambert had returned to the temporary tent Galahad had rented.

"Hey, guys, I have two pieces of good news. Want to hear them?"

Galahad, Garrett, and Godfrey all looked at Lambert, who seemed eager to create some suspense.

"Stop beating around the bush and just spit it out," Godfrey grumbled. He was impatient and hated that sort of drawn-out talk.

Lambert shook his head and smiled before speaking seriously. "First piece of good news: Baron Torin of Soaring Bird City is aware of the plan to bring the Princess back, and he's quite supportive."

Hearing this, Garrett and Godfrey didn't think much of it, but Galahad frowned. In his view, the fewer people who knew about bringing the Princess back to the human kingdom, the better.

"The second piece of good news is that the kingdom's official envoy will arrive in Soaring Bird City within three days. Once they're here, we can head to the giants' territory together."

At the mention of the envoy, Galahad finally relaxed. The fact that the kingdom would send an official envoy meant a deal of some sort had already been reached between the human kingdom and the giants' territory. This mission to bring the Princess home had a high probability of success.

Truthfully, Galahad's tense heart felt much lighter upon hearing this. In his original plan, if they couldn't wait for the kingdom's envoy, the four of them would have tried sneaking through the ogres' territory to rescue the Princess in secret—a crazed idea that was practically a death sentence. Yet Garrett, Godfrey, and Lambert had all been willing to go through with it.

"Lambert, thank you," Galahad said sincerely. Lambert's news had potentially saved their lives.

"We were all born bearing heavy burdens. Since the gods pity us, we should extend that pity to the world," Lambert replied, giving Galahad a knight's salute. "Helping you is like helping myself."

Just then, Godfrey's voice interrupted them. "I don't know about the kingdom's envoy, but we should watch our backs with that Baron Torin."

Galahad, Garrett, and Lambert all turned to Godfrey.

"You're all too young. You have no idea how malicious people can be. I've been wandering around this camp for the past two days, and I've noticed that most of the people here are slaves—there are hardly any regular civilians."

Godfrey took a swig from his wine flask, clearly displeased by what he had witnessed in Soaring Bird City.

"And I've picked up on a few hints. There's a slave-hunting group hiding in this camp. I don't know if Baron Torin is the one backing them, but given how close he seems to be with them, he's definitely no saint."

He paused, letting his words sink in. "If other races discover the atrocities of a slave-hunting group in this territory, do you know what would happen? To non-human beings, a slave-hunting group is an absolute taboo."

The tent fell silent as everyone contemplated what Godfrey had said.

"I don't know or care who Baron Torin is," Galahad finally spoke. "Our goal is to follow the envoy to the giants' territory and bring the Princess home. If he tries to interfere, I won't show mercy."

Godfrey frowned and shook his head. He could tell that Galahad, after surviving near-death experiences, had become more rigid and extreme. Garrett and Lambert also looked at Galahad but didn't offer any comments of their own.

"Let's just wait," Godfrey eventually said. "The kingdom's envoy will be here soon. Then we'll see Baron Torin's true intentions."

With that, the tense atmosphere in the tent eased a bit.

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Elsewhere on the Meadowland Plains, in a dense forest where even sunlight struggled to filter through.

"Well done. You didn't back down at the brink of life and death," Orion said, recalling his abyssal dragon. He personally led the group at the forefront, with Rolan and Steelblade walking at his side.

"Dying isn't what you should fear. Real fear is shrinking back from your enemies and failing to conquer your own cowardice."

Orion was instructing Rolan while Steelblade listened in. "Also, don't just rely on brute force during a fight. Use your head. Understand your advantages and know your enemy's weaknesses. That way, you can be calm and confident in battle."

Rolan and Steelblade nodded repeatedly as they listened to Orion's guidance.

Chapter 425: War isn't the only way to solve problems

Ogre territory.

"WAAAGH!"

"Damn humans, breaking into my territory—are you trying to start another war?"

Bluehide brandished his massive spiked club, locked in an aerial battle with a human knight.

Even as the fight raged, the smaller of Bluehide's two heads kept hurling curses and questions.

Seizing an opportunity, Aldous spat a small, blazing fireball to ambush the knight he was fighting.

If Orion were here, he would surely realize that this Aldous (Bluehide) he had encountered during the North–South War had been hiding his true power.

"Lord Bluehide, the human kingdom does not wish to oppose you. We only want to pass through your territory to open a route to the giants' domain."

Theodore felt a surge of astonishment, for the ogre lord before him was by no means weaker than he was.

A prince of the human kingdom, Theodore had come to the ogre territory partly to negotiate a mutually beneficial trade route with the ogre lord.

Another reason was to carry out his father's command and personally escort his aunt back home.

"Passing through my territory—did you ask me beforehand? Did you send an envoy to request it?"

Theodore fell silent. Indeed, they were in the wrong.

According to previous intelligence the kingdom had gathered, this ogre possessed mid-tier Legendary-level power.

Theodore had come wearing a sacred suit of armor, which in theory should have allowed him to defeat the ogre lord.

Initially, he had planned to use his own might to subdue the ogre lord and force open a trade route.

However, the intelligence was mistaken. The ogre lord's strength far exceeded expectations.

"Lord Bluehide (Aldous), the human kingdom and the nearby Blood Elves and giants have already signed an alliance pact. We urgently need a trade route."

"If this route goes through the ogres' territory, whether for taxes or commerce, it'll benefit all of us."

Realizing he couldn't cow the ogre lord by force, Theodore resorted to mentioning the Five-Race Alliance, hoping to pressure the ogres through their allies.

In truth, upon hearing "Five-Race Alliance," Aldous was indeed taken aback.

"Five-Race Alliance? So the races in the south have united? The giants are part of it too?"

Ogre Aldous fixed his gaze on Theodore, trying to spot any trace of deceit in the young man's eyes or expression.

Yet Theodore, hovering in midair, remained calm and unwavering, giving no sign of lying.

"Why bother talking? Kill him, roast him for a meal—otherwise he'll think ogres are easy targets!"

With a roar, Bluehide lunged at Theodore again.

Aldous did not stop his other head from attacking; he fell silent, continuing to observe Theodore.

Theodore, supported by his sacred armor, showed no fear as he fought fiercely against the ogre.

Half a day later, Aldous finally reined in his more volatile head, calling a halt to the fight with Theodore.

"In honor of my friend, Orion the Giant King, I'll let you pass this time."

"But if you humans want to cross my territory and open a trade route, it won't be so simple."

Aldous's expression turned grim. Just thinking about the Five-Race Alliance left him feeling uneasy.

"Lord Aldous, the human kingdom has no wish to start a war. We only hope to establish a trade route."

"We're willing to pay taxes for it, and we're happy to negotiate."

"War isn't the only way to solve problems!"

Ogre Aldous gave a cold snort, then turned and headed north into his own territory.

He was certain he had sensed Orion's presence there a few days earlier.

As he watched the ogre lord depart, Prince Theodore's face grew solemn.

"It seems opening a route to the giants' domain isn't as simple as my father believed."

"If we can't persuade this ogre lord, the trade route won't work at all."

"This is troublesome!"

In fact, Theodore was thinking far beyond that single issue.

He was leading the delegation to the giants' territory this time, and the mission had to succeed—failure was not an option.

As a prince, Theodore was also seeking to gain merit, proving his great power and his ability to handle affairs.

Accomplishing the king's orders would be crucial to his future succession to the throne.

After leaving the royal capital, his first move was to win over Baron Torin and promote the construction of Soaring Bird City.

Torin had no choice but to comply, and Theodore achieved that easily.

Yet persuading the ogre lord and establishing the trade route had run into obstacles right from the start.

Ogre territory, southern region.

While Prince Theodore clashed with the ogre lord, the kingdom's envoy—supported by Baron Torin and the coal knight Galahad—pressed forward at top speed through ogre territory, heading toward the giants' domain.

"I never expected Prince Theodore to personally serve as the diplomat for this mission."

Lambert sighed, brimming with confidence about bringing the princess home.

"Let's hope everything goes smoothly; otherwise, I'll have no way to face Arthur!"

Galahad rode his mount right behind Lambert.

"Don't worry. Prince Theodore is a Legendary-level powerhouse. No matter how formidable that giant lord might be, he'll show the prince the respect he deserves."

"Galahad, you have to remember that this is an official diplomatic visit between two nations."

"Regardless of how things turn out, Her Highness the Princess—and our own safety—are under certain protections."

Galahad didn't fully understand the tangled interests between factions.

Still, Lambert's explanation helped put Galahad at ease.

"Relax. With Prince Theodore personally coming here, Princess Ava is sure to return safely."

Galahad's friend Garrett chimed in at just the right moment to comfort him.

At the rear of the group was Baron Torin, accompanied by his subordinates, Mike and Wyatt.

"Master, who are those four knights at the front?"

"How did they manage to earn Prince Theodore's favor, leaving us stuck at the back of the envoy?"

Mike's question only made Torin even angrier.

Still, Torin kept his fury tamped down, unwilling to show it.

"Shut your mouth!"

Torin wheeled around and snapped at Mike, who trembled under Torin's venomous glare.

Then Torin turned back, staring after Galahad, Lambert, and the others ahead, his eyes flickering with malice and resentment.

Chapter 426: I must become stronger

"I am a genuine Baron, yet in Prince Theodore's eyes, I'm worth less than four knights of unknown origin."

"It's all because I'm not strong enough. I have to become stronger. I must become stronger."

Torin's mood was dark and resentful. As soon as Prince Theodore arrived at Soaring Bird City, he had taken half of the territory's benefits away from Torin. And Torin hadn't even been in a position to refuse. He felt profoundly stifled.

Although Prince Theodore had promised to help develop Soaring Bird City, Torin still saw it as an insult.

"Master, among this envoy, we're the lowest-ranked group. We need to endure," Wyatt whispered. "Keeping the right to oversee Soaring Bird City is the most important thing."

Hearing this, Torin once again forced down the anger rising in his chest.

"Just wait. I'll remember every single bit of this, and I will pay it back someday!"

Torin exhaled slowly and put on a mild expression once more.

Far to the north on the Meadowland Plains...

After challenging two orc clans(tribe)—Warhammer and Bloodmoon—Rolan and Steelblade went on to challenge three more: Brokenfang, Darkgold, and Thunderfury. They were victorious each time, though each fight left Rolan and Steelblade slightly injured. Fortunately, with Grulbane traveling alongside them as a healer, the two young orcs remained in good shape.

The orcs' territory was remarkably beautiful. Beyond every forest stretched a boundless sea of grass, lush and vividly green, sprinkled with colorful wildflowers. Orion couldn't help but admire the scenery.

Suddenly, Orion glanced east, sensing a familiar presence in the distance.

"Dace, Otho, carry on as planned. I'll be back in a moment."

With those words, Orion became a bolt of lightning, streaking swiftly across the plains.

He arrived on a meadow bright with flowers in full bloom. There, Aldous lay half-reclined on the grass, one head nodding off while the other blew puffs of air, trying to send the petals overhead floating back into the sky.

The rumble of thunder drew closer. Orion appeared beside Bluehide, dropping down to sit on the grass with him.

"My friend, you picked a fine spot here."

Bluehide blew out another breath, scattering the petals into the air and watching them drift away. Once they were out of sight, Bluehide finally turned to Orion.

"My friend, Aldous just got into a fight with a certain lord. Aldous was bullied!"

Hearing this, Orion narrowed his eyes slightly, a menacing aura gathering around him.

"It was a human," Bluehide went on. "He claimed to be a prince, a Legendary-level fighter. I wanted to beat him to a pulp, but he said they've allied themselves with you."

"That's why Aldous let him go!"

The hostility emanating from Orion gradually subsided. Without looking at Bluehide, he turned his gaze to the white clouds in the distance.

"The Five-Race Alliance is a group formed by dragons, humans, dwarves, Blood Elves, and giants, with the goal of balancing power and preserving peace in the south," Orion explained. "To be honest, I never received an official invitation from the humans or the dragons. I joined indirectly through the Blood Elves. In other words, the giants are basically there to make up the numbers."

When Orion finished, he turned back to look at Bluehide the ogre.

"My friend, they underestimated you. You're definitely stronger than any of them. They should be properly inviting you, offering you the most enthusiastic welcome when the giants arrive."

Orion chuckled, unconcerned about Bluehide's comment.

"So that human prince fought with you over this trade route issue, right?"

Bluehide nodded, raising his spiked club with a furious snarl. "That lord was dressed in some strange outfit—like a shell tougher than any turtle's. Otherwise, I'd have smashed him to bits."

Orion laughed. At that moment, the other head stirred awake, prompting Orion to pose his question directly.

"You refused them?"

Aldous inhaled the floral scent around them, looking pleased. "No, I didn't agree, and I didn't outright refuse, either."

"Out of respect for you, I let them pass."

Orion frowned, not immediately answering. But hearing that Aldous had let the human prince pass, Orion suddenly realized why the Blood Elf Lycanor had come to Stoneheart City.

"So Lycanor came for that Princess Ava?"

"That makes sense. The humans and Blood Elves have coexisted peacefully for thousands of years, so there must be a deep and complicated relationship between them."

"Two Legendary-level figures have come to Stoneheart City one after another—maybe they want to put pressure on me."

His eyes grew sharper at the thought.

"My friend," Aldous asked, sensing Orion's shifting aura, "did you run into trouble too?"

Orion shook his head, his expression turning quietly enigmatic.

"Listen to me: agree to the human kingdom's request. Let them build that trade route."

Aldous stayed silent, watching Orion and waiting for him to elaborate.

"Establishing the route will benefit both you and me. It'll bring far more advantages than drawbacks," Orion said. "You can trade the useless things in your territory for whatever you need from the human kingdom."

He gestured at the spiked club lying near Aldous. "For instance, don't you want a heavier, sturdier weapon? Both dwarves and humans can craft that."

"With this trade route, you can demand plenty of weapons, food, magical plants—whatever you want—to arm your people."

Orion had outlined a direct, concrete benefit, without diving into complex talk of expanding markets or increasing profits.

"So, friend," Aldous said, "you're telling me to let them build the route?"

Orion nodded, meeting Aldous's eyes seriously.

"Aldous, if we establish this trade route, the humans, ogres, and giants all share a common interest. This is an opportunity—one that can bring peace between the ogres and the southern races."

"Surely you don't want the ogres plunged into war?"

Aldous shook his head. Most ogres were dull-witted, hot-tempered, and fond of meat.

"My friend, you don't understand. Human flesh is sweet to the taste. My people have long desired it. I can keep them in check for a time, but not forever."

Orion nodded, indicating he knew full well how ogres behaved.

"Aldous, think carefully. If you refuse, you're not just refusing the humans. You're also rejecting the dwarves and the dragons backing them."

"Those dragons have every reason to reclaim territories for their own growth, and they won't stand by if the ogres remain in the south."

Of course, if the ogres refused, they would also risk offending Orion and the Stoneheart Horde. With that in mind, Aldous soon offered his answer.

"I understand!"

"I can relinquish the stretch of land they need for the route, but I want something in return."

Orion studied Aldous. He already knew Aldous was a special kind of ogre—smarter than any of the others.

"As it happens, Lycanor of the Blood Elves is at my territory(domain) as well. You can come with me to Stoneheart City, and we'll discuss this further together."

Chapter 427 427: Tomorrow will be better

"Alright!"

Aldous nodded in agreement.

"It seems I'll have to cut short my journey to inspect my territory this time!" Orion stood up and withdrew his gaze from the distance. "Go on ahead and wait for me. I'm going to inform my subordinates."

With those words, Orion turned into a flash of lightning and disappeared across the grassy field.

"Five-Race Alliance... trade routes... peace..."

Murmuring these words over and over, Aldous stood gazing in the direction Orion had left, lost in thought for a long while.

Stoneheart City, inside the castle.

In a bedroom, Princess Ava looked out at the unfamiliar city, her eyes filled with worry.

Suddenly, a succubus maidservant opened the bedroom door, and Lilith followed her inside.

"Your Highness, please forgive our neglect these past few days! If there's anything you need, just let me know. We'll make sure you get it."

Lilith wore a bright smile. She bore no real malice toward Princess Ava.

When Orion decided to imprison Ava, Lilith had understood that this woman wouldn't remain by Orion's side for very long.

"Since when has the Stoneheart Horde been so kind to its captives? Save your phony courtesy. If you have something to say, just spit it out."

Princess Ava's words were sharp and unwelcoming. After all, here—especially around Orion—he came and went as he pleased, and whenever he felt like it, he would abuse her, treating her purely as an outlet for his sexual desires.

As a princess of the human kingdom, Ava felt her dignity was being trampled underfoot, the humiliation unbearable.

"Your Highness, you may not be aware that among the great tribes of the north, any woman from the defeated side is seen as a slave, merely a spoil of war. Is it really wrong for the victor to enjoy what they've conquered?"

Lilith still wore that confident smile, unaffected by Ava's derision. Then, switching gears, she extended an invitation.

"Your Highness, Blood Elf Lycanor mentioned she was your old acquaintance. Wouldn't you like to step out and see her?"

"Who?"

"Lycanor!"

"Lycanor... the bloodthirsty one from the Blood Elf clan?"

Lilith nodded, her eyes flickering with curiosity about Lycanor's moniker "the bloodthirsty one."

"Lady Lilith, please show me the way."

Lilith nodded again, her smile deepening. That Ava would say these words proved she'd already yielded, at least for now.

In the castle's rear garden, several magical plants were about to mature, bathing the area in a distinct floral fragrance at every moment.

"Seeing you unharmed puts my mind at ease," Lycanor said, taking Ava's hands in hers and speaking gently to comfort her.

The instant Ava heard Lycanor's reassuring words, her eyes brimmed with tears. She clung to Lycanor's hands, tightening her grip as though afraid to lose her last lifeline.

The look on Ava's face made Lycanor sigh softly.

"I never expected King Edward would send you all to help in the Blood Elf territory. Our clan(tribe) ended up dragging you into this," Lycanor went on. "But rest assured, I came precisely for this reason."

Ava couldn't hold back; she suddenly threw herself into Lycanor's arms, weeping quietly.

Lycanor placed a hand on Ava's back, offering whispered consolations.

"Prince Theodore is already on his way to Stoneheart City. You'll be able to return home very soon."

Ava sobbed even harder, her body trembling. She had waited for days for a moment like this: not only had a friend arrived, but a family member was on the way as well.

"I apologize. Ava's emotions are running high today—please don't take it personally, Lady Lilith," Lycanor said with a reassuring smile.

Lilith, seated at a round table in the garden, shook her head, smiling but remaining silent.

"This place has magical plants that are about to mature, filling the air with a dense magical essence," Lycanor said softly. "Calm yourself a little and keep me company as I watch them bloom. Some things are best left behind once they've passed.

"We still have tomorrow; tomorrow will be better, and tomorrow will bring us even more hope."

Under Lycanor's gentle words, Ava's sobs gradually subsided, and she slowly regained her composure.

From her seat at the round table, Lilith noticed this and frowned, puzzled. She could sense no direct application of mind-based magic, something in Lycanor's words clearly had a soothing effect.

"Could it be some secret technique of the Blood Elf tribe?"

Lilith pondered, pouring a fresh cup of floral tea for Lycanor and Ava.

Vagrelly, on the border between giant territory and ogre territory.

Prince Theodore rode a lion-headed, horse-bodied beast, leading the kingdom's envoy as they followed behind Thundar.

Prince Theodore glanced at the wide, packed road stretching far into the distance, raising an eyebrow. "Aren't giants supposed to be nasty brutes who adore slaughter and violence? So why do these giants sent to greet us show not even a hint of dullness?"

He looked again at the road—a flat, solid path that wound ahead like a tan ribbon—and then turned his gaze to the squad of Raptor Knights before him.

Their armor was uniform, their mounts vicious and intimidating, and among the giants leading them stood an Alpha-level commander—as well as Alpha-level dark creatures serving under him.

No matter how Theodore looked at them, they radiated a faint sense of civilization.

Meanwhile, among the human kingdom's envoy, the coal knight Galahad was scrutinizing Thundar. From the moment he first laid eyes on the giant knights, his mind was flooded with dark memories, as if ghosts from the past had awakened. He saw again the image of Arthur, who stayed behind to hold off

the enemy. He recalled the Rose Knight Regiment falling under the giants' and ogres' assault, their pained cries echoing.

Galahad gripped the hilt of his sword, fighting the urge to draw it and strike.

Godfrey reacted immediately, pressing down on Galahad's right hand. "Steady yourself and face everything with composure. That's the way of a knight," he said in a low, urgent tone. "Galahad, you are a knight, not a butcher lost to bloodshed."

Godfrey's quiet counsel drew Lambert's attention as well.

"Any problem is best resolved under a balanced order," Lambert said gently. "Galahad, violence isn't the surest solution—especially when you're weaker than your opponent. Turning to carnage will only bring about your own doom.

"And I assume you still want to see the princess safely returned?"

The name "princess" might as well have been a magical incantation, yanking Galahad back from the brink of madness.

"Yes, Sir Galahad," someone else chimed in. "Trust Prince Theodore—he's her family and the future of our kingdom."

Taking several long breaths, Galahad steadily dispelled his murderous impulses.

"I'm alright now, Sir Godfrey. You can let go."

Godfrey watched him carefully for a moment before finally releasing his hand.

"Remember, this is giant territory. If you cause any trouble here, not even Prince Theodore can save us."

Galahad nodded in silence.

Chapter 428 428: It's beyond incredible

Meadowland Plains, Orc Blackrock Clan.

Dace turned around, looking at Rolan and Steelblade. He spoke with a solemn expression:

"Our Lord has important matters to attend to, so he returned to Stoneheart City ahead of us."

"The challenges that await will be faced together with us by your side."

"For the glory of the giant tribe and the honor of the stoneheart horde—go and give it your all!"

Rolan and Steelblade exchanged glances, then both nodded.

"Very good. The Blackrock Clan is just up ahead—prepare yourselves. We'll go challenge them now."

Standing beside Dace was Grulbane. He looked at Rolan and Steelblade, then at his own disciples, speaking seriously:

"This territory has already been conquered by the mighty Lord Orion!"

"In the coming years—even decades—I want you to subjugate every Orc and Beastfolk in this territory."

"Can you do that?"

These young giants before him were the hope of the giant tribe. Grulbane wanted them to have a goal from early on. If they had none, he would give them one.

"Yes, we can!"

"WAAAGH... we'll conquer them!"

"Mentor, we can definitely do it!"

"..."

Their eager replies made Grulbane very pleased. He turned his gaze to Rolan and Steelblade, as though asking, "What about you two?"

"Elder, Rolan wants to conquer them right now!"

"So do I!"

Grulbane and Dace exchanged a smile, then led everyone onward to the Orc settlement ahead.

Stoneheart City, the castle.

After meeting the Blood Elf Lycanor, Princess Ava regained her vitality; her noble and graceful temperament once again shone through, restoring her royal bearing.

Lilith invited Lycanor and Ava to enjoy the flowers in the rear garden. They conversed harmoniously, the atmosphere filled with warmth. While everyone was smiling, a succubus maidservant approached Lilith, leaned in, and whispered a few words. A subtle flicker passed through Lilith's eyes.

Once she dismissed the maidservant, Lilith turned her gaze to Lycanor and then smiled sweetly at Ava.

"Prince Theodore has arrived in Stoneheart City with the human kingdom's envoy, Ava. You'll soon see your family."

Over the past few days, thanks to Lilith's hospitality, her relationship with Lycanor and Ava had improved significantly, leading to a deep sense of camaraderie—at least on the surface.

Ava looked to Lycanor, hoping for confirmation from this Legendary-level powerhouse.

"Three days ago, I sensed a Legendary-level presence coming from the south. I just didn't expect it to be Prince Theodore," Lycanor said with a nod, offering Princess Ava a reassuring smile.

Ava breathed a large sigh of relief, her chest rising and falling noticeably with her deep intake of air. Clearly, she was overjoyed yet tinged with anxiety and unease.

After replying to Ava, Lycanor turned her eyes southward. There, two powerful presences were also heading toward Stoneheart City.

"Besides Orion, could the nearby ogre lord be coming as well?"

She felt a flicker of suspicion. The consecutive arrivals of Prince Theodore, the Giant Orion, and the Ogre Aldous made her sense something unusual. Still, recalling that Prince Theodore had traveled through ogre territory offered Lycanor a strong hint.

"Could it be..."

"This could be troublesome."

According to the human kingdom's and the Blood Elves' plan, Prince Theodore would pressure the ogre lord to clear a trade route, while Lycanor occupied Stoneheart City to contain Orion. Ultimately, Prince Theodore and Lycanor would join forces to rescue Ava, and under this pressure, force Orion to sign a tripartite pact—dominated by humans, giants, and Blood Elves—in that part of the region.

However, with Orion returning to Stoneheart City and bringing the ogre lord as an ally, not only would he gain extra support, but the negotiations would also become more complicated.

"Ms Lycanor, is something happening up north?" Lilith's pleasant voice reached Lycanor's ears, her tone curious and concerned.

Lycanor withdrew her gaze, glancing at Lilith's faint smile. Knowing full well that this observant succubus likely sensed something in her brief moment of distraction, Lycanor responded evenly:

"Nothing. It's just that Orion will be back soon as well. The matters involving our three races can finally begin in earnest."

Lilith nodded, a flicker of delight appearing on her face.

Princess Ava, on the other hand, trembled slightly at the news of Orion's imminent return. Clearly, Orion's "enormous" cock had left a psychological scar on her. It was simply too large; every time they had sex, Ava felt as though her entire body was being penetrated.

Elsewhere, Prince Theodore—who had just arrived at Stoneheart City—fixed his gaze on the arrow towers atop the city walls, his pupils tightening a fraction.

He recognized them as specialized constructs, indicating that this giant lord was an entire step beyond most other Legendary-level powerhouses. Shifting his gaze from the arrow towers, he surveyed the ongoing construction of the outer city: countless slaves and small spiders busily hauling massive stones.

The scene was so striking that it made a deep impression on him.

"If this city is completed, it will undoubtedly become one of the largest in the southern region."

"The giant tribe has truly found its foothold in the south of this continent."

For reasons unknown, that notion welled up in Prince Theodore's mind in a flash.

"Your Highness, I can hardly believe what I'm seeing. This must be a miracle!"

Standing nearby, Knight Samuel regarded the construction in astonishment, his expression brimming with disbelief.

"What do you mean?" Prince Theodore asked.

Knight Samuel, eyeing the newly built structures of the outer city, looked both awed and uneasy:

"Your Highness, the last time I came here as part of the envoy, Stoneheart City's outer walls were still incomplete—there wasn't even a clear plan for the outer city's layout. But in just a few months, everything has changed dramatically."

"It's beyond incredible!"

Prince Theodore did not respond, merely continuing to study Stoneheart City. This was his first official diplomatic mission, as well as his first venture into the giant tribe's territory in this region.

"Your Highness, welcome to the Stoneheart Horde's Stoneheart City!"

Having returned to Stoneheart City, Thundar felt a heightened sense of security. He knew Prince Theodore represented the human kingdom and stood at the Legendary level. The idea of hosting such a powerful figure made Thundar more than a little tense.

Chapter 429 429: Colosseum

If Prince Theodore suddenly lost his mind, wiped out the Raptor cavalry sent to greet the envoy, and then fled back to the human kingdom—or if he decided to seize Thundar and the others as hostages to bargain for the human kingdom's princess.

Before returning to Stoneheart City and meeting Orion, it was hard for Thundar not to imagine the worst.

Prince Theodore merely nodded without a word, following closely behind Thundar. Afterward, Thundar introduced him to Stoneheart City, then led him and his entourage to a newly built guest house within the inner city.

This guest house was a small castle on the western side of the inner city, some distance from the main castle. Since Prince Theodore was male and Orion was away, there was no chance Thundar would lead him to the castle.

Prince Theodore did not mind—he could already sense Lycanor's presence, as well as Orion and the ogre lord swiftly approaching from the north.

Half a day later, in a bedroom within the guest house.

Torin, with his subordinates Mike and Wyatt, stood by the window, observing Stoneheart City.

"Oh my god. Who would've thought a barbaric race from the north could build a city so grand and orderly?" Mike, the Deputy Commander of the Mercenary Corps, had traveled far and wide before joining Torin's service and had visited most of the major cities in the human kingdom. He was certain that this Stoneheart City, built by the Stoneheart Horde, could rival the large cities of humans, dwarves, or blood elves.

Torin did not respond, also captivated by the city's breathtaking scale and beauty.

"If only it were my city!"

"If I owned this place, I'd never again have to worry about those noble parasites in the human kingdom, forever free of their disgusting faces."

This still-under-construction metropolis gave Torin a powerful jolt of inspiration, reminding him of his own Soaring Bird City. If possible, he too wanted to build Soaring Bird City into something this grand—but for now, it was beyond him. Constructing a city of such scale consumed unimaginable amounts of resources and labor.

"Master, those workers building the city are all slaves," Wyatt remarked. As head of the slaver group, he was highly sensitive to the state and scent of enslaved labor.

Torin nodded. If Wyatt had noticed, he certainly had as well.

"Master, we must hold onto our rights to manage Soaring Bird City. If the trade route through the ogre territory really opens up, just imagine the immense wealth that the resources of this giant territory will bring us."

Mike gazed out the window, already picturing a bright future, so excited he could hardly contain himself.

"Master, not only that—beyond the giants' territory to the south lies the blood elf territory, where we could purchase countless rare items."

Torin's breathing grew quick. Only then did he realize that this was a perfectly laid-out trade route beginning in the human kingdom and running through ogre territory, giant territory, and blood elf territory. And his Soaring Bird City just happened to be at the starting point.

"Soaring Bird City is mine...this territory is mine...all that wealth is mine..."

Elsewhere in the guest house, in another bedroom.

Galahad, Garrett, Godfrey, and Lambert had also gathered. Galahad and Lambert were at the window—one admiring the view, the other lost in thought.

"Honestly, I never expected to see such a magnificent city outside the human kingdom," Lambert said.
"It's clear the giant king here must be tremendously powerful."

Unlike Galahad, who was solely focused on rescuing Princess Ava, Lambert took the chance to admire the city's splendor. Galahad remained quiet, still in a daze.

Over on the bed, Godfrey lay with his hands behind his head, staring at the intricately decorated ceiling and speaking with anticipation:

"A city of this size must have its share of taverns—maybe even brothels. Heh... I just saw some succubi earlier—sexy, beautiful, downright mesmerizing..."

Garrett, the quietest of the group, noticed Galahad's distraction and offered a few gentle words.

"In two days, we'll accompany Prince Theodore to the castle to meet this giant king. Our princess will be free to return with us soon."

Then Garrett gave the other two a reminder.

"This is giant territory. You two had best not wander around too much."

No one responded. The whole room remained silent.

Three days later, a monumental aura descended upon Stoneheart City. Every member of the Stoneheart Horde living there knew the Giant King, Lord Orion, had returned.

In the guest house, Prince Theodore was reading a letter when he suddenly stood, looking slightly pensive.

"It really is an upper-tier Legendary presence. This Giant King is incredibly powerful."

Murmuring to himself, Prince Theodore sat back down and reread the letter in his hands. Penned by Princess Ava and delivered through Blood Elf Lycanor, it confirmed that Ava was alive and safe. Only with that assurance had Theodore chosen to remain in the guest house, awaiting Orion's arrival.

The next morning, Stoneheart City was abuzz with excitement. The reason? The newly built colosseum in the outer city was opening for the first time, drawing the curiosity of countless tribespeople.

Within a reception hall at the colosseum, Orion received Prince Theodore and Blood Elf Lycanor. Naturally, Lilith and Princess Ava were there to accompany them.

Orion had chosen to build this colosseum in the outer city after his visit to the dragons' territory gave him the idea.

In the future, the colosseum would be a prime location for him to host betting events and amass wealth. Once Stoneheart City fully opened its doors and visitors flooded in, every match held there would earn Orion considerable profit. But he still needed a skilled manager or organizer to run the place.

As for today, the colosseum's grand opening served to welcome Blood Elf Lycanor, Prince Theodore, and the ogre Aldous.

"Ms. Lycanor, Prince Theodore, and my ogre friend—please, be seated. Welcome to Stoneheart City."

After the guests took their seats, Orion stepped onto an open-air platform, his towering figure visible to everyone in the colosseum. He looked imposing and majestic.

"Giant King!"

"Giant King!"

"Giant King!"

"..."

Before Orion could speak, the entire colosseum erupted with cheers. Deafening cries resounded in waves, causing both Blood Elf Lycanor and Prince Theodore to raise their eyebrows in mild surprise.

Chapter 430 430: Victory means life, defeat means death

Orion raised his hand, signaling his people to be silent.

In the very next moment, the cheers, shouts, and clamor died away. The entire colosseum became so quiet that even breathing could be heard. Lycanor, Theodore, and Aldous, seeing this scene, could not help but look at Orion's back.

"This is the kind of influence the King of Giants holds over the Stoneheart Horde?"

Lycanor fixed her gaze on Orion, recalling the battles she had fought against him during the North-South War.

"Such formidable organizational skills and leadership—he truly is a king!"

Unlike Lycanor, Prince Theodore saw only the power of rallying hearts. If he could command such loyalty in the human kingdom, then he thought the day of his coronation might not be far off.

Aldous, on the other hand, showed no particular reaction. His two large heads were too busy savoring the delicacies brought by the succubus maidservants.

"People of our clan, everything we have now was bought with blood and life," Orion began.

"In this continent, it is always survival of the fittest. Only the strongest races can claim the richest lands and tastiest meats."

"The strong survive, the weak are eliminated. The law of the jungle has never left us."

Orion's voice was soft yet carried far. Blood Elf Lycanor and Prince Theodore both found themselves slightly uncomfortable with his outright glorification of strength above all.

"That is why, here in the Stoneheart Horde colosseum, the theme is simple: the strong live, and the weak die."

As soon as Orion spoke, valves on both sides of the colosseum opened. An Orc slave and a human slave, each holding a crude weapon, emerged from the dungeon below.

"Tobias!"

Seeing the human slave, Princess Ava—dressed in splendid clothing—immediately stood up. Prince Theodore raised his hand, signaling her to stay calm and let him handle the situation.

"Honorable King of Giants," Theodore said, "according to our agreement, you should restore the human kingdom's princess to her freedom."

Orion turned around and glanced at Princess Ava. At once, she bowed her head, not daring to meet his eyes. Every time she saw Orion, she remembered his big and hard cock that had thrust into her vagina, mouth, and even her anus.

Then Orion looked at Prince Theodore and spoke in a leisurely tone.

"Your Highness, from the moment you stepped into Stoneheart City, Princess Ava was already free. The ransom for her was fully paid by Grand Duke William back when we were at the Five-Race Alliance."

Hearing this, Prince Theodore breathed a sigh of relief. Joy flashed in his eyes. Having accomplished another goal on this mission to the giants' territory, he felt the burden on his shoulders lighten a bit.

"Honorable King of Giants, what about them?" Theodore asked, pointing to the human slaves in the colosseum.

Orion smiled and thought for a moment.

"They are my slaves. I prepared them for a duel, in honor of Your Highness's visit."

Tobias was a human slave, one of the Deputy Commanders of the Rose Knight Regiment. Hence Princess Ava recognized him at a glance.

Back then, nearly the entire Rose Knight Regiment had been wiped out, and while capturing Princess Ava, the giants had also taken the few remaining knights. Those knights were nearly dead from grievous wounds. It was only with a shaman's treatment that their lives had been saved.

Originally, Orion had intended to use these knights as leverage to threaten Princess Ava. But since Ava was now ransomed, these human slaves were simply assigned to perform in today's colosseum opening.

Ignoring Prince Theodore's deepening frown, Orion turned and projected his voice so that it rang through the entire arena.

"Today, for all participants in the colosseum, victory means life, defeat means death. Whoever wins shall be free—free to return home or choose to join the Stoneheart Horde."

A low rumble of excitement spread through the colosseum at Orion's words, and soon the crowd was roaring once again.

"Victory means life, defeat means death!"

"Victory means life, defeat means death!"

"..."

Gradually, every member of the horde echoed the same chant, fueling the bloody atmosphere of the colosseum.

Orion turned back to his place, smiling at Prince Theodore and Princess Ava.

"I only have seven human slaves like these. I'm afraid today's show might not fully satisfy Your Highness."

Under the table, Princess Ava gripped Prince Theodore's hand, pleading with him to do something. Prince Theodore narrowed his eyes, keenly aware that this was Orion's way of showing him who held the power—and of reminding him that humanity had been on the losing side of the North-South War.

"Heh heh heh... My friend, you're absolutely right," rumbled Aldous the ogre, before Theodore had a chance to speak. "The strong survive and the weak fall. Among ogres, only the mightiest get the best females and the finest meats."

Orion nodded and then turned his gaze to Blood Elf Lycanor and Prince Theodore.

"Humans and Blood Elves should know this principle even better than we do, being the masters of the southern region."

Whether it was meant as sarcasm or praise, it was hard to tell from Orion's tone.

"This land has always belonged to the fittest," Lycanor said calmly, betraying none of her true feelings.

"Well then, let the show begin!" Orion waved, and immediately a giant bloodline warrior ran out to sound the battle horn.

In the arena, the unknown Orc and Tobias the human knight both set their minds on killing the other. With the horn's call, they charged forward.

Greatsword clashed against greatsword. Shield struck shield. The Orc was, without doubt, stronger in raw force. From the first collision, Tobias was knocked back three steps. The Orc then swung his massive blade again, charging at Tobias relentlessly.

With each step Tobias took, Princess Ava and Coal Knight Galahad felt their hearts clench, as though squeezed by an iron fist.

Tobias knew that if he kept retreating, the moment he could no longer withstand the Orc's blows, he would die. So, as the Orc raised his sword for another strike, Tobias pressed forward with his shield, ramming the Orc in a sudden move. Seizing that small window, Tobias tossed his shield aside, rolled forward, and ended up behind the Orc.

A flicker of triumph crossed Tobias's face. Gripping his sword with both hands, he slashed downward.

Splurt!

Splat!

In that instant, one leg fell to the ground—and one head as well.

At the decisive moment, the Orc had also abandoned his shield, raised his sword with both hands, and slashed back while lifting a leg to block. As a result, it was the Orc who lost a leg, but Tobias was the one who lost his head.

This brutal, bloody scene sent the colosseum into frenzied cheers and wild cries once again.