

Titan King 481

Chapter 481: Slaughter or death

Emerald Dream Realm, Red Moon Valley

Loska, standing beside the cross-realm teleportation array, suddenly leapt to his feet, his face alight with wild excitement.

Just moments ago, the void passage between the Emerald Dream Realm and the Titanion Realm had reopened.

Loska hadn't been swept away by it, proving the method he'd found in the secret records to avoid the void passage actually worked.

"Hahaha... the Red Thread Clan will rise again!"

His laughter turned feral.

A savage, unrestrained hunger twisted Loska's features.

"Clansmen, it's time to slaughter our enemies and plunder endless resources!"

Transcendent power surged through Loska like a tidal wave. He activated the cross-realm teleportation array, and the swarm of Dark Worms gathered in Red Moon Valley began teleporting through.

Blackstone City.

Night fell, and dawn never came.

Beneath the underground fissure, chaos erupted.

The energy ripple from the teleportation array's activation hit Clymene, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, and Desdemona—all Alpha-level beings—like a shockwave.

"On guard!"

"On guard!"

"On guard!"

...

Clymene's voice rang out, and every skeleton warrior and cave spider snapped to attention.

Swish, swish, swish!

Hiss, hiss, hiss!

The clatter of skeleton warriors raising their weapons mingled with the skittering of cave spiders.

All eyes locked onto the teleportation array.

The monument representing the array blazed with light, emitting a mysterious red-and-blue glow.

In the next instant, a flood of Dark Worms—varied in size and grotesque in form—spilled into the area around the array.

Roar!

Roar!

...

A chorus of primal, guttural roars followed, thick with savage energy.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Before the skeleton warriors and cave spiders could react, the arrow towers—positioned in a triangular assault formation near the array—opened fire preemptively.

Three disoriented Dark Worms, still dazed from the long-distance teleport, were shot dead on the spot.

"Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel—each of you take a side and hold this ground!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

The Skeletal Knights split into six teams. Five formed a pentagram defense array, anchoring themselves behind the skeleton warriors and cave spiders, cutting down any Dark Worms that broke through.

Clymene and Desdemona, leading the final team, stood atop a tower, overseeing the battlefield and ready to adapt.

The battle exploded the moment the arrow towers fired.

Dark worms, underground worms, skeleton warriors, and cave spiders clashed around the cross-realm teleportation array, instantly turning the area into a meat grinder.

Near the array, inside the corpse of a massive slain Dark Worm, a tiny, red-threaded black bug coiled within its eye, surveying the chaos.

"Only six Alpha-level beings—no Legendary-level powerhouses. The ancestors must be smiling on us! Their lord must've gone to guard the void passage!"

"Hahaha... this place will be the Red Thread Clan's hunting ground!"

Back in the Emerald Dream Realm, Lord Loska laughed in sync with the strange black bug.

Through a will projection hidden in the first wave of teleported Dark Worms, Loska received real-time intel from the battlefield.

"Get over there! Break their lines, hunt them down, devour them!"

Roar, roar, roar!

Another wave of roars erupted as five Dark Worms, three bizarre oversized bugs, and two terrifying spiked worms burst from the swarm.

Loska's transcendent power surged wildly. Once he confirmed no Legendary-level foe was present, he threw caution to the wind.

"Go, my children! Devour every living thing in sight!"

"Hahaha..."

The teleportation array flared again, and the bugs amassed in Red Moon Valley vanished one by one.

...

Bottomless Abyss, Underworld.

More and more bugs poured through, and as their numbers swelled, the combat zone expanded outward.

The arrival of those ten Alpha-level bugs sent the battle into a fever pitch.

Desdemona, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, and Grendel—the six Alpha-level Skeletal Knights—were dragged into the fray.

Thanks to the three arrow towers, they barely held the line a hundred meters out from the structures.

Clymene looked down over the battlefield, sensing the aura of the ten Alpha-level bugs. Her expression grew grim.

The sounds echoing back were the crunch of breaking bones, the agonized screeches of dying Dark Worms, and the wet squelch of cave spiders being torn apart.

The battlefield's tempo shifted with each faction's forces, constantly rewriting the rhythm of the fight.

As terrifying spiked worms joined the chaos, countless cave spiders took devastating hits.

These dark creatures—troublesome even for Orion when he first hit Alpha-level—were absolute beasts on the field.

But as the battle wore on, the cave spiders adapted.

Countless spiders scaled the stone walls, dangling from silk threads, launching aerial assaults on the Dark Worms below.

The underworld fight bogged down into a stalemate. It had become a slaughterhouse, a dirge for the fallen ringing through the air.

...

Blackstone City, Underground Fissure, Beside the Bottomless Abyss.

A flood of small spiders, as if answering some unseen command, scurried toward the underworld.

On the other side of the abyss's entrance, Lorelia, Lilith, and Rendall stood together, staring into the void in heavy silence.

After a moment, Lorelia opened her eyes, fear and awe flashing through them—scenes she'd never witnessed before.

"How's it looking?"

Lilith, who'd raised Lorelia from childhood, knew her abilities well.

Lorelia gazed into the pitch-black abyss, stunned and at a loss for words.

She could link with spiders, sharing their vision to glimpse the underworld's battlefield.

But the connection was fleeting—a skill she'd only recently honed after reaching Alpha level.

"Mistress, the underworld's swarming with bugs!"

After a long pause, Lorelia shook off her shock. She looked up at Lilith and Rendall, recounting what she'd seen.

"Down there... there are more bugs than I can count—maybe even more than my spiders."

"And there are ten Alpha-level oversized bugs. We've seen two of the types before."

"One's like an earthworm—the kind that can get chopped in half and still survive."

"Then there's the terrifying spiked worm, covered in spines. Every little spider that gets near it either gets killed or swallowed whole."

"Plus, there are a few oversized bugs with red patterned lines on their backs. They're not just huge—they fight like absolute savages."

"The underworld's a mess. Orion's sister is already tangled up with those oversized bugs."

"Everywhere Lorelia looked, it was either slaughter or death!"

"... "

Lorelia went on at length. She'd never been part of a massive battle like this before, and seeing such carnage for the first time left her reeling.

Lilith and Rendall, though, handled it with far more composure.

"Based on Orion's intel, the underworld has six Alpha-level fighters, three arrow towers, and nearly 600,000 troops."

"The enemy's dropped ten dark oversized bugs and countless cannon-fodder bugs. With that kind of firepower, after some fighting, both sides will likely hit a stalemate."

"Lorelia's sent another 300,000 little spiders as reinforcements. For now, the underworld shouldn't see any major upsets."

"The good news? No Legendary-level beings have shown up."

Lilith's expression was stern, her face tinged with gravity.

"Lilith, there's one thing I don't get." Rendall frowned. "If war's broken out in the underworld, why hasn't Blackstone City been hit by dark creatures yet?"

The upheaval in the underworld made him think of Blackstone City.

Rendall was worried about the underworld, but even more so about the city he was tasked to protect.

"The teleportation array in the underworld's been activated, which means the dark beast tides have started."

"Blackstone City hasn't been attacked yet, probably because the dark creatures assigned to our area haven't arrived."

"This time, our Stoneheart Horde territory doesn't have a Legendary-level fighter holding the fort, meaning no void passage has opened here."

"For dark creatures to invade us, they'd have to come from another region."

Since Orion reached Legendary level, a lot of once-secret knowledge was no longer hidden from the Stoneheart Horde.

With compiled intel and Orion's guidance, Lilith quickly pieced it together.

"Even so, we can't let our guard down."

"To the north, we've got a new mammoth neighbor who might just dump dark creatures our way."

"Then there's the centaur clan to the east and the goblin clan to the south—both losers from the last north-south war."

"If they think their tribes can't handle more dark creatures, they'll pull some tricks to shunt them out of their territories."

That's how it worked. Not every territory treated dark creatures as a resource like the Stoneheart Horde did.

Weaker lords and tribes couldn't swallow all the dark creatures they faced.

For their races to survive, they'd offload the excess elsewhere.

Historically, northern lords drove dark creatures south, while southern lords pushed them toward human, Blood Elf, and dwarf territories.

Beyond the scarcity gap in resources between north and south, this practice of shoving dark creatures outward was a big reason for the power disparity between the regions.

The strong got stronger, the rich got richer.

The weak, meanwhile, suffered, fought each other, and grew weaker still.

Over the past ten thousand years, if Frostsire hadn't broken its seal, even Orion's southward invasion to claim territory would've taken ages.

At least before hitting Arch Lord, he couldn't have guaranteed a clean victory over a human Saint.

Without that win, a southern conquest would've been off the table.

"I see!"

The web of relationships was complex—without Lilith spelling it out, Rendall wouldn't have connected the dots.

"So, should we head down to back up Clymene?"

Lilith shook her head, her expression firm, her resolve unshaken.

"No need. Trust Clymene—Orion trusts his sister too!"

The fight had begun. Leave the underworld to Clymene and the surface to Lilith.

That was her clear-headed stance right now.

Lilith turned, addressing Lorelia with a rare, serious tone.

"Hold this spot. Guard it with your life!"

Lorelia nodded, raising her longbow, matching Lilith's gravity with her reply.

"Don't worry—I'll hold it down!"

Lilith gave a soft hum, then strode out of the underground fissure.

"Arch Elder, stop worrying about Clymene. We've each got our roles. Guarding Blackstone City is our job."

Rendall cast one last glance at the bottomless abyss, worry flickering in his eyes, but he followed Lilith out.

...

Stoneheart City.

The battle had already kicked off.

Outside the towering walls, dark creatures attacked relentlessly, hour after hour.

Though no void passage had opened in Stoneheart City's region, it was still swarmed with dark creatures.

Most lords in the far north had gone into hiding, so a flood of dark creatures got dumped south.

In the darkness, signal fires blazed, and warriors stood ready to draw their blades.

Delilah stood atop the wall, gazing impassively at the dark creatures scaling it—only to be smashed back down by bolts and rolling stones.

High above, the shrill cry of a Four-Winged Blood Bat pierced the night. Darting unseen through the dark, it knocked flying dark creatures out of the sky one by one.

It was Delilah's mount. Without Alpha-level aerial dark creatures to challenge it, the bat was practically invincible.

Delilah glanced up at it, saw it was in top shape, and paid it no more mind.

Trailing her were not just her four succubus guards but also Gort and Samson.

Gort and Samson hadn't been sent elsewhere because Delilah needed them here, helping her hold Stoneheart City.

The Stoneheart Horde was a multi-race faction where raw power and size equaled strength.

In some situations, succubi just didn't cut it for intimidation.

Gort, an obsidian golem, was naturally massive—his presence alone was a deterrent without lifting a finger.

Samson, a giant, was just as imposing, his bulk now rivaling even the obsidian golem's.

Plus, as Orion's childhood friend, Samson's status carried weight—enough to rein in subordinates lost to bloodlust, violence, or madness.

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Of course, none of this is set in stone. These are merely some of the tactics Delilah orchestrated for the bigger picture.

What Delilah truly depended on were her own abilities, her mount—the Four-Winged Blood Bat—and the will force Orion had hidden within her.

"Your Majesty, we've received word from the Sentinel Corps. Everything appears stable in the other three directions, with only a small influx of dark creatures attacking."

"As for that human knight named Godfrey, he's fighting bravely and has shown no suspicious behavior."

"Also, our logistical supplies are being transported as expected..."

Somewhere along the city wall, Godfrey thrust his lance into a dark creature about to climb up, neutralizing the crisis in that section.

"Human, your fierceness far outweighs that small frame of yours."

"I'll admit—you're a real man!" A giant gave Godfrey a thumbs-up.

Godfrey nodded slightly without replying.

From the start of the battle until now, Godfrey had been restraining the aura around him, so everyone assumed he was merely a hero-level human knight.

Nearby, fighting alongside Godfrey, was a hero-level giant.

By participating in the defense of Stoneheart City, Godfrey came to understand that these Stoneheart Horde bloodline warriors were entirely different from the soldiers of the human kingdom.

In Stoneheart City, every bloodline warrior fought with extreme courage, treating every battle as if they had nothing to lose.

Here, apart from Orion—whom everyone revered like a god—Godfrey often heard other names in the bloodline warriors' conversations, such as Earthshaker, Gronthar, and Dirtclaw.

In particular, whenever they mentioned Dirtclaw, their eyes lit up with excitement and a sense of anticipation for the future.

It was as though their gaze said to Godfrey: "Just watch. One day, I'll become a powerful warrior myself—maybe even an elder."

"You're not half bad either. One of the bravest people I've met!"

For some reason, Godfrey blurted out these words.

"Hahaha... Human, that's the kind of thing I like to hear!"

"Once we rotate out, I'll buy you a drink!!"

"..."

Stoneheart City wasn't the only place erupting into war. Battles also raged in the area where Orion now stood.

Three days earlier—Soraya City.

As soraya City's walls rose bit by bit, a large fortress took shape at the heart of the city.

After Orion entered the fortress and placed a Lord's Stone in the restricted chamber, the domed castle became the core of the entire Soraya City.

"From now on, this place will be called the Dusk Castle!"

Emerging from the restricted chamber, Orion came to the castle hall, standing by a window and pulling Soraya—who was gazing into the distance—into his arms.

"Dusk? What does that mean?"

"I just had a whim. The name seems fitting!"

In truth, when Orion envisioned the name, an image of a 'desert sunset' hovered in his mind.

"What about a building just for me?"

Soraya leaned against Orion, her tone full of eager anticipation.

"I'll need a bit more time for that."

"Once this war ends and Soraya City moves into the next planning phase, I'll find the perfect place and design a beautiful sand tower for you."

Orion paused, then added, "Tomorrow, I'll head to the front lines. Soraya City will be under your watch!"

Three days later—Moonveil Plains, the front-line battlefield.

Skeleton warriors led the charge, small scorpions advanced behind them, and Dirtclaw and Drakthul commanded the cannon fodder troops. They split into small squads, joining the fight.

High above the battlefield, Orion hovered in midair, clad in ice armor and wielding a trident.

He was surveying the field when, without warning, two peak-level legendary slime molds monsters burst out from a layer of slime molds and lunged at Orion.

Boom!

Orion took a direct hit from this sudden ambush. The ice armor he wore shattered into icy shards and disappeared.

Fortunately, his reflexes were swift. A flash of lightning sparked around him, and he darted back a short distance to steady himself.

However, the two slime molds monsters shifted back into dark shadows, attacking from Orion's left and right.

"Go to hell!"

Orion let out a furious shout. Two tridents formed from transcendent power streaked toward the shadows to strike them down.

Yet, after two swift swipes in the darkness, the tridents were shredded as though ice meeting blazing sun, vanishing without a trace.

Even so, that brief delay gave Orion the time he needed.

He triggered Instant Impact, and in the blink of an eye, his figure vanished from his original spot. A sharp sonic boom erupted in the surrounding space.

Bang!

It sounded like a house collapsing. Orion materialized behind one of the dark shapes, thrust out his trident, and a thunderous explosion echoed across the sky.

Yet despite such a sudden and fierce attack, Orion missed.

Eyes gleaming with battle fervor, Orion locked onto the monsters before him—large, bear-like beasts.

In particular, these bear monsters stood upright like humans, with terrifyingly long claws on their limbs. Each claw was nearly as long as the creature was tall.

Just moments ago, the bear monster had used its fearsome claws to block Orion's attack head-on.

"Ugh... Orion... please help me..."

All of a sudden, from further back on the battlefield came the pained howl of lich Vexis, causing Orion's heart to lurch.

"This is bad!"

In a flash, Orion burst into lightning once more, racing toward Vexis.

But the bear monster before him lashed out with blood-red light swirling over its body, its twin claws creating a makeshift cage of talons that trapped Orion.

Orion glanced over, his anxiety boiling into anger.

"I'm following the broodmother's command. Today, I will kill you!"

An emotionless voice emanated from the bear monster's mouth. As soon as it finished speaking, it charged Orion head-on.

Orion raised his trident and met the monster's assault, activating his Eightfold Spear Barrage to parry the raining claws.

He knew that to rescue Vexis, he first had to deal with the bear monster in front of him.

"Kill me? Hahaha, you think you can?"

Brimming with murderous intent, Orion shifted into Titan form and launched Instant Impact, significantly boosting his speed and strength.

"Power Surge—Furious Bear Strike!"

It seemed the bear monster had already anticipated Orion's full-force attack; blood-red mist swirled around its body, concentrating its bloodline power into its right arm.

Under this channeling, the bear monster's left-claw shriveled, while its right arm accelerated and surged with multiplied strength.

"Die, you wretched blasphemer!"

The bear monster's taunt was met with Orion's unrelenting onslaught.

High above the battlefield, a blinding white light flared. Friend or foe, skeleton warriors, small scorpions, and slime molds mutants alike dissolved into ash beneath its brilliance.

Then, after the white light came an unparalleled shockwave blasting out in all directions.

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Accompanied by a thunderous roar, the entire ground caved in, revealing a massive spherical crater.

This hollowed depression spread across the battlefield's front lines for about 30 miles.

No one could deny that the impact between two peak-level legendary beings unleashes a terrifying force.

Even the distant slime molds layer was ripped up and hurled aside by the shockwave.

All at once, the frontline for which the Stoneheart Horde was responsible became a no-man's-land.

Suspended in midair, Orion clutched a handful of life essence. From his right hand all the way to his left shoulder guard, the frozen bone armor had been smashed to pieces.

The helmet covering half of Orion's face had also disappeared. Where the armor was gone, a layer of purple dragon scales shimmered in perfect condition.

Orion turned, glaring furiously at another figure surging forward with murderous intent.

Somewhere on the battlefield, lich Vexis's presence had vanished entirely.

It was clear that the other dark silhouette had already dealt Vexis a fatal blow.

"You will all die!"

With a small detonation, Orion triggered Instant Impact once again.

A second blaze of brilliant white light burst forth, followed by continuous booming explosions.

This time, because the earlier devastation had created a vacuum zone, neither side's cannon fodder troops were caught in the blast.

When the shockwave subsided, Orion stood holding his trident, his upper body bare as though a titan god manifest among mortals.

"Not enough!"

Orion's voice rang out with savage indifference. Sparks of lightning flickered around him, and he dove into the slime molds layer.

Like a madman, Orion slaughtered there for three days and three nights.

Only after realizing the slime molds broodmother wasn't sending any additional Legendary-level combatants did Orion, his face devoid of emotion, walk out from the slime molds layer.

"Lord Orion, by my master's command, we are here to relieve you."

Orion said nothing. He did not nod, merely cast the speaker a glance, then passed silently by the cloaked skeletal being.

"What a cold stare!"

The skeleton made no further comment. Following its orders, countless skeletal warriors poured onto the battlefield, replacing the Stoneheart Horde's bloodline warriors.

One day later, when Orion returned to Soraya City, he spotted lich Vexis and Soraya on the city wall. He was both astonished and overjoyed.

The coolness on Orion's face finally melted away.

"Lord Orion, you must be surprised to see me again."

"Certainly. I thought you were truly gone, and I felt terrible about it. I had no idea how I'd explain this to Arthas."

Orion approached Vexis and Soraya, observing the lich with wonder.

"I'm a lich. Though I can't match some of my master's other subordinates in terms of combat power, when it comes to survivability, I'm second to none."

"Lady Vexis, could you tell me how you managed to stay alive?"

Vexis shook her head, replying calmly, "I didn't survive. That particular body really did die."

"Lord Orion, what you see now is one of my other selves."

Soraya nodded, gazing at Orion earnestly. "I can confirm that. I watched Lady Vexis emerge from the undead tower."

A grin spread across Orion's face. With Vexis not truly dead, the dark cloud that weighed on his mind finally lifted.

He refrained from prying further into how Vexis had pulled off such a feat—after all, it was her personal secret.

Yet knowing Vexis had such an impressive life-saving method made Orion feel all the more comfortable relying on her in battles to come.

What followed were days of rest and further city construction.

Bone City—on the city wall.

"Master, Vexis has sent news that one of her bodies was destroyed."

"The ones responsible were the two peak-level legendary Rending Explosive Bears who killed Greenbone."

"The good news is that your friend finished off both of those Rending Explosive Bears."

Arthas stood with his sword, fully aware of what the Rending Explosive Bears were capable of. One of his best subordinates—a peak-level legendary skeleton—had died at the claws of those parasitic slime molds creatures not long ago.

As for Orion killing the Rending Explosive Bears, Arthas was anything but surprised.

"Send Vexis some materials so she can make another body."

Arthas offered neither sadness nor joy. From his perspective and great combat experience, death and sacrifice were the norms of any battlefield.

"More Legendary-level fungal creatures keep emerging. It looks like our brief respite is coming to an end."

Arthas sighed. He took little pleasure in local victories, instead pondering how the wider situation was sinking into yet another drawn-out war.

Soraya City—Dusk Castle.

After the post-war assembly concluded and his subordinates filed out, Orion sat upon the throne, immersed in thought.

The Ghostbone Armor gifted by Arthas had been mostly destroyed in this latest combat and was obviously no longer usable.

Fortunately, among the supplies Arthas had sent earlier were plenty of decent-quality bone beads.

Repairing the Ghostbone Armor wouldn't be too difficult—just time-consuming.

What truly intrigued Orion now was the layer of dragon scales hidden beneath his own skin.

In his earlier battles with normal Legendary-level powerhouses, the dragon scales had never had an opportunity to shine.

Yet facing the Rending Explosive Bears, Orion realized just how formidable Commander Thresh's gifted dragon scales actually were.

Even amid that crushing force and explosive impact, they remained intact, absorbing part of the shock.

Orion extended a hand, noticing how a dense array of dragon scales covered his skin. Beneath his palm, they felt soft and pliable yet smooth and firm.

He almost had the illusion that these scales were simply part of him.

Recalling the astounding defense they displayed, Orion found himself growing more attached to them by the moment.

He withdrew the dragon scales so they remained concealed under his skin, then closed his eyes to meditate.

Bottomless Abyss—Underworld.

One teleportation array. Two factions. A grand banquet of slaughter.

Countless Dark Worms of the Red Thread Clan perished in battle, while the Stoneheart Horde suffered enormous losses of cave spiders.

In this war, with bloodshed on both sides, a few hundred Skeletal Knights and tens of thousands of skeletal warriors were the real victors.

As cannon fodder corpses piled up, the concentration of death energy in the Underworld increased.

This caused Alpha-level Skeletal Knights like Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, and Desdemona to radiate ever-greater power.

And, as a Shade Valkyrie, Clymene's strength surged more than anyone else's. Not only did her individual capabilities grow, but she also harnessed the Underworld's energy to resurrect others.

After the Red Thread Clan lost two Dark Worms at Alpha level, the remaining insects seemed to receive some order and withdrew from the battle, vanishing into their worm swarm.

Meanwhile, the battlefield meat-grinder continued turning, piling up cannon fodder casualties at every moment.

"I am a Shade Valkyrie, a warrior reborn through death."

"Arise once more, warriors of the horde!"

Chapter 484 484: Summoning of skeleton knights

As soon as Clymene's faintly mysterious voice rang out, the others joined in the chant.

In this low, resonant prayer, the underworld's deathly aura both gathered and diminished.

At the center of the cross-realm teleportation array, a massive summoning circle for Skeleton Knights took form. Swirling clouds of deathly aura merged into the fallen corpses on the ground below.

A moment later, those fallen bodies began to rot, their flesh twisting. One after another, newly formed skeletons emerged from the remains. Wielding sharp white bone blades, they joined the battle.

This was Shade Valkyrie's skill—the Summoning of Skeleton Knights! To awaken newly born Skeletal Knights required a large amount of sacrificial offerings and deathly aura. In the past, Clymene could never attempt this spell. But now, with the cross-realm war underway, it was the perfect moment to cast the summoning.

However, these newborn skeletons were still too fragile. If they survived this war, they would need to absorb plenty of deathly aura before they could advance into true Skeletal Knights. Still, it was hard to imagine a more suitable force for the current battlefield than these fresh undead.

Seeing the countless skeletons rise from corpses and charge the enemy, a small smile formed on Clymene's face. The successful summoning of the Skeleton Knights reinforced her side, reducing casualties among the cave spiders.

Near the cross-realm teleportation array, hidden within the swarm, Loska's will projection let out a mental howl upon witnessing the multitude of skeletons crawling from the wreckage.

"Damn it. That woman warrior even knows summoning spells!"

"No, this won't do. She must be slain, or my people will keep dying in vain!"

"Curse it all!"

With large numbers of skeletons joining the fight, the area around the cross-realm teleportation array bristled with renewed activity. Countless brutal and vicious insects(bugs) surged into the front lines, looking to expand the theater of war.

Meanwhile, the remaining eight Alpha-level oversized bugs of the Red Thread Clan slipped into the insect swarm, launching an assault on the skeletons and cave spiders' defensive formation.

Forced to respond, Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, Desdemona, and several others reentered the fray.

This wave of attacks saw the Red Thread Clan truly display its formidable strength. Behind the front line, many insects of the same type began gathering, unleashing their first assault—a barrage of toxic gas.

The gas spewed from their abdomens, coalescing into poisonous clouds. Wherever the clouds passed, they left the skeleton warriors and knights unaffected, but the cave spiders died in droves.

Right after that came the poisonous liquid. The skeleton warriors and knights were affected by this as well: acid sizzled on their bones, corroding both bone and any remaining bits of rotted flesh. In the worst cases, the poison invaded their bodies and dissolved them entirely within moments.

Faced with such a ruthless onslaught, Clymene had no recourse but to command the skeletons and cave spiders to throw themselves forward, hoping to exhaust the insects' supply of poison gas and venom through sheer sacrifice.

The battle shifted rapidly. In mere moments, the Stoneheart Horde's defensive perimeter was forced back another 200 feet.

"Command them to push forward!"

"We absolutely cannot let the enemy near the arrow tower, or the consequences will be unimaginable!"

These were the orders Clymene conveyed to Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Grendel, and Desdemona.

In truth, the reason Loska's will projection launched such a violent assault was to destroy the three arrow towers surrounding the cross-realm teleportation array. Those towers, unlike the cave spiders or skeleton warriors on the front lines, were immensely powerful. Each arrow that left a tower exploded within the dense insect swarm, inflicting massive damage.

Of course, the arrow towers were only the first target for Loska's will projection. Hiding deep among the attacking swarm, Loska sought to push back the battle lines and ultimately kill Clymene atop the arrow tower.

Three hundred feet... two hundred... one hundred... until only fifty feet remained between the swarm and the tower. Then, from within the swarm, a dark red ray of light suddenly shot out, aimed straight at Clymene's head.

Zzzzzz!

Just then, a bolt of lightning leapt from Clymene's brow, transforming into a brilliant lightning trident. In the blink of an eye, the red beam collided with the trident, flooding the underworld with a flash like daylight.

A deafening boom followed, shaking the entire underworld. Massive slabs of rock tumbled down from the cavern's ceiling, raining onto the battlefield and crushing large swaths of expendable fighters on both sides.

Fortunately, the collapse halted after a minute or two, spurred by a mysterious radiance emanating from the cross-realm teleportation array—otherwise, the destruction would have been catastrophic for both Stoneheart Horde and the Red Thread Clan.

Closer to the front lines, the collision of the crimson beam and the lightning trident packed an enormous punch. That singular strike obliterated the red beam, but the trident shrank significantly, crackling with arcs of electricity, before returning to Clymene's brow.

"Kill them—close in and annihilate the enemy!"

With the hidden will projection dispersed, Clymene raised her warhammer and bellowed, leaping down from the arrow tower and charging into the fight. Immediately, the skeletons and cave spiders mounted a frenzied counterattack.

In the forefront of the swarm, the once-fearsome Alpha-level oversized bugs from the Red Thread Clan flickered out of sight, retreating into the masses to avoid direct confrontation with the Skeletal Knights.

After multiple bouts of engagement, these insects understood that unless they completely crushed the bones, the Skeletal Knights would eventually regenerate and continue fighting.

Moreover, Loska's will projection, before vanishing, left them with hidden commands.

In the Emerald Dream Realm, within Red Moon Valley, the Red Thread Clan's leader Loska opened his eyes, a glint of excitement flashing in them.

Moments ago, he had manipulated his will projection in an attempt to kill Clymene. Though the plan failed after a series of maneuvers, it was still a kind of success. Loska had drawn out Orion's will projection, forcing Clymene to use one of her trump cards.

"I can't teleport over yet. I must be careful—my survival is critical to the clan's future."

Loska was not supremely clever, but he was exceedingly cautious.

A pained look flickered across his face as he deployed another will projection from his body. It fused with a Dark Worm, which then transported it to the underworld.

Chapter 485: Fuck me as hard as you want

Bottomless abyss, underworld.

After pressing the battle lines back, Clymene returned to the arrow tower because Orion had begun communicating with her.

"Sister, that beam of red light was nothing more than a will projection," he said.

"It was most likely sent to probe our strength—to see if I would show up and confirm whether we have the support of a Legendary level will projection on our side."

Clymene gazed out over the battlefield, still uneasy about that will projection she had just encountered. Without Orion's will projection as her trump card, defending this underworld would have been impossible. Although she had already become a Shade Valkyrie, she could feel her power was no match at all against a Legendary level being's will projection.

Even Orion, back in the day, nearly suffered grievous harm when he ran into Lord Ariel's will projection—if it hadn't been for the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms that came to his aid, he would almost certainly have been in dire straits.

"Orion, if there isn't a will projection on my side, is it really impossible for us to resist a Legendary level being?"

Orion fell silent for a moment. He knew the answer as soon as she asked, but he didn't know how to broach the subject with his sister.

Currently, Orion himself was at the peak of Legendary level, and his will projection had also grown stronger. In fact, his will projection could annihilate most ordinary Legendary level foes. This was precisely why Orion had not chosen to return to Blackstone City.

When it came to Clymene's desire to challenge a Legendary level will projection, it would likely still be difficult for her to pull off. Of course, Orion couldn't bring himself to say something so disheartening to his older sister.

"So it really is impossible?"

"I understand."

From Orion's silence, Clymene had guessed the answer.

"Sister, after this war ends, I'll find time to visit the underworld.

I have some Rebirth Stones with me. They'll be just the thing for you and the other Skeletal Knights.

Perhaps at that time, you'll feel at least a little more confident when you next encounter a Legendary level will projection."

Orion offered Clymene a few reassuring words, explaining the function and effects of the Rebirth Stones.

"A little confidence, huh..." Clymene murmured. From Orion, she had learned that the gap between Legendary level and Alpha-level was truly vast. To beings like them, those differences in rank were nothing short of overwhelming.

Meanwhile, the war between the Stoneheart Horde and the Red Thread Clan raged on in the underworld. This was a cross-realm conflict, a war of races—one that would not end until one side was destroyed.

Valkorath Realm, Soraya City.

A swirl of sand drifted in and settled in front of Orion. Soraya stepped forth from the sand and fell straight into Orion's arms. Lowering her head, she kissed him on the chest.

"Honey, you've been sitting on that throne for a whole day and night. Aren't you feeling lonely or cold?"

Soraya looked up at Orion with a playful, sultry smile. Settling herself directly onto his lap, she pressed her firm, curvaceous backside against his hips.

"Honey, do you want to have sex with me?"

"I've already taken off my clothes—how about you?"

With another gust of sand, Soraya's body instantly became bare. All her clothing had transformed into sand and dispersed into the air. At the same time, she let out a series of soft, tantalizing moans right by Orion's ear, rubbing her body back and forth against him.

Her round, firm breasts and enticing hips were on full display. Confronted with such mesmerizing temptation, Orion's hands began to wander of their own accord. He reached up to grasp her breasts, kneading them over and over.

"Mmm... your hands on my breasts feel so wonderful..." Soraya murmured as she moved. Sliding a hand into Orion's pants, she began stroking his already rock-hard cock.

"Ah... oh..."

Her touch made Orion gasp eagerly. He could feel her five nimble fingers gliding slowly over the underside of his tip, while her palm massaged his testicles. Under such intense stimulation, Orion's desire was fully awakened.

The hall's light was somewhat dim; in that subtle glow, the curves of Soraya's breasts, buttocks, and legs were exquisitely alluring. When she arched her back, from her shoulders and chest down to her slender waist, she formed this impossibly seductive silhouette that was mesmerizing beyond words.

Orion scooped Soraya up, taking the chance to shed his own pants. His big, hard cock sprang free, pressing directly against Soraya's rear.

Her eyes sparkled. "Honey, fuck me as hard as you want. Don't hold back—just unleash all your desire on me!"

Orion nodded, holding Soraya tight. From below, he thrust his cock straight into her vagina.

"Mmm... ah... making love feels so divine!"

It was more enchanting than words could describe. Orion had barely started thrusting a few times when Soraya's reaction became intense: she moaned sweetly, and slick fluids started trickling from her entrance.

They maintained that position for a while, after which Orion lifted Soraya onto the throne. Spreading her legs apart, he lay beside her and wrapped his arm around her from behind. Sliding his cock back into her vagina, he began thrusting rapidly, all the while using one hand to fondle her full breasts.

Waves of euphoria pummeled Soraya. Her body was soon drenched in sweat.

"Mm... so good... ah, harder... make me... feel even better..."

Obliging her, Orion quickened his pace, driving his cock in and out of Soraya's vagina in swift strokes. Holding her firmly from behind, he urged her forward.

Almost unconsciously, Soraya, her hair hanging loosely around her shoulders, started rolling her hips up and down against Orion's cock. Each gyration produced a sticky sound, and her full breasts bounced with every movement.

At that moment, Orion seized her waist, guiding her rise and fall in tandem with his hands. Soraya could no longer control her body and matched him move for move, twisting her lithe torso. Orion gripped her swaying breasts with one hand, thrusting insistently with his hips.

"Honey, you're so sensitive... I can feel your vagina contracting, like it's nibbling at me! How many times have you come already today?" Orion whispered hoarsely in her ear.

"Ah... it's unbelievable, making me feel utterly triumphant..."

"Oh..." Midway through their lovemaking, Soraya let her lips part, upper body arching backward. "I'm about to climax again. Let's... reach that peak together..."

Hearing this, Orion held Soraya close and sped up, each thrust sending droplets of shining fluid flying. She was once again carried off to a dizzying height of pleasure.

"Oh, oh, oh... I'm almost there!!" Soraya cried out loudly, swaying her waist in tandem with Orion's frantic thrusts.

Their coupling persisted. Within five hours, Soraya had climaxed at least fifty times.

Finally, Orion reached his climax as well. His cock sent out a flood of semen, all of it shooting deep into Soraya's body.

"Ah... ah... oh..."

In the moment of his release, Soraya's insides seemed to fasten onto Orion's cock like a suction tube, exerting powerful pressure that made him almost dizzy with pleasure. spurts of milky-white fluid poured into her depths, as though his entire being had melted in this indescribable ecstasy.

Soraya's eyes gleamed seductively. She kept her legs tightly clamped together and murmured, "Honey, you're incredible... that was so much in just one go! I feel like my womb is about to overflow..."

...

When the palace gates opened again, Soraya was already leaning against Orion's chest, her attire neatly in place.

"You came to see me. Is there something you want to tell me?"

"Mm-hmm."

Soraya's voice was languid, tired, and irresistibly seductive.

Orion lowered his head and kissed Soraya's hair, catching a unique, exotic fragrance.

"Through your semen, nourished by copious amounts of life essence, all the scorpion soldiers I personally raised have finished hatching."

"Thirty scorpion soldiers, all Alpha-level! Unfortunately, they've reached their limit and can't get any stronger."

Orion, who had been resting with his eyes closed, suddenly opened them and asked, "How many?"

"Thirty scorpion soldiers, all Alpha-level!"

Soraya smiled playfully, as radiant as a blooming desert mariposa lily.

"Aren't I incredible?"

She tilted her head upward, gazing at Orion with eyes that seemed to say, "Choosing me—supporting me—is your greatest and wisest investment."

"Have you seen Vexis?"

Soraya nodded, looking puzzled. She had no idea why Orion mentioned the lich Vexis.

"Ever heard of her master?"

Soraya shook her head, a hint of awe flashing in her eyes.

Orion merely smiled and lifted his gaze to the vast expanse of Soraya City, visible beyond the palace walls.

"Vexis's master is a peak arch lord, and could become a demigod one day."

Arch lord... demigod... Back before she arrived in the Valkorath Realm, these ranks were beyond Soraya's wildest imagination.

"My dear Soraya, Legendary level is only the beginning. I hope that across the long ages ahead, you will all walk by my side until the very end."

Orion's voice echoed—distant and yet close, as though it spoke across both sky and ear.

Suddenly, Soraya found herself marveling at the giant before her. Her man was mysterious, unfathomable, and filled with boundless ambition.

Yet recalling the intimate way Orion had just addressed her, Soraya's heart felt sweet.

No one had ever called her that.

Even the High Priestess who had guided Soraya only alternated between "Saintess" and "Your Majesty."

Hearing Orion softly and tenderly call her his dear, Soraya squinted contentedly and rested against Orion's chest, gazing upon the city that bore her name: Soraya City.

...

Three days later, on the front lines of battle.

It was another rotation. This time, Orion brought Gormathar and Thunderclaw with him.

Gormathar hailed from the Starveil Giant Tribe, while Thunderclaw came from Thunderwood Forest.

Initially, they had only followed Orion out of fear and awe, before arriving in the Valkorath Realm.

But after witnessing Orion's battles against various Legendary-level slime mold mutants, they were fanatically devoted to him.

It was only upon entering the Valkorath Realm that they truly considered themselves part of the Stoneheart Horde.

Naturally, five colossal black scorpions and fifteen scorpion soldiers also accompanied Orion on this campaign.

Whether black scorpion or scorpion soldier, Orion had only brought half of them. The rest stayed behind to defend Soraya City, just in case.

Compared to previous defensive battles, the Stoneheart Horde had come prepared with a large force of small scorpions and powerful elites.

The result was obvious: The Alpha-level Gormathar and Thunderclaw practically felt like they were just here for show, collecting war merit.

In particular, those five giant black scorpions working in tandem with five scorpion soldiers burrowed into the ground, churning up dirt and sand, unleashing a storm of dust within the slime molds layer.

Beneath that sandstorm, the black scorpions, the scorpion soldiers, and the small scorpions all gained a home-field advantage.

Chapter 486 486: Support the war with war

After three days of battle, the Stoneheart Horde had gathered a large quantity of life essence.

Only at this moment did Orion fully realize why Arthas had been urging him to quickly cultivate a Legendary-level broodmother.

During these three days of fighting, although many small scorpions had fallen in battle, their losses were soon converted to an advantage because of lich Vexis. Any small scorpion that died would be turned into an undead shortly thereafter.

In other words, no matter how many cannon fodder Orion lost, his army would continue to grow like a rolling snowball.

That day, Orion finally tasted the first wave of benefits from his Legendary-level broodmother.

"Ms. Vexis, do you know why the slime molds broodmother hasn't sent over any Legendary-level slime molds mutants to our side?"

The reason Orion asked this was because he knew Vexis could definitely contact Arthas's main force and obtain firsthand intel.

"Lord Orion, I'm sorry, but I don't know."

"From the information I received, Legendary-level slime molds mutants appear very frequently on other fronts. As for why one hasn't shown up here, I'm guessing the slime molds broodmother simply doesn't want to risk losing any more Legendary-level subordinates on our battlefield."

In fact, this was not merely Vexis's guess, but a theory from Arthas's team of strategists.

Based on the recent battles and their outcomes, the slime molds broodmother would need to send at least three peak Legendary-level slime molds mutants if she wanted to secure a sure victory against Orion. However, such a lineup would definitely draw the attention of Arch Lord Arthas.

In that event, Arthas would dispatch reinforcements, turning what would have been a minor conflict into a full-scale war. That is something the slime molds broodmother, still recovering from a heavy blow, simply could not afford.

Hence, under these delicate circumstances, Orion's Stoneheart Horde found itself in an almost stress-free plundering phase.

One day later, in Soraya City.

Seated upon the throne, Orion waved his hand and distributed the captured life essence among the Armies and Soraya. Apart from the guards on city wall rotation, everyone else immediately plunged into intense training.

These cycles of three days of battle and seven days of practice allowed Orion's subordinates to steadily grow stronger.

Among the major armies Orion had brought, the bloodline warriors' quality also advanced rapidly. After Orion finished reflecting on his experiences, he focused his mind on the Survivor's Platform.

On the Survivor's Platform, Orion went directly to the trading channel to confirm more than a dozen delayed grain transactions. These trades all came from Horn of Harvest grain merchants.

Over the past several days, those who could maintain stable deals with Orion were genuine business-minded merchants. As for the unscrupulous merchants, Orion declined every single one.

Orion glanced at the scrolling content in the Horn of Harvest public channel. A few profit-driven scammers were stirring up trouble, inciting others to raise grain prices. Everyone who was singled out chimed in. Of course, there were also some sharper merchants who would verbally agree while continuing to trade with regular customers on the sly.

It was just a small public channel, yet Orion saw some survivors trying to control the market by uniting to monopolize the grain supply on the Survivor's Platform. Clearly, Horn of Harvest wasn't the only party doing this. There might be countless other unscrupulous merchants out there in unknown channels, attempting the same shady strategies.

With a quick glance at the grain listings, Orion noticed that most of the prices were around three times higher than normal—totally outrageous.

"Looks like buying grain through the Survivor's Platform and dealing with those merchant-type survivors isn't a long-term solution."

Orion sighed, feeling a sense of urgency. Although Soraya's advancement to Legendary level and the rise of the scorpion tribe appeared glorious, Orion knew too well it was because Arthas and Edward were providing virtually limitless supplies behind the scenes.

Once the war in Valkorath Realm ended, those small scorpions Soraya hatched would become a burden if Orion failed to find them a viable path forward. The Stoneheart Horde's grain crisis would hit immediately. All the advantages the Stoneheart Horde had built would be lost in a flash.

"Stopping the war isn't an option!"

That was the conclusion Orion reached based on the Stoneheart Horde's situation. Centered around Soraya, this giant snowball had to keep rolling and growing. As it did so, it needed to seize extensive resources for the Stoneheart Horde while also gaining more time for further development.

"In other words, we have to support the war with war itself!"

That was Orion's plan. For the giant snowball to keep rolling, the war simply couldn't end.

"If the war in Valkorath Realm wraps up, I'll bring the flames of war to the Emerald Dream Realm."

At that moment, Orion made up his mind. He wouldn't just invade the Emerald Dream Realm on his own; he planned to bring his allies from the Champions Alliance along. That, in essence, would be Orion's way of providing a benefit to those allies, in return for all that they had done so far.

However, before that could happen, Orion would have to help his allies in the Champions Alliance drive the fungal creatures out of Valkorath Realm. After all, Valkorath Realm was now as good as Orion's own territory.

Collecting his thoughts, Orion shifted his attention to the Champions Alliance public channel.

Leonidas: "Damn it, I just lost two valuable subordinates again!"

Leonidas: "Arthas, Alexander, watch yourselves. Some powerful parasitic creatures have appeared on the front lines—slime molds mutants we've never seen before."

Arthas: "You mean those bear-like parasitic creatures?"

Leonidas: "Yes. Those slime molds parasites are fast, strong, and their attacks are terrifyingly sudden."

Arthas: "A few days ago, Hulk slaughtered two of them!"

Edward: "Hulk is doing great!"

Alexander: "Hulk's getting more interesting by the day!"

Kraken: "Unbelievable!"

Leonidas: "Holy fuck, is Hulk really that strong? You've got to be kidding me!"

Arthas: "Are you implying I'm lying, Leonidas?"

Leonidas: "I'm just suspicious. So, Arthas, what can you do about it?"

Arthas: "I could always reduce reinforcements to the southern front. No problem letting you handle more fungal creatures on your own, right?"

Leonidas: "Arthas, we're all good friends. We can talk smack, but don't joke around like that."

Edward: "..."

Alexander: "What a coward!"

Reading this, Orion couldn't help but let out a slight laugh.

Hulk: "Honestly, Rending Explosive Bears really are strong. They lurk in the slime molds layer and launch surprise attacks. Without some serious tricks up your sleeve, even a peak Legendary-level fighter can barely keep up."

Hulk: "Arthas sent a lich with upper Legendary power to help me. Under my watch, that lich was killed in less than three rounds."

Hulk: "If it weren't for the lich distracting a Rending Explosive Bear, I doubt I would've escaped unscathed."

Orion wasn't exaggerating. In that previous battle, he relied on the sheer might granted by his Titan Form and the close-combat skill Instant Impact to stand toe-to-toe with a Rending Explosive Bear.

In the end, he only managed to take down those two Rending Explosive Bears because he had the dragon-scale armor from Commander Thresh, which allowed him to emerge unharmed.

Chapter 487 487: Realm formation

Despite that, the Ghostbone Armor Orion was wearing had also sustained heavy damage. It went to show just how terrifying Rending Explosive Bears truly were.

Leonidas: "I have no idea where the slime molds got those Rending Explosive Bear parasitic creatures. They've forced me to spread my focus thin just to deal with them."

Leonidas: "Hulk, why don't you come over to my side? If we join forces, we'll definitely be able to take down the slime molds layer."

Arthas: "Your subordinates are totally pinned down by the enemy—there's no benefit in going to fight alongside you. In fact, it could even lead to further losses. You seriously haven't realized that these newly emerged Rending Explosive Bears are showing up because of you?"

Leonidas: "Arthas, why do you have to pick on me all the time? Come on, let's settle this one-on-one!"

Arthas: "All right, bring it!"

Orion and Kraken didn't get involved in Leonidas and Arthas's back-and-forth.

Given how many years Leonidas and Arthas had known each other, no amount of jabs or insults ever went too far. They were close enough that they could trade barbs and curses without getting seriously offended. Orion and Kraken, on the other hand, couldn't just pick sides in this kind of banter.

In a situation like this, any sensible person would keep quiet. Once Leonidas and Arthas had vented all they wanted, only then could Orion and Kraken join in on this friendly, stress-relieving banter.

Just when Leonidas and Arthas were about to continue taunting each other, Deputy Commander stepped in and spoke, putting an end to the farce.

Edward: "The realm formation has been fully set up. After we run some tests, I'll activate it in half a month, completely severing the fungal creatures' supply line."

Edward: "By that time, Valkorath Realm will undergo some unusual phenomena and upheavals, and the fungal creatures might launch their strongest assault yet."

Edward: "All of you should get ready and make sure our defensive lines don't collapse!"

When Deputy Commander Edward spoke, the public channel fell silent for a moment before everyone finally responded.

Alexander: "So what do you all think—will the slime molds broodmother step out of the main nest for this assault? Maybe we should just go in for a cheesy assassination. Anyone up for teaming up?"

Leonidas: "Deputy Commander for the win! We've been waiting ages for this day."

Leonidas: "Cut off the fungal creatures' supply, and we'll get through the toughest phase."

Arthas: "Let's hope everything goes smoothly, with no surprises!"

Arthas: "Alexander, there's a lot of pressure on all sides right now, so it's tough for me to leave my post."

Judging by Arthas's response to Alexander, he was the only suitable person in the Champions Alliance to work with Alexander on such a mission. Leonidas's beast armies, on the other hand, had suffered heavy losses, so he couldn't spare himself from his own defensive lines.

Orion and Kraken's responses, however, made them sound like newbies who didn't know what to do or where to start.

Hulk: "Pardon me, but what exactly is a realm formation?"

Kraken: "Big bosses, please tell me what I should be doing."

No one in the public channel helped Orion or pointed Kraken in any direction. Leaving that channel, Orion went directly to Arthas.

"Bro, please tell me—what is a realm formation?"

Arthas seemed to be in the middle of a meeting, and Orion waited ten minutes before finally receiving an answer.

"The Valkorath Realm we're in is itself a planet. A realm formation is an ultra-large magical formation that covers an entire planet."

Shocked!

Orion felt completely astonished by this. He couldn't even begin to imagine just how massive or complex a magical formation that envelops an entire planet would have to be.

"Must be unbelievably difficult to create a realm formation like that, right?"

Orion ventured a guess. Surprisingly, Arthas replied again.

"I only found out recently myself. Ever since Deputy Commander reached demigod level, he's been busy constructing the realm formation for Valkorath Realm."

"It's been over a hundred years since Commander Thresh seized Valkorath Realm, and Deputy Commander has been engraving the realm formation this entire time, from the very beginning."

"How big is the realm formation? I don't know. How hard is it to build? I also don't know."

"I only know that Deputy Commander, who's at demigod level, spent over a century on it."

Orion could tell that even Arthas was left in awe.

"Bro, when Commander took Valkorath Realm, Deputy Commander spent a century creating this realm formation. What's the real purpose behind it all?"

Orion was genuinely curious about these deeper questions, so he didn't beat around the bush.

"The realm formation is essentially the real protective shield for a realm."

"No matter which world we're talking about—if there's a realm formation in place, plus a demigod-level guardian, even an actual god might not be able to shatter the realm formation's defense."

Arthas was vague, and while Orion could picture some of it, he still felt it was all a bit intangible.

"I'll give you an example. Your world is in the midst of a divine war. The reason no demigods or gods have descended upon your world to fight is principally because the realm formation there protects you."

Orion frowned. He had gained clarity on some fundamental truths about worlds, but new doubts kept emerging.

"In a sense, a realm formation is meant to keep out beings with powers at or beyond the demigod level."

"Such high-level beings can use myriad methods to easily wipe out a continent or even an entire world."

"Remember the Godforsaken Land?"

"They had no realm formation. After a certain evil demigod invaded, their world essence was siphoned off."

At that point, Orion finally understood just how crucial a realm formation could be. It also explained why Deputy Commander Edward would devote over a century to constructing one.

If Valkorath Realm had possessed a realm formation from the start, the fungal creatures wouldn't have dared set their sights on it.

"As for the realm formation cutting off the fungal creatures' supply lines—that's merely a minor function."

"Once the realm formation is fully established, any fungal creatures remaining in Valkorath Realm will be our prey."

"In other words, from that point on, our Valkorath Realm will be a genuine base of operations—a safe zone."

"Got it?"

Orion understood perfectly—more than perfectly, in fact. From the information Arthas revealed, Orion had deduced many useful things.

Put simply, as long as Orion stayed loyal to the Champions Alliance, Valkorath Realm would remain an absolutely safe place, serving as a true refuge for the Stoneheart Horde.

In truth, from everything Arthas had said, Orion reached one key takeaway: he absolutely must become a demigod-level powerhouse or higher in order to truly protect himself and to stand on equal footing with those exalted gods hovering above everyone else.

Chapter 488: Clymene's resolve

Bottomless Abyss, Underworld.

The fierce battle had been raging for a long time—it was brutal in every sense of the word.

Crunch!

Grendel was ambushed by a terrifying spiked worm, sent hurtling through the air. Another giant, concealed bug suddenly burst out of the ground, snapping its jaws at Grendel's head.

"Grendel, watch out!"

Thanks to Clymene's shout, Grendel tilted sideways and barely dodged the lethal strike. Even so, one of his arms and half his shoulder were still torn off by the oversized bug.

With a thud, Grendel hit the ground and rolled a good thirty feet or so before steadying himself. Clymene leaped down from the arrow tower, made her way to Grendel's side, and helped him up.

"How bad is it?"

Grendel shook his head. As a skeletal knight, he felt no pain. Yet he knew all too well that the deathly energy within him had plummeted. Not only was his fighting strength impaired, but even his long-term potential was likely diminished.

Clymene raised her right hand. A suction force radiated from her palm; in the blink of an eye, a nearby skeletal warrior was pulled toward her. With a sizzle, she tore away the warrior's entire arm—shoulder and all.

Clymene handed the arm to Grendel, who, without a second thought, attached it to his own missing limb. At once, the bones in Grendel's body began writhing and extending at high speed, quickly assimilating and strengthening this newly grafted skeletal arm.

"Make do with that for now. Once you've recovered a bit, get back into the fight. After the war's over, maybe we can find your original arm."

Grendel nodded without speaking. On the battlefield, arms were expendable—and so was this newly continued life. If it was for the horde, Grendel was prepared to lay down everything.

After calming Grendel, Clymene turned and headed back to the arrow tower.

Right then, a piercing screech came from within the swarm, bringing the entire battlefield to a momentary halt. At once, a bolt of red light flared up from the mass of crawling enemies and formed a blurred worm-shaped silhouette, streaking straight for Clymene's unprotected back.

In that split second, Clymene, even at Alpha level, had no time to react. But at the critical moment, a deep rumble akin to thunder rolled out: the will projection Orion had placed at Clymene's forehead appeared once more.

A lightning trident shot forth, only to be swallowed whole by the worm phantom. Yet in a duel between will projections, victory or defeat depends on whose transcendent power and resolve are stronger—so nothing was decided yet.

Hovering in midair, the crimson worm phantom let out a pained screech, and its shape grew steadily larger. It swelled and swelled, until it could no longer hold itself together. Finally, like an overfilled balloon, it exploded.

The resulting blast wave formed an enormous shockwave that wiped out almost every living thing within a thousand-foot radius. Only a handful of exceptionally strong creatures survived, though most of those

were badly wounded. Among them were three Dark Worms that had been hiding in the swarm—one perished outright, and the other two were gravely injured.

Naturally, Clymene and Grendel, caught near the center of the explosion, were also sent flying.

Although Clymene avoided critical injuries, she had still taken some damage. Grendel, who was already wounded, collapsed where he fell, his soul energy obviously exhausted. It was clear he wouldn't be able to continue fighting.

In the surrounding areas, nearly all skeletal warriors, cave spiders, and dark worms were wiped out—apart from a few who were naturally gifted enough to survive.

Because of the sudden blast, the fierce battle between the two sides paused. A crater-like depression now marred the battlefield, a gaping void where the explosion had occurred.

Roarrrr!!

Squeeeak!!

But within two breaths, both armies' cannon fodder once again hurled themselves into the fray with frenzied roars. The battlefield's meat grinder whirled to life again.

After a brief respite, Clymene, holding Grendel in her arms, jumped back onto the arrow tower to survey the chaos.

Only now did she realize how extraordinary Orion had been—challenging a Legendary level powerhouse while at Alpha level was more than just luck or raw talent. It was something neither words nor simple explanations could fully capture.

Another thing weighed on her mind: Orion's will projection had completely dissipated.

"What should I do now? Will Orion make it back in time? Can we hold off that otherworldly lord?"

Clymene stared at the battlefield, her eyes brimming with anxiety.

"Is this fear I'm feeling? Dread?"

"Am I ready to face death again? This time, I may not even have the chance to fall into eternal darkness."

"I am Clymene, from the Giant Tribe!"

"That matters!"

"Because even if I fall, someone will remember me!"

"..."

She didn't know how much time passed before the turbulent emotions inside her finally settled.

Death. Clymene had tasted it once before—it was anything but pleasant. Still, for the Horde, and for Orion, she wouldn't hesitate to die a second time.

That was Clymene's resolve!

"Roar!"

Standing atop the arrow tower, her hair blowing in the wind, Clymene let out a thunderous howl—a sort of dirge for the soul, broadcasting her determination to every Skeletal Knight in earshot.

Vargrum, Mordak, Zorn, Balgor, Desdemona, and the others all sensed Clymene's will and responded with their own hoarse howls. Even Grendel, lying behind Clymene, opened his jaw in a silent roar.

...

Emerald Dream Realm, Red Moon Valley.

Loska, lord of the Red Thread Clan, opened his eyes, light blazing within. Through his renewed efforts, he'd finally worn down the enemy's lingering will projection, depriving the distant foe operating the teleportation array of their final trump card.

"Caution. Yes, I must remain cautious."

"There's no rush—now is not yet the time to descend in person."

Muttering to himself, Loska soothed his excitement in a tone almost as if he were coaxing a child. Closing his eyes again, after a few moments, another will projection split away from his body and hid itself inside a Dark Worm near the teleportation array.

However, compared with the previous two times, this will projection was much weaker. That was because it was being sent on a probe mission—to test whether the enemy still had anything left up their sleeve. Put simply, it was doomed to die. Thus, Loska had no intention of investing too much power into it.

Suppressing the agony of rending his soul yet again, Loska channeled his transcendent power. The teleportation array flashed, and the Dark Worm vanished, transported away.

Chapter 489: Purification Tower

Valkorath Realm, Soraya City.

Orion opened his eyes upon the throne, fully informed of the intricate situation unfolding in the underworld. Yet there was no hint of concern on his face—only deep contemplation.

"Just two collisions of will projection are enough to deplete mine," he murmured. "It seems the opponent's strength is roughly at a mid-level Legendary stage."

From his clash with Loska's will projection, Orion had gained a rough sense of his adversary's prowess. As he continued to project how events might unfold, a giant guard entered the palace, informing Orion that Onyx was waiting outside.

"Let the prophet in."

Moments later, Onyx trotted into the hall, brimming with excitement. "Lord, I've finished constructing that building you requested!"

At his words, Orion's eyes lit up. He strode down from the throne. "Prophet, wait here for a moment."

He then turned and disappeared into the forbidden grounds within Dusk Castle, merging a special structure known as the Purification Tower into the territory core.

Within ten minutes, Orion emerged from the restricted area.

"All right, Prophet, show me the way."

"This way, please!"

Onyx was well-accustomed to Orion's disposition. Though Orion could be stern regarding important matters, he was approachable in his manner. Without further ado, Onyx led Orion toward the city's central barracks.

Truth be told, in the spacious Soraya City, Orion could see the Purification Tower from a distance the moment he left the castle. The structure was a triangular, pagoda-like tower built of a special stone that mimicked wood. Composed of a base, a main tower body, and a crowning section, it stretched to about 900 feet in height and was divided into nine levels.

As Orion drew closer, he realized how rough the Purification Tower still appeared. There were no carved ornamentations or inscribed runes—at a single glance, it looked like little more than a plain stone tower.

Orion instructed Onyx to clear out the nearby people. He then merged a miniature Purification Tower into the stone structure. In mere moments, the transformation became visible to the naked eye.

The tower's height shrank from 900 feet down to about 500 feet. At its base emerged eight enormous statues of mysterious beasts, radiating an imposing aura. All across the tower's surface, magical runes that Orion could not decipher began to appear. Even the top of the tower grew four upward-pointing spikes, lending it a new ferocity.

After that, from top to bottom, the Purification Tower glowed with a faint white light that pushed away surrounding mist and dust, continuing to shine steadily. It truly was a special, luminous structure, and even the lich Vexis was awestruck at the sight.

"Purification Tower! Even seeing such a unique structure again, I still can't make sense of the magical runes etched on it."

The transformation of the Purification Tower caught Vexis's attention, who had been in her undead tower extracting death energy.

Meanwhile, others among the Stoneheart Horde also looked up, marveling at the first real building in Soraya City besides Dusk Castle. (Vexis's portable undead tower didn't count—once the war ended, she would pack it up and relocate.)

"Lady Vexis," Orion ventured, "does Arthas's territory contain many structures like this?"

"How could it? Up until now, my master has managed to build only three Purification Towers of this kind," Vexis replied. "Lord Orion, the special uses of a Purification Tower exceed what you can imagine."

Orion nodded, not denying her claim. Though he knew the Purification Tower had purifying capabilities, he lacked specifics on its full power.

"Please enlighten me, Lady Vexis," he said respectfully. Vexis, startled by Orion's deference, hastened to respond.

"I wouldn't dare call it 'enlightenment,' but I can offer a concise explanation: as long as someone's strength is below demigod, any negative status can be purified by the Purification Tower."

Orion felt a jolt of shock. "Below demigod?"

"Yes!"

"And it can purify all negative conditions?"

"It can!"

"Including curses?"

"Including those!"

Orion's questions were earnest, and Vexis's answers equally so. For a moment, Orion felt an urge to rush into the Purification Tower and cleanse the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms from his body on the spot.

But he resisted the impulse. Back when Orion was merely at the Alpha level, the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms was indeed a ticking time bomb. However, since advancing to Legendary level, and through

deeper understanding of transcendent power and faith energy, Orion had gained new insights into the curse.

The mysterious Flower Goddess who cast it likely never expected him to ascend to Legendary so quickly and suppress it. Moreover, Orion's mind had already hatched plenty of plans involving her.

Besides, Orion could always use the Alpha-level belt, the Curse of Sorrow, to keep the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms in check. It was no longer an imminent threat—he could remove it whenever he wished.

Putting those thoughts aside, Orion continued to listen to Vexis.

"In the southern region guarded by that arch lord, there's a dreadful form of slime-mold life called Rotten Flowers. They spread minuscule spores across the battlefield, making them nearly impossible to defend against. Rotten Flowers grow within flesh, bloom, then take over the host's body and invade the soul."

As she spoke, a hint of fear flickered in Vexis's eyes, as though she were recalling some harrowing memory. "Many of the arch lord's subordinates were infected by these spores, eventually mutating into slime-mold abominations that became our enemies."

"Lord Orion, those parasitic creatures you encountered before had been transformed by these fungal beings," Vexis continued, her tone deadly serious. "If people return here in time, this Purification Tower can cleanse the minuscule spores spread by Rotten Flowers. Lord Orion, if my master or Leonidas find out you've built a Purification Tower here, they'll definitely cram Soraya City full of people."

Orion frowned. From Vexis's explanation, he realized he had underestimated the tower's capabilities. In truth, Orion initially wanted the Purification Tower primarily for purifying the attribute of Lord's Stone. He never anticipated it would bring so many pleasant surprises.

"Well then," he said under his breath, "the Purification Tower looks to be far more powerful than I imagined..."

Chapter 490: Stay composed

Blackstone City, North Gate Wall.

Lilith stood in command, gazing intently at the battlefield beyond the walls.

Dark creatures were attacking, but given Blackstone City's greatly enhanced strength and the multitude of arrow towers, these dark creatures outside the city posed no serious threat. What worried Lilith, however, was the underworld beneath the bottomless abyss.

Because of this, Lilith had also sent Rendall to the underground fissure to help Lorelia guard the bottomless abyss.

High in the sky, an eagle's piercing cry rang out, followed by a cacophony of cawing ravens.

"This time, we'll have to rely heavily on Rayden!"

To be honest, at this moment on the battlefield, Thunderhawk Rayden had already become the sharpest blade of the Stoneheart Horde. Not only did Rayden and his flock of plague crows eliminate threats from the air, they also dove down from time to time to launch assaults on the dark creatures on the ground. With Thunderhawk Rayden in action, two Alpha-level dark creatures hidden among the monster hordes still refused to show their faces.

"Whitefur, you should go too!"

"Master, I must protect you!"

"Go. Only by fighting can you grow stronger—strong enough to protect me."

"But..."

When it came to battle, someone from the warlike frost giant race like Whitefur yearned for the thrill of combat. Yet he also knew his duty was to keep Lilith safe.

"Go now. For me, for yourself—hunt down more dark creatures!"

"At the moment, you're still not strong enough to protect me."

Those words stung, but they were the truth.

Whitefur hesitated for a moment, then jumped down from the city wall to join the hunting team, charging straight at the dark creatures. Lilith smiled as she watched Whitefur's broad back recede, feeling a trace of warmth and tenderness.

But that hint of tenderness was soon replaced by worry. A succubus-bloodline warrior approached and whispered in her ear.

"Elder Lorelia sent word that underworld defenses are currently holding, but both sides are locked in battle with no sign of victory for either."

"Elder Lorelia also said Orion's sister has run out of trump cards."

That bit of information made Lilith's heart jolt. She almost lost her composure.

"I see. You can head back now. Let me know if there's any further news."

"Understood!"

Once the succubus-bloodline warrior was gone, Lilith slowly let out a breath.

"Calm down... stay composed... I must remain calm!"

"If this happened, Orion surely knows about it."

"Since Orion hasn't passed any messages to me, it means his sister's not in immediate danger and he must have some plan."

"What I need to do now is focus on the task at hand—defending Blackstone City."

A freezing wind whipped through the air, stirring Lilith's hair. She forced herself to appear unusually calm, bestowing endless confidence and resolve on the bloodline warriors outside the walls.

The night was dark, the wind blew more fiercely, and snow began to fall.

"Your heart is uneasy."

All of a sudden, in the midst of that wind and snow, a cool, clear voice sounded at Lilith's side. The wind ceased, and the snow halted. Lumi, dressed in a white gown, appeared on the wall and stood beside Lilith.

"Is it because of them?"

With a wave of Lumi's hand, the wind rose, snow surged, and countless little snow monsters emerged from the drifts, tearing into the dark creatures besieging the city.

Lilith turned her head and, seeing that familiar figure, felt the tension in her heart ease.

"Lumi, you came—"

Before Lilith could finish, she furrowed her brow, eyes filled with shock. Why? Because in that very moment, Lilith couldn't sense Lumi's level of power at all, nor even detect Lumi's aura.

"Lumi, you... you..."

"Orion gave me a Lord's Stone. I've advanced."

Lumi regarded Lilith, speaking nonchalantly about her new Legendary-level power. To Lumi, an elemental lifeform who had immediate access to a Lord's Stone, ascending to Legendary rank was merely a matter of time. Having succeeded now just meant her innate talent was decent, and she felt little need to make much of it.

It never crossed Lumi's mind to show off in front of Lilith. First, because showing off simply didn't suit Lumi's nature. Second, Lumi knew that once Lilith reached the Alpha peak, Orion would do the same for her—helping Lilith advance to Legendary level as well.

"That's wonderful!"

"Lumi, come with me!"

Lilith's shock melted into a surge of delight. She stepped forward, took Lumi by the arm, and led her along the city wall at a brisk pace toward the underground fissure. As they walked, Lilith hastily told Lumi about the current situation and the difficulties in the underworld.

Underground fissure, entrance to the bottomless abyss.

"What's happening down there right now?"

Lorelia couldn't recall how many times Rendall had asked that very question.

She was patient with Rendall because when she was young, most of the Stoneheart Horde's resources had been personally delivered to her by Rendall. Rendall had placed great hopes on Lorelia, and in turn, Lorelia held deep respect and admiration for this giant elder.

"There was a huge explosion. Orion's sister got injured, and Master's will projection vanished!"

"Also, one of Clymene's subordinates is on the verge of death!"

"And most of my little spiders... so many of them died already."

"So far... we haven't detected any new will projection..."

As Lorelia went on, she grew visibly distressed, pouting her lips and looking close to tears.

Since the Stoneheart Horde's rise, they had provided countless resources to the cave spiders, and Lorelia had worked hard to hatch millions of spiderlings for the horde.

Because she personally nurtured those cave spiders, she knew better than anyone how many resources it took to bring them to life. Now they were dying in droves. As the broodmother of the cave spider clan, Lorelia mourned not only the loss of those resources but also the loss of her own children.

Hearing this, Rendall stamped his foot repeatedly beside the bottomless abyss. He desperately wanted to leap into the underworld and aid Clymene.

Once, Clymene had fallen in battle, and Rendall hadn't been able to rescue her. Confronted with the same dire situation, he paced in circles anxiously. After hearing Lorelia's account of the carnage in the underworld, Rendall became even more agitated.

Just then, a sudden gale swept through deep cracks beneath Blackstone City. Bitterly cold winds roared, bringing flurries of snow with them.

"Who goes there?"

Lorelia, who spent most of her time sleeping in the underground fissure, was intimately familiar with the local weather and temperature. The blast of ice-cold wind immediately put her on alert. Rendall spun around at once, spiked club already in hand.

"It's me!"

"And Lumi!"

Lilith's pleasant voice arrived.