

Titan King 511

Chapter 511 511: Life or death?

Sizzle, sizzle!

The ancient giant-horned whale's sharp, pointed bone spines kept scraping across Orion's body. For a moment, draconic scales shimmered on Orion's skin, only to be quickly sliced open. Huge wounds appeared everywhere on his body—some even pierced right through.

Yet, against such a formidable foe, Orion refused to surrender.

"WAAAGH!"

All the pressure, all the blood, and all the hope converged onto the trident in Orion's hands. Gripping it tightly, he turned himself into a living arrow, continually charging through the ancient giant-horned whale's body.

This was Orion's final onslaught.

While Orion pushed forward, the ancient giant-horned whale repeatedly invoked its bone sword cage, attempting to halt his advance. Especially when it realized Orion was aiming for its head, it understood that this wasn't a mere desperate struggle, but a true fight to the death.

For Orion, breaking free had been straightforward in its logic: either he would perish mid-charge, or he would leap across a gap in power and slay this Arch Lord-level broodmother counterpart before him.

Life or death?

Sometimes in life, you just have to roll the dice, don't you?

...

Titanion Realm, Blackstone City.

This time, there weren't many dark creatures attacking Blackstone City. Though several Alpha-level dark creatures did show up, Rendall and the thunderhawk took them down. As usual, Lilith stood atop the city wall, directing the larger battlefield.

Now that Lumi had descended onto the underworld, Lorelia no longer had to send troops there nonstop. She instead dispatched large numbers of small spiders to the wall in support of the fight.

Beyond the city, bloodline warriors from the Stoneheart Horde rode their contracted cave spiders side by side with Rendall, ferociously slaughtering the dark creatures.

Long ago, when the Stoneheart Horde warriors couldn't find suitable mounts, they would contract certain cave spiders that showed promising potential. Those contracted cave spiders would no longer receive Lorelia's care; instead, the bloodline warrior who signed the pact would handle their upkeep.

As time passed and the population of various tribes grew, so did the number of people contracting cave spiders.

Now, Rendall's Hunting Party includes a cave spider army of well over ten thousand. Not only does this spider force excel at hunting, but in certain unique terrains, their combat power multiplies.

Observing the cave spider army ruthlessly cutting down dark creatures outside the city, Lilith's face gradually lit with a smile. Dark creatures could no longer be called a threat; instead, they'd become a resource to strengthen the horde.

Lilith once again brushed her abdomen, where the pulse she felt seemed more active than usual.

...

Underworld, near the cross-realm teleportation array.

Lumi stood atop an arrow tower, gazing out at the teleportation platform. Suddenly, she glanced down at the structure beneath her feet as if sensing something. For an instant, it felt as though the arrow tower itself pulsed with life, carrying a familiar presence.

She wasn't sure if it was just her imagination, but Lumi sensed a slight shift in her contract with Orion—only for it to vanish just as quickly.

"Was that him?"

Lumi murmured, still unsure. But she didn't leave her post. She had promised Orion she would safeguard this place. Lumi was simple, and sometimes simplicity means unwavering conviction.

...

Valkorath Realm, Bone City.

After a brilliant flash of light, Arthas emerged from his death domain. More precisely, the death domain had been shattered. Appearing alongside him was the slime molds broodmother, both severely injured.

Arthas, however, looked the worse for wear. His longsword was snapped in half, its flames extinguished long ago. His left arm and right leg were both missing, leaving him little more than a skeletal figure propped on the city wall.

Yet, in this form, Arthas radiated an even stronger regal majesty, standing there like a war banner, guiding his followers and his soldiers.

"I, the Skeleton King, am undying!"

His voice was steady and low, echoing in the broodmother's ears.

The slime molds broodmother was in a critical state. Though her slime molds layer kept sending power surging into her body, some wounds simply couldn't be healed by the layer alone.

Her upper torso boasted countless sword gouges, each one still blazing with flame. Neither the broodmother's might nor the slime molds layer could extinguish those fires.

"No one is truly immortal!"

"Aaaaargh..."

The broodmother let out a cry of pain and rage. At once, the slime molds layer rose like a colossal wave, overwhelming Bone City. Arthas let out a furious roar as well, raising his broken sword high.

In Bone City, a tide of undead poured from the undead towers, while countless bones crawled from the mass graves. Clashing mercilessly, the undead tide and the slime molds wave crashed against each other. Terribly wounded, Arthas and the broodmother clashed once more, with no victory decided, no outcome certain.

...

Meanwhile, near Soraya City.

Despite all his injuries and the risk to his life, Orion launched a final assault but never reached the ancient giant-horned whale's head. Sensing mortal danger, the whale had thrown everything into one last ultimate move.

Deep Sea Detonation!

Compressing its power ceaselessly, the ancient giant-horned whale gathered every shred of its strength around Orion's position. Orion's body was enclosed in an unimaginably dense energy field.

Just before the detonation, the whale's form rose high into the air.

In midflight, an enormous deep-blue orb suddenly flared. After just a short flicker and expansion, it released a light a hundred times brighter than the sun—an intensely hot, blinding radiance. Nearby fungal creatures that turned to stare curiously were struck blind on the spot.

Then came a thunderous boom that resounded across the land. Dazzling glare, a deafening explosion, and a mushroom cloud like a nuclear blast—it was followed by hurricane winds, tsunamis, and blankets of ash.

Everything nearby was swept away, utterly obliterated. Even the sky rippled with the force of the blast, forming a vast, outward-expanding ring.

It was an utterly cataclysmic Deep Sea Detonation from the ancient giant-horned whale, an upper arch lord level broodmother counterpart.

As for Orion, his body, returned to its normal size, fell from the sky like a piece of charred coal.

...

Soraya City remained locked in combat.

At the sight of that distant blue glow, the lich Vexis took note. Though the intense light did not blind her, it made her deeply uncomfortable.

Even from this far away, the suicidal strike of an arch lord still carried unimaginable force.

After the roar of the explosion and the tremors that followed, Soraya appeared on the city wall as well.

"What happened?"

"An Arch Lord level battle."

"Who won?"

"I don't know."

"But I can't sense Orion's presence anymore!"

Chapter 512: Claw of the Reaper

Soraya felt a surge of panic. After that thunderous blast, she had sensed Orion's aura—just for an instant, yet she was certain it was there.

"In a blast like that, no one below Arch Lord level could possibly survive!" Lich Vexis spoke these words with a hint of regret, but primarily with reverence.

Far away, in Bone City.

A dazzling light and the terrifying roar of the explosion rang out; of course Arthas and the slime molds broodmother both noticed it.

Their expressions darkened, looking more grim than ever.

Arthas thought there was no way someone at Legendary level could live through such a catastrophic blast.

The slime molds broodmother, on the other hand, believed her broodmother counterpart had perished and that no reinforcements would arrive now.

"Is Orion truly dead?"

Arthas murmured quietly. He knew that even when he himself was at a Legendary level, he would never survive a detonation of that magnitude against a broodmother counterpart.

"Fuck!"

"I'll make sure that the slime molds broodmother goes to the grave with you!"

Arthas flew out from the slime molds layer and returned to Bone City.

In his hand were over a dozen Lord's Stones and several clusters of life essence.

Among them was the Lord's Stone he had obtained in a trade with Orion.

Arthas opened his massive jaws and swallowed everything in one gulp.

In a mere three seconds, his missing arm and leg began regenerating at a rate visible to the naked eye.

Within moments, Arthas was completely restored.

However, this recovery was unnatural, and his current state was highly unstable.

Splurt! Splurt! Splurt! Splurt!

Arthas's four limbs exploded one after another, leaving only his head and torso, which dropped onto the city wall.

Yet at this moment, Arthas had gone mad. He roared in a wild frenzy.

"Faith, body, the power of death...take all you want!"

"Come forth, Claw of the Reaper!"

This was a sacrificial method. Arthas had devoured a huge amount of Lord's Stones and life essence to gain that raging power. Combined with the faith energy he had collected, his limbs served as the medium and were fully offered up as a tribute.

In a space beyond mortal comprehension, an unknown God of Death responded to Arthas.

From the void, the fabric of space tore open. A claw covered in runes and floating with corpse-fumes emerged in utter silence, seizing the slime molds broodmother in an unrelenting grip.

A golden light radiated from the broodmother's body, but it faded the moment it touched the claw.

Crack!

The body of the slime molds broodmother, Gloob, was torn to shreds and instantly absorbed by the Reaper's Claw, leaving no trace behind.

"Keh keh keh... Ga ga ga..."

A hideous, malevolent laugh echoed through the air, lingering in the minds of all survivors like a nightmare.

The Reaper's Claw vanished back into the rift in space, gone without a trace.

On the wall, the utterly exhausted Arthas issued his final command.

"Proceed as normal—wait for my return!"

As soon as he spoke, the greatest Skeleton King of the Necro Realm fell into a deep slumber.

...

During the great war, near Soraya City.

At the spot where Orion had crashed, a strange scene took place.

Zilan...in this world, that name symbolizes both gentleness and courage.

It is a flower of formidable adaptability, able to take root in the harshest of environments.

In the massive explosion, Orion's body was not annihilated entirely, thanks to the protection of his Titan Form.

Still, his condition was dire—he was nearly burnt to a crisp.

Strangely, upon Orion's chest, a pattern appeared: the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms.

A Zilan had taken root in Orion's body, occupying him fully.

"I told you...all that you are shall one day belong to me!"

"You managed to endure arch lord-level power while still at Legendary rank. Your potential is more than enough to become my divine servant."

"Now it's time to hand over everything you have!"

In a space unknown, a Flower Goddess who had scattered her seed into this plane channeled tremendous divine power into it.

Within the Valkorath Realm, the Zilan sprouting from Orion's body multiplied before one's very eyes.

Within moments, vast fields of blossoms spread out, as far as the eye could see—like a dream, yet tinged with terror.

In every region overwhelmed by the Zilan, all slime molds mutants became unwilling fertilizer.

Nowhere was this more evident than within the slime molds layer. As soon as the flowers touched it, they grew madly.

Clearly, the Zilan had its sights set on the power and nutrients within that slime molds layer.

In just a few moments, the area where Orion had fallen was transformed into a sea of flowers.

A gentle breeze sent ripples through that floral ocean, the swaying Zilan like soldiers cheering in triumph.

Orion's body was already ensnared by countless silver roots and stems. The energy and nutrients the Zilan drew from the slime molds layer were rapidly poured into him.

Orion's body, receiving new life, began to replenish its life energy.

The Curse of a Hundred Blossoms that had marked Orion's chest spread over his entire form, leaving not even his pupils untouched.

If anyone had come close, they would have noticed two Zilan blooming in Orion's eyes.

But Orion, trapped in his own consciousness, was gradually slipping away.

...

High above, the realm formation, which had been shaking under the onslaught of meteors, abruptly regained stability.

Streams of rich world essence, channeled through the World Tree at the continent's center, poured into the realm formation.

The realm formation radiated a seven-colored glow and destroyed every meteor approaching Valkorath Realm.

"We've won!"

Demigod Edward's imposing voice echoed across the sky, brimming with joy and a hint of self-satisfaction.

This entire demigod-led battle, orchestrated by him, had ultimately ended in his favor.

The slime molds mother deity ceased its assault—there was no point in continuing.

"Is it all over...?"

The voice of the slime molds mother deity carried slight regret.

She felt remorse at failing to conquer Valkorath Realm in time and secure this resource-rich world for her own people.

"Release my subjects!"

"In return, I will form a contract with you, agreeing not to reveal this world's spatial coordinates."

"Otherwise, I will draw enemies to you in endless waves."

The slime molds mother deity spoke with authority. It was an offer of exchange, not simply a threat.

"That's impossible!"

Deputy Commander Edward rejected the demigod's demand. With the realm formation raised, all fungal creatures left in Valkorath Realm were nothing more than fresh meat waiting to be slaughtered.

Yet at that moment, a voice spoke quietly into Edward's ear.

"Agree."

"But only return the three slime molds broodmothers that are still alive."

Chapter 513: Is he dead?

This was Commander Thresh's voice. Deputy Commander Edward had known him for countless years—he was far too familiar with it.

Edward did not ask why. Instead, he turned to the slime molds mother deity, expressionless, and changed his statement.

"I agree to your terms, but I can only release three slime molds broodmothers."

"One broodmother has already fallen in battle, and the remaining slime molds mutants are our spoils of war."

The moment Edward's words faded, the slime molds mother deity responded.

"Fine!"

Edward was momentarily stunned, but in the end, he said nothing further.

Controlling the realm formation, he released the remaining three slime molds broodmothers. Without another word, the slime molds mother deity took them, tore open a portal, and departed the Valkorath Realm.

"Commander...you're awake...?"

Before Edward could finish speaking, Commander Thresh's voice interrupted him once again.

"Not fully awake yet. But I must force myself to regain consciousness for a moment, because something very important needs to be done."

"I had you draw that slime molds mother deity here so you would come to terms with the true extent of your own power."

"As for those fungal creatures, Arthas, Alexander, and Leonidas have all gained what they needed. Our objectives have been met."

"We mustn't drive the slime molds mother deity into a corner. In the future, she may not be our enemy."

"We, too, need allies!"

Deputy Commander Edward nodded. He understood perfectly well that demigods were not at the apex of power in this world. The stronger one becomes, the deeper the sense of one's own insignificance. This realm concealed many more horrifying beings.

While Edward was mulling all this over, Commander Thresh's voice came once more.

"Arthas has fallen into slumber. By the time he wakes, I expect the Champions Alliance will have yet another demigod-level warrior among its ranks."

"But Orion might be in trouble—I came here specifically on his account."

As Thresh spoke, two stunningly brilliant blades of light formed in his left and right hands.

"Take these and help Orion solve his problem!"

"If you delay much longer, Orion might be in real danger!"

...

In the Valkorath Realm, the assault by the slime molds mutants suddenly abated.

With the broodmothers gone, the slime molds layer began retreating, heading back toward the sea.

Not only in the northern region but in the other four major war zones as well, the same retreat took place.

Leonidas, Alexander, and the others, after receiving word from Deputy Commander Edward, knew the crisis was over.

They hurried to Bone City.

However, by that time Arthas had already entered a deep slumber and been moved into the depths of Bone City by his minions.

Deputy Commander Edward, Alexander, and Leonidas did not see Arthas, as his subordinates refused to admit them. Yet having sensed Arthas's aura and confirmed he was safe, the trio left soon after.

Though his energy was greatly diminished, there was no risk of Arthas perishing outright.

"Let's go see Hulk together."

Deputy Commander Edward turned around and, with a single gesture, conjured a magic circle that enveloped Alexander and Leonidas.

In the next moment, space rippled, and the three vanished in teleportation.

...

Near Soraya City, the fighting had not stopped.

Even though the slime molds layer had signaled a retreat, they had pushed too far into their advance and could not simply pull out without losses. The battle would continue for quite some time.

According to Deputy Commander Edward's expectations, the next phase would be a long campaign of driving out the slime molds.

About 100 miles away from Soraya City, Edward, Alexander, and Leonidas floated in midair, all slightly taken aback.

"A sea of flowers?"

"What a remarkable plant—using the slime molds layer as fertilizer."

"No, wait, there's divine power here!"

Leonidas, who spoke, was amazed to see such a field of blossoms. Ever since the fungal creatures overran the Valkorath Realm's outer territories, virtually all original beasts and plant life had been consumed. That a sea of flowers would appear here was astounding indeed.

However, Leonidas quickly sensed the presence of divine energy.

"This is definitely divine power. Hulk's aura is gone. His body must have been stripped away."

Edward was more versed in divine forces than Leonidas and Alexander. He felt it keenly: the divine energy within these flowers was purer than that of any demigod.

Put simply, this patch of flowers was the handiwork of a genuine god.

"What has this guy gotten himself into, that he actually provoked a god?"

Alexander was just as curious. He and Leonidas had been among the Champions Alliance's most trouble-prone members for as long as they'd been awakened and then ascended to Arch Lord—but they had never offended a god.

If Orion were conscious, he might have bragged about his own audacity: because he had raped the body of a goddess's avatar seed.

"Good grief, we'd better clear out these things right away. Haven't you noticed they're even more aggressive than the mutated slime molds?"

Leonidas extended his senses and quickly discovered how Zilan was ravenously drawing nourishment from the slime molds layer.

"That's exactly why I'm here."

Deputy Commander Edward chanted an incantation, and the ground beneath the flower sea rose in levels like steps, cutting it off from the slime molds layer.

After all, the plan for the slime molds layer was to treat it like a flock of sheep raised in the Valkorath Realm for Champions Alliance members to train with and profit from. They couldn't just let the Zilan devour it on a whim.

Next, countless wind blades appeared in the midst of the flower field, shredding every Zilan into pieces.

Then came an ocean of flames, and every last Zilan was reduced to ash.

The Zilan fought back. In the flames, countless new sprouts tried to draw power from the fire and grow. But within the blaze were wind blades that slashed these fresh sprouts to pieces again.

"This power...does it have a will of its own?"

Leonidas spoke in alarm, having sensed something profoundly unusual.

"It hasn't developed true sentience—only an awareness of danger, prompting it to react accordingly."

Deputy Commander Edward offered a terse explanation and intensified his cleansing efforts.

The divine power in the Valkorath Realm was merely a fragment, and for him, eradicating it was not difficult at all.

Now that the realm formation was complete, even if a god were to appear in person, Deputy Commander Edward felt confident they could respond.

"Let's go. Hulk is over there!"

At that moment, the sea of flowers looked as though it had been frozen in time. The frantic growth of the Zilan was brought to a halt.

Deputy Commander Edward stepped deeper in, finding a spot where the Zilan were thickest.

He reached out and brushed them gently aside. Instantly, the purple blossoms turned to dust.

Amid the tangle of Zilan roots, Orion's body was revealed, fully healed.

He was sheathed in silver stems, and tiny silver filaments kept sprouting out of him.

Furthermore, Orion's aura was utterly gone.

"Hulk...is he dead?"

Leonidas exclaimed, and Alexander, standing beside him, frowned.

"He's not dead yet—but he's very close!"

Chapter 514: Dad! Mom! Is that really you?

Edward lightly waved his right hand, and the silver vines coiled around Orion disintegrated into ash.

This feat demonstrated Edward's command of magic—an expertise that could only be described as unparalleled.

With the vines gone, Orion's body collapsed.

Edward reached out and caught Orion.

"I need to get bigger if I'm going to carry a Giant that size!"

Leonidas heard this and immediately enlarged his own body.

Edward placed Orion on Leonidas's back and carefully examined Orion's condition.

"It's a curse."

"Under normal circumstances, Hulk wouldn't have been felled by this kind of curse."

"But it must have been infused with divine power at the moment Hulk was critically injured, which intensified its effect."

"Hulk is now trapped in his own sea of consciousness. If we'd arrived any later, he'd be lost forever."

"At that point, all we'd see is a puppet—and that might very well spell disaster for the Valkorath Realm."

Seeing Orion, Deputy Commander Edward finally let out a sigh of relief.

At the same time, he gained a new appreciation for Commander Thresh's abilities.

Edward remained silent and took out the pair of radiant knife-lights Thresh had given him.

The shimmering blades appeared and immediately drilled into Orion's eyes.

The eyes are the windows to the mind, the lanterns by which we observe the outside world.

To save Orion, one has to delve deep into his inner self, down into his subconscious.

The subconscious is a mysterious place, even for a god.

Here, what Orion sees, hears, and thinks are all reflections of his truest thoughts.

In this world, Orion never really died.

But he didn't know if he was dying now.

According to the information his sister Clymene once let slip, when Giants die, they appear in some strange space beneath a dazzling sun.

"Where am I?"

"Have I died in battle?"

Orion always assumed death would be darkness, so his subconscious was nothing but emptiness.

An endless darkness, an eternal void devoid of everything—no sound, no light, no breath.

Time didn't seem to exist here either, or at least Orion couldn't sense its passage.

The intense silence and utter stillness gradually filled Orion with helplessness and fear.

He tried to get through this nightmare using sleep, hope, dreams—anything at all.

But the present moment was an endless stretch of pure chaos.

There was no end to this world; darkness was its only constant.

In his muddled state, Orion occasionally saw some familiar faces.

"Dad..."

"Mom..."

"Sis..."

...

Outside, Leonidas turned his head to look at Orion, then glanced back at Edward and Alexander.

"Hey, so...why hasn't Hulk woken up yet?"

Deputy Commander Edward shook his head and signaled for them to keep waiting.

"You were told to carry him, so just carry him. Is he really that heavy? Are you tired?"

Alexander cast a sidelong glance at Leonidas and chided him.

In truth, Alexander was also worried that Orion hadn't woken up yet.

He just wasn't the type to voice it outright.

"I'm not tired, just concerned."

"Hulk's potential is incredible, and he grows so fast. Even before we invested much in him, he was already giving back to us."

"We finally found someone who shares our temperament. It would be a real shame if he died just like this."

"..."

Leonidas kept muttering to himself—whether it was meant for Alexander to hear or for himself, even he wasn't quite sure.

"With Arthas in a deep slumber and Hulk still unconscious, this turned out to be a massive loss for us!"

Saying this, Leonidas looked up at Deputy Commander Edward.

"Deputy Commander, letting those three slime molds broodmothers go like that—wasn't that a huge loss?"

Alexander was also curious about Leonidas's question and glanced at Deputy Commander Edward.

Members of the Champions Alliance aren't exactly saints. Slime molds broodmother was a prime prize—everyone wanted a share.

Edward pondered for a moment, recalling that Leonidas and Alexander had already passed their trial. The rest no longer involved them.

He organized his thoughts and began to explain.

"It's not a loss. We've accomplished all our planned objectives."

"Once Arthas wakes up, he'll most likely be at demigod level!"

Shock.

Complete bewilderment.

"Holy fuck!"

Leonidas finally managed a response after a prolonged stunned silence.

"Deputy Commander, you're not messing with me?"

"That sounds ridiculous!"

Leonidas stared at Edward, eyes wide as saucers.

"That's what Commander Thresh said. Are you doubting his judgment?"

To Leonidas, Commander Thresh was practically a god. If Commander Thresh said it, there wasn't much to dispute.

"Deputy Commander, hit me hard enough to knock me into a coma, too!"

"When I wake up, I'll be a demigod!"

Leonidas puffed out his chest and straightened his tail, as if prepared for heroic sacrifice.

Deputy Commander Edward shook his head with a wry smile, ignoring Leonidas's joke.

Alexander, on the other hand, frowned and fell silent, deep in thought.

Edward stopped talking. Some truths wouldn't help if revealed too soon; they'd only lead to twists and complications.

Arthas becoming demigod-level had many contributing factors.

Reflecting on the word "demigod" brought Edward back to memories of his own past.

"Gotta say, Hulk's heavier than he looks. Are all Giants this massive?"

It was unclear how long had passed—perhaps Leonidas's back was sore by then—when he finally voiced his complaint.

"Orion isn't your average Giant. He's got Titan blood in his veins, and thanks to that massive explosion earlier, plus the infusion of divine power, and then the nutrition absorbed from the slime molds layer by those strange flowers, his body's strength is on par with an Arch Lord now."

"Before, he could barely hold his own against a arch lord. After this, he'll be able to fight one head-on."

"In a way, this is a good thing for him!"

Deputy Commander Edward wasn't joking. Orion received more than a single benefit from that divine power renewal and nutrient surge.

First, his body's toughness received a massive boost.

Second, if Orion wakes, he'll not only regain the half of his life energy he lost; he'll actually exceed his previous level.

...

Back in his subconscious.

The hidden domain.

Orion recalled all he'd experienced since coming to this world: his parents' love when he was young, hunting alone in the wild, bravely exploring abyssal caves, marrying Lilith, facing dark creatures, advancing to Alpha-level...all the way through descending upon the Valkorath Realm and battling the broodmother counterpart.

"Not bad, quite exciting."

That was Orion's reflection on his own life—definitely more thrilling than his old life on Earth.

"Maybe this is enough."

The truth was, after being trapped in his own subconscious and enduring inexhaustible darkness and infinite loneliness, Orion's spirit had shifted from resolute to ready to give up.

Yes, give up.

"I've had enough of this unending torment."

"Dying an epic death and returning to the Titan god's embrace might be better."

Orion closed his eyes, prepared to vanish here. No matter what might happen, he no longer wished to wake.

He was just so tired.

Crackle!

But, unfortunately for him, things didn't go as planned.

Just when Orion chose to surrender, two towering figures appeared like twin suns, scattering every last shadow.

"Dad!"

"Mom!"

"Is that really you?"

Chapter 515: Beauty of reversal

Orion felt warmth, saw the light, and seized upon hope.

Hope—perhaps it's the most miraculous thing in the world.

Although his mother and father did not speak, they smiled at Orion with gentle expressions. Then Hyperion extended a hand and pulled Orion to his feet.

"Dad, I..."

Orion lifted his head, wanting to speak with his father, only to discover that both parents had disappeared.

But he heard his father's familiar voice echo by his ear: "My child, don't keep sinking. Now is not the time for us to meet, but I believe that one day we will see each other again. There's a long road ahead of you—wake up."

In that moment, Orion was once more filled with hope and faith.

He had previously resigned himself to burial beneath the ground. Now, he transformed into a seed within the dark soil, bursting forth with infinite life.

Hope sprouted, broke through the darkness, and then bloomed everywhere.

It was a rebirth—death giving way to life, life giving way to a second chance. It was a beauty of reversal, a renewal of energy, spirit, and essence.

Outside, something changed in Orion, still draped over Leonidas's back.

The silver roots that had covered Orion's body began retracting, retreating into the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms design on his chest.

The changes continued for about fifteen minutes, until the flowers on Orion's chest compressed. Their number dropped rapidly, finally shrinking to ten blossoms.

"Deputy Commander, this guy's curse is getting worse," Leonidas blurted out in alarm, worried that Orion might die on his back.

"It's just a curse—it won't take Orion down."

"If Orion wants to remove it, he can tap into his Titan bloodline. Then, by meditating in the Purification Tower for six months, he can fully cleanse himself of it."

The mention of "Purification Tower" made Leonidas pause. Right, Orion's Soraya City has a Purification Tower; obviously, Orion would know what it can do.

At last, Leonidas realized Orion must have kept the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms for a reason.

While Leonidas was thinking, Orion slowly opened his eyes.

"Haha...Big Guy, you're awake!"

Leonidas's huge head moved in closer, pressing face to face with Orion—nearly cheek to cheek.

Upon waking, Orion almost launched Battle Will Surge and Instant Impact. Fortunately, Leonidas's voice clued him in that this was a friend.

A few breaths later, Orion regained his bearings and jumped down from Leonidas's back.

"Thank you all for saving my life. Otherwise, I really would've been finished this time."

Orion stood and lightly tapped his right fist against his chest, offering Deputy Commander Edward, Leonidas, and Alexander a formal Giant's salute.

"Heh heh, thank Commander Thresh and Deputy Commander Edward. They're the ones who saved you—nothing to do with us."

Leonidas resumed his normal size, sprang up onto Orion's shoulder, and swung his tail across Orion's neck in delight.

"Is the war over?"

Orion aimed the question at Deputy Commander Edward.

Only a demigod-level fighter would know where the battle stood.

"It's effectively over," Edward replied.

"The enemy's top-tier forces have left. The ones that remain are basically freebies for you and Kraken."

From Edward's words, Orion grasped the situation immediately.

"How are you feeling now?" Edward added, having answered Orion's question first.

Orion clenched his fists, brimming with an uncontainable strength and a deep sense of satisfaction.

"Great. I feel at least ten times stronger than before."

He looked down at his chest, where the curse mark now showed ten budding blossoms.

"The curse on you seems stronger now. Based on that formation, it'll flare up again in at most ten years."

"Are you sure you don't want to purify it?"

Talk of worsening curses, changing patterns, and the possibility of a recurrence in ten years left Orion deep in thought.

After a long pause, Orion lifted his head, a smile lighting up his face.

"I don't plan on purifying the curse by choice!"

"Since it found its way onto me, I won't let it escape so easily."

"And look at me now—I'm fine, aren't I?"

He raised an arm, flexing his muscles for emphasis.

"You're not wearing any clothes!"

Just as Orion struck a showy pose, Alexander popped off a sudden remark.

"Not wearing clothes? What do you mean?"

Orion glanced at Alexander, who offered no further response.

Perched on Orion's shoulder, Leonidas gave two playful whoops, then broke into laughter.

"Hulk, your package is pretty big. Really, quite impressive!"

"If you ever find yourself weaponless on the battlefield, I'm sure you can knock enemies out with your cock!"

"Hahaha..."

Orion lowered his head, noticing his lower half. Realization dawned.

Instinctively, he tried to cover himself.

"Everyone's already seen it. No use hiding now!" Leonidas teased again.

Orion stretched out a hand, calling forth his weapon, Flame of Will, from beneath the earth.

An icy armor spread from Orion's hand, quickly cloaking his body.

"Not bad. It's infused with your will, so no wonder it survived that massive explosion," Alexander remarked, showing some interest in Orion's trident.

"Hulk, you killed a broodmother counterpart—that thing was on par with an arch lord. Hurry and see if there's anything you can loot."

Leonidas pointed into the distance, where a whale skeleton could be seen.

For an ancient giant-horned whale that used Deep Sea Detonation, the fact that its skeleton remained intact meant it must be special.

Orion's eyes lit up as he spotted the skeleton.

An arch lord-level creature's remains were extremely valuable. If there was a survivor's treasure chest inside, so much the better.

He streaked toward the whale skeleton in a burst of lightning and fished out a treasure chest from under the bones.

"This whale skeleton is pretty impressive. When Arthas wakes up, maybe ask him. You might get a nice surprise out of it," Leonidas suggested.

Orion nodded and then asked, "What about Arthas? How is he?"

"Him? He got ganged up on and left in a wreck—turned into a bag of bones, knocked unconscious...basically, he's in a deep slumber."

Leonidas's response was full of scorn and disdain, though there was also an obvious tinge of envy.

"Let's head back," Edward said. "From now on, Valkorath Realm will focus on clearing out fungal creatures. You can rotate back home to your own world."

"Hulk, pay attention to the mission of cleansing the slime molds. It's a great opportunity to train your soldiers."

"And a great chance to strengthen your faction!"

Orion nodded, casting a grateful look at Deputy Commander Edward.

Defeating slime molds mutants yields life essence, a resource that directly boosts strength—an opportunity that doesn't come around often.

Relying on Valkorath Realm here to clear out fungal creatures, Stoneheart Horde would be making a giant leap forward.

Chapter 516: Head back

"And, we need to prepare for the life-restoration plan of Valkorath Realm."

"Gather more special items too, like magical plant seeds, soil-enhancing potions, life potions... Valkorath Realm will need them soon."

Orion, Alexander, and Leonidas all nodded in agreement. From now on, Valkorath Realm would be their base of operations.

Naturally, this place needed an overhaul. It had to become more beautiful, more livable, and gradually accumulate various types of resources.

"Even though the overall tide has turned, the war won't just end here."

"Everyone should head back. The realm formation has drained me quite a bit, so I'll remain in the central area."

"If anything comes up, get in touch with me later."

Deputy Commander Edward left decisively. He took a single step, then teleported out of Orion's sight.

In fact, Orion had plenty of questions he wanted to ask, but he lost his chance before he could say a word.

"There are some things you can't know at your current level."

"Even we only know so much."

Leonidas stayed perched on Orion's shoulder and showed no desire to move.

While advising Orion, he looked toward where Soraya City stood.

Leonidas had many subordinates in Soraya City. They were waiting near the Purification Tower, hoping to rid themselves of slime mold spores.

This time, Leonidas planned to bring a group of his subordinates back with him.

"You still have my token, right?"

"When you get the chance, use it. It'll only benefit your territory, nothing to lose."

Alexander focused on Orion, spoke those two sentences, and then vanished into thin air.

Unlike Deputy Commander Edward, Alexander's disappearance wasn't a teleportation spell; it seemed more like a stealth skill.

"Hulk, stop worrying so much."

"A world that houses a demigod and carries out realm formation isn't something others can easily invade and seize."

Leonidas's words held a deeper meaning, and Orion understood.

Before, Orion had been reluctant to use the token Alexander gave him, because he didn't fully trust his allies.

Everyone could see that.

On another note, Orion had also been worried about exposing the location of Titanion Realm, revealing his horde.

However, after this great war, Orion had earned the approval of Alexander and Leonidas.

Some matters could be discussed openly among one's own people.

On the surface, Orion still hadn't advanced to arch lord, but his power had soared. He was fully capable of being treated like an arch lord-level warrior.

That was precisely why Leonidas and Alexander had grown closer to him.

In other words, Orion had touched the height Leonidas and Alexander had attained.

Additionally, after the carnage in Valkorath Realm, Orion understood that Titanion Realm was not something he could devour anytime he wished, nor could the Champions Alliance simply march in and invade.

"Let's head back!"

"Hurry up—I just finished carrying you, and I'm exhausted. Now it's your turn to carry me."

Standing on Orion's shoulder in the form of a teddy bear dog, Leonidas hopped twice and urged Orion to return to Soraya City.

The war wasn't over yet, and Leonidas needed to get back to oversee everything.

They could only truly relax once the fungal creatures were driven out of the central region of the continent.

Half a day later, Orion returned to Soraya City.

Leonidas led his healed subordinates through a teleportation portal and went back to his domain.

Dusk Castle, inside the palace.

Because the war was still in progress, not all of Orion's subordinates were present.

Only Soraya and Vexis stood in the palace.

"Lord Orion, did you go to Bone City?"

"What's the situation with my master right now?"

Vexis was deeply concerned about Arthas. Ever since Arthas joined the battle, she hadn't been able to reach him.

Orion leaned back in the throne, apparently in a good mood.

This brush with death had given Orion new insight into himself, into others, and into the world.

He waited for the cold comfort of the throne's backrest to spread through him before speaking in a calm, measured voice.

"Arthas is fine. He clashed with the slime molds broodmother, used up too much energy, and fell into a deep slumber."

Seeing that Vexis breathed a sigh of relief and gradually relaxed, Orion continued.

"Bone City is fine too—everything's normal."

The worries in her heart resolved, Vexis finally looked up at Orion.

Before, she hadn't noticed any difference, but now, as she observed Orion carefully, she realized he had changed.

His skin had grown paler, and there was a slight change in his overall aura, as though he was radiating a faint divine glow.

That quality usually only showed up in demigod warriors.

"Lord Orion, have you..."

Vexis didn't complete her sentence. She wanted to ask if he had advanced to arch lord, but from what she had learned about the Stoneheart Horde, it didn't seem possible.

"I went through a big battle as well, and I did gain something from it. But I'm still some distance away from reaching arch lord level."

Orion's voice was calm yet brimming with confidence and assurance.

If he had faced the broodmother counterpart in his current state, he was certain he wouldn't have been so disadvantaged.

At the very least, he would have been able to escape, even if it cost him dearly.

"Then let me congratulate you!"

Vexis then recounted some minor occurrences within Orion's domain after he left, and afterward, she departed the palace.

Once Vexis had gone, Soraya, who had been silent all this time, immediately threw herself into Orion's arms. Her eyes were filled with tenderness and concern.

"Not long ago, something must have happened to you, right?"

"For a while back there, I couldn't sense your presence at all!"

Right now, Soraya lacked her usual wild energy; she also wasn't displaying the seductive boldness she typically showed when making love. Instead, she pressed against Orion's chest like a gentle cat, confessing her worries.

"It's nothing. I was swallowed by a broodmother counterpart earlier, but Leonidas rescued me."

"Aha, so that's why you don't have a single piece of clothing on you."

Orion froze momentarily, then let out a knowing chuckle.

At the moment, he was wearing a suit of ice armor; all his previous clothes and his belt had been destroyed.

He didn't go into detail about the battle, simply offering a vague excuse to gloss over it.

Mulling over life-and-death situations would only cause more worry.

Chapter 517: Titan Emblem

"Who's Leonidas?" Soraya asked curiously.

"Well, that teddy bear dog on my shoulder just now—he's actually an arch lord at peak level."

"What...?"

"Don't look so doubtful. Didn't you see how all those beasts heading to the Purification Tower were completely submissive to him?"

Soraya still found this hard to believe. She had never thought that the little teddy bear dog was actually a great being at arch lord peak.

She merely assumed Orion had brought back a random pet dog from outside the city.

In all honesty, Soraya hadn't even sensed Leonidas's aura. If Orion hadn't pointed it out, she would have spent her whole life completely unaware that a peak arch lord had just appeared before her.

At this moment, Soraya was nestled in Orion's arms. Feeling the soft curves of her body, Orion felt his long-dormant desire awaken once more. Without hesitation, he slipped his hand under Soraya's skirt.

His fingers caressed her clitoris, then he pushed two fingers right inside.

"Ah... oh my god..."

"Stop messing around—there's still a battle going on outside!"

Gasping and blushing, Soraya came to her senses, forcing Orion's hand out of her panties.

"Too many slime molds mutants are lurking nearby, so I need to get back to hatching more small scorpions!"

Orion pulled back his hand and planted a gentle kiss on Soraya. He spoke in a soft tone.

"All right, go on. I'll be here to hold down the fort."

There was no time for lovemaking. Still, Soraya responded with a deep kiss. After a five-minute embrace, she turned into swirling sands and returned to her Nest.

The moment Soraya left, the tenderness on Orion's face disappeared.

Seated on his throne, Orion leaned against the back, one hand resting on the armrest, an expression of perfect composure.

In this battle, Orion had poured everything into the fight.

An upper arch lord—level warrior was already this formidable. Orion could hardly imagine how fearsome a peak arch lord might be.

On the way back, Leonidas had mentioned that Arthas fought single-handedly against the slime molds broodmother and three broodmother counterparts.

How unbelievably powerful must he be?

What secrets might Arthas hold?

Orion didn't know, but he found himself looking forward to discovering the answers.

Putting those thoughts aside, Orion began surveying himself.

The armor covering his body gradually vanished, revealing his bare, muscular frame.

He noticed a layer of dragon scales emerging on the surface of his skin. Orion stared at these scales in surprise.

He remembered very clearly that, during his final assault, his dragon scales had been cut and pierced by an enemy's attacks—they were left torn and tattered.

But now they were once again intact, appearing perfectly whole on Orion's skin.

"Is this the effect of the Titan bloodline?"

"It doesn't look like it's due to the Titan bloodline... so maybe they were restored by those Zilan flowers?"

Dragon scales were hidden inside Orion's body, and as the Zilan flowers repaired his injuries, they had apparently repaired the scales as well.

That was the only explanation that made sense.

"What a nice treasure!"

"The commander never gives anything but the finest gear."

Orion had another reason for thinking so.

When Thresh rescued him, he had also gifted Orion two other items—a pair of blade flashes hidden in Orion's eyes.

Those twin blade gleams hadn't disappeared. They still remained within Orion's gaze, serving as two trump cards bestowed by a demigod warrior.

For Orion, those were his greatest spoils.

He pulled out a set of clothes from his storage ring. Before getting dressed, he glanced at the cursed pattern on his chest that had now formed ten flower buds.

Previously, Orion had underestimated the Curse of a Hundred Blossoms and even tried using it for leads or information about the gods.

But now, he realized: if you're careless with a curse set by a god, you could pay a terrible price.

"Should I purify it?"

"My Titan bloodline is no weaker than this curse, so do I really need to get rid of it?"

Orion hesitated again.

After a while, he finished dressing and chose to keep the curse.

Naturally, that wasn't the only change in his body.

He felt stronger, his life force more vigorous.

All aspects of his being had improved, yet he sensed his Titan bloodline had somehow become more diluted.

To describe it: if Orion's total bloodline used to be 100, of which Titan accounted for 70, then now, his overall bloodline total was 110, but the Titan bloodline still remained at 70.

That was the best way to explain it. Orion couldn't say if that was good or bad.

Regardless, Orion knew he had grown more powerful—powerful enough to defeat a lower arch lord.

Collecting his thoughts, Orion steadied himself, then took out the survivor's treasure box that the broodmother counterpart had dropped.

It was an arch lord drop. Aside from the gifts given by the commander, it was his most valuable prize.

With a silent command, the survivor's box dissolved into dust, revealing its contents.

[Titan Emblem]

Type: Special Medal

Quality: Legendary

Bonus Skill: Gigantic Form

Skill Description: Wearing this medal grants you the might of a Titan, even without activating its power. You receive a mysterious boost to all attributes.

Skill Note: By offering different types of sacrifices to the medal, you can trigger various levels of Gigantic Form. The larger your transformation, the greater the power.

Item Evaluation: Always remember that you carry Titan blood in your veins. You shall dominate the world.

It was a piece of legendary gear!

Orion studied the [Titan Emblem] for a long time, noting that it didn't specify how much it increased his power.

"Does that mean legendary equipment grows stronger along with its wearer?"

That was Orion's best guess, because the same piece of equipment could have different effects depending on who used it.

He could accept that reasoning.

"I'll just put it on. Once I get the chance, I'll ask Leonidas about the details!"

Orion placed the golden, mysterious emblem on his chest. It flashed briefly, then gently merged into his body, leaving behind only the faint outline of the medal across his chest.

Orion knew the emblem was still there.

He could feel it—and at this very moment, his body was saturated with a strange power.

For a brief second, Orion felt as if he could kill a god, or smash the very planet beneath his feet.

Of course, that was only an illusion, brought on by the rush of heightened power.

"With the blessing of this emblem, my combat ability will improve again!"

Closing his eyes, Orion calmly focused on the energy within his body, determined to master it as soon as possible.

Outside the palace, on the city walls.

Amid the hiss of bolts and whoosh of wind blades, the bloodline warriors of the Stoneheart Horde clutched their weapons, fighting desperately to hold off the relentless slime molds mutants.

The din of battle cries and shouts had never ceased.

Having learned from their previous setbacks, Gustalon didn't dare to take the risk of diving too far into the slime molds layer to chase down fleeing enemies.

Even so, with Dirtclaw's help, he had already killed several Alpha-level slime molds mutants.

"Aaaaao... that's the eighth one, Gustalon!"

"And as agreed, we split the loot fifty-fifty!"

"No problem!"

Transformed into a Hellhound, Dirtclaw held a clear advantage in mobility compared to Onyx, Earthshaker, or Gronthar.

Especially now that he and Gustalon had teamed up, their coordination was spot-on—one would distract the enemy while the other went in for the kill, a highly efficient approach.

Chapter 518 518: Following in Orion's footsteps

A sharp whoosh sliced through the air!

A massive wind blade materialized on the city wall, killing a slime molds mutant. Gustalon then pointed out the next target for Dirtclaw.

"Over to the west, near the arrow tower!"

Dirtclaw let loose a wolf's howl, bounding past the crowd and the small scorpions on the city wall, charging straight for the next Alpha-level slime molds mutant.

Wherever they passed, members of the cannon fodder troops raised their shields in front, fending off the fungal creatures scaling the walls as weapons stabbed down from behind the shields.

As the Hellhound bounded nimbly across the wall, Dirtclaw saw that every full-force strike could spell life or death. The harsh reality of war was on full display—unvarnished, brutal, and vividly intense.

Of course, Gustalon and Dirtclaw weren't fighting alone.

Onyx fought just as impressively. Working in tandem with his Dark Armored Beetle, he singlehandedly held off a large swath of enemies, swinging his weapon in grand, sweeping arcs.

"Once this battle's over, I'm definitely advancing to Alpha peak!"

Onyx burst into laughter as his giant axe came crashing down, unstoppable in its path.

Not too far away stood Gronthar, also a giant. Compared to Onyx, he was clearly weaker, but that was only in comparison.

In reality, ever since they'd entered Valkorath Realm, Gronthar's aura had become noticeably steadier. He had even managed to raise his power level by one small tier, ensuring he was by no means the weakest among them.

"If I can make it through this war, I might just manage to break through again," Gronthar thought.

Unlike Gustalon or Onyx, Gronthar's goal wasn't the Legendary level.

He knew his own gifts and potential—the Alpha peak might well be his ceiling.

In these past months, he had absorbed quite a bit of life essence, but his progression was minor.

Still, he was excited because he stood at a height his old tribe had never reached. Someday, he hoped to return to that tribe, bringing forth future generations with even greater potential and talent.

Gronthar believed that under Orion's leadership, the Stoneheart Horde would have more opportunities for resources like life essence. Its younger giants would get their chance, one that might carry them beyond what the current generation could achieve.

"Gronthar, what are you daydreaming about?"

Earthshaker lifted his two-handed sword, tearing through an oncoming slime molds mutant, and snapped Gronthar out of his momentary daze.

"Earthshaker, I was imagining our future—our next generation!"

With a roar, Gronthar charged forward, displaying fearless bravery.

Through the crashing and clashing, Gronthar's voice rang out:

"I have a son, and I hope he'll surpass me."

"But if his talent isn't enough, I'm planning on having a few more children once I get back."

"I'm convinced one of them will follow in Orion's footsteps and reach the Legendary level of power."

"..."

Earthshaker heard every word, feeling just a bit shaken, too. He remembered that before coming to Valkorath Realm, his wife might have been pregnant again.

"Following in Orion's footsteps, huh?"

He had never seriously thought about it, but he could sense that he wasn't at his own limit yet.

"I have to work hard. I want to catch up to Onyx, Dirtclaw, and the others, pushing my power to ever greater heights."

" ... "

And so the battle for Soraya City continued for another month or so.

Finally, on that particular day, the defensive campaign came to an end when the slime molds layer began receding into the distance.

At Dusk Castle, in the great hall.

With the retreat of the slime molds layer, the senior elders of the Stoneheart Horde had all gathered in the palace.

Seated to the left and right of Orion were Soraya and Vexis, while the other elders stood.

Soraya and Vexis were allowed to sit because they were both Legendary-level beings.

Orion glanced at everyone present. Besides Gustalon, Onyx, Earthshaker, Gronthar, Dirtclaw, Drakthul, and Gormathar, there were also six newly promoted Alpha-level warriors.

Within Valkorath Realm, three previously established Alpha-level elders had fallen in battle: Marnok and Veldrok from the Starveil giant tribe, plus Thunderclaw from the Thunderwood Forest.

Thunderclaw died while defending the city walls, pulled into the slime molds layer by fungal creatures. At that time, Orion had been locked in combat with a broodmother counterpart and missed the chance to rescue him.

The six new Alpha-level individuals were Taran, Brontes, Steropes, Erythros, Thalion, and Torvald.

Taran was the chieftain of the Pandaren tribe; he had joined the Stoneheart Horde and come along with the cannon fodder troops to Valkorath Realm, eventually advancing to Alpha-level.

Brontes and Steropes were brothers from the Thunderstorm Bearmen clan. They hadn't become Shield Warriors; instead, they joined the cannon fodder troops under Dirtclaw's leadership. Now they were reaping the rewards.

Erythros was the biggest surprise to Orion—he hailed from the Ironbone Tribe.

Frankly, the Ironbone Tribe's giants were usually weaker. Aside from Thundar, that tribe hardly ever made much of an impression.

Finally, Thalion and Torvald came from the Starveil giant tribe.

Because the Starveil giants resided in the south, protected by their Legendary-level giant king, they had deeper resources and more promising youths.

"Soraya City has finally held out, and all of you did well. This victory belongs to the entire Horde!"

"You'll soon receive the share of spoils you're due."

Orion's tone was imposing, yet also tinged with genuine delight.

"However, the war isn't over. Up next is your chance to profit."

"From now on, if you pursue the retreating slime molds mutants, you need only hand over half of what you earn to the Horde. The other half is yours to keep."

For these Alpha-level fighters, that news was indeed a temptation, and Orion was clearly sharing the spoils.

It was especially enticing for the more powerful elders like Gustalon, Onyx, Dirtclaw, and Drakthul. An extra half share of life essence might help them quickly reach Alpha-level peak.

"Remember, you only have one month."

As everyone exchanged glances, Orion's voice, which had grown quiet, rose once again.

"A month from now, the dark beast tides in Titanion Realm will recede."

"At that point, all of you must return to the Stoneheart Horde."

"I'll rotate this opportunity among the elders back home who've stayed to guard the Horde."

"In the future, only those who have proven themselves valuable to the Horde and possess outstanding talent will be allowed to come here to train."

Because the fungal creatures would soon be heavily reduced in number, chances to fight would also dwindle.

While the enemy still posed a threat, Orion intended to bring over more of the Horde's members so that everyone could grow stronger.

An overall rise in power, this was the true path to strengthening the Horde.

Chapter 519 519: Peak of desire

The meeting didn't last long. After Orion arranged the plan to move forward, all the Alpha-level elders of the Horde took their leave, hurrying off to prepare for battle.

They only had one month to seize resources and battle achievements, and time was tight. Everyone was highly motivated.

These resources wouldn't just benefit them personally; any surplus would also help their families and the Tribe and Clan they belonged to.

"Small scorpions can't stop hatching here. Resisting the slime molds will be a long-term plan."

Orion glanced at the elders walking out of the palace, then turned to Soraya and said this.

Now that the outcome of the war was more or less determined, the Stoneheart Horde would most likely no longer receive substantial resource support from Deputy Commander and Arthas.

With what remained, Soraya would have to ration carefully.

"Should we keep hatching them at full capacity?"

Soraya wasn't sure how extensively she should use the resources. No one knew better than she did how many supplies the Stoneheart Horde had consumed in this war.

To put it mildly, Soraya had never seen so many resources in her lifetime.

"Not at full capacity. We currently have 1.8 million small scorpions. Increase that number to 2 million, then let it stay at that level."

"From then on, however many small scorpions we lose, we just replenish the same amount. Those resources have to be kept in reserve."

After thinking for a while, Orion set the limit for Soraya. This gave her a sense of direction.

"Next, I'll join Lich Vexis and lead all our armies to counterattack the fungal creatures, to gain more resources for the Horde."

"You still need to maintain order in Soraya City, and I'll grant you the authority to manage it. But be cautious."

Soraya nodded with a solemn look.

It was clear that her role was to keep everyone's lair safe, to ensure a steady flow of supplies for the soldiers on the front lines, and to keep the number of small scorpions stable. That might sound simple, but it was anything but.

"Lady Vexis, you should get ready as well. We depart early tomorrow morning."

"I'm always ready. Have someone come wake me at the undead tower right before we set out."

Lich Vexis nodded without objection. Her purpose was to assist Orion.

After discussing a few more matters, Vexis returned to the undead tower.

On the throne, Orion drew Soraya into his arms. Her eyes were full of tenderness. She gradually relaxed her body, awaiting the inevitable.

Because their enemy had begun to retreat, Soraya had changed into a very seductive outfit. The top half of her breasts were pushed up into perfect crescents, with a smooth, flat belly exposed in the middle and long, slender legs revealed.

Such attire demanded an incredible figure, and Soraya undoubtedly had what it took to wear it.

Soraya took Orion's hand, guiding it to rest on her flat stomach. His palm was met by smooth warmth, full of supple elasticity, making Orion feel a dizzying rush of bliss.

"All right, although I've felt it many times, I must say, hmm, it feels so good!"

As he gave this admiring praise, Orion's hand slid downward, gently brushing up along Soraya's thigh.

His swift movements quickly elicited a reaction from Soraya's body. Her shapely legs trembled softly under his touch.

Orion's hand moved up between her legs to her private area. She was wearing a nearly see-through lace panty, made from a material that not only looked visually stunning but also felt exceptionally soft, wrapping around her slightly pronounced clitoris in a wildly enticing way.

Sensing her trembling body, Orion grinned and said, "Take this off."

Soraya returned a tender smile to Orion, taking off her panties and revealing her alluring vagina.

Soraya stripped off all her clothes and stood naked before Orion. She began undoing his belt, then pulled down his underwear. A stiff cock sprang up at once, nearly striking her face.

Soraya gripped Orion's cock with both hands, taking it into her mouth and savoring it fully. She used her mouth to pleasure him as a prelude to their lovemaking.

After Soraya had been going down on him for about thirty minutes, Orion withdrew his cock from her mouth and said, "Now it's my turn. Turn around and stick your butt out."

Soraya obeyed his command without hesitation. She turned around and placed her hands on her knees. Then she slowly bent over, presenting her butt for Orion's full enjoyment, exposing her naked pussy.

"Honey, is this what you want?" Soraya asked, glancing back at Orion.

"Exactly. Lift that butt a bit higher... perfect. Now I can't wait to have you."

Orion narrowed his eyes, savoring Soraya's enticing curves. From his vantage point, Soraya's entire body was on stunning display. He couldn't hold back any longer. With one forceful thrust, he drove his cock directly into Soraya's vagina.

In an instant, his big, hard cock reached Soraya's innermost depths. Her lower belly even bulged slightly with the outline of Orion's cock.

"Ah yes, my vagina is completely filled by your cock."

"Fuck me harder. I love how that feels—I love a big cock."

Hearing Soraya's lustful voice, Orion immediately started thrusting his hips, plunging his cock in and out of Soraya's vagina. Each thrust was strong and daring, and before long she was completely overwhelmed by pleasure.

Even though Soraya was a legendary level being, she soon found herself struggling under Orion's ferocious rhythm and began begging him for mercy.

"Honey, this feels incredible. I can barely breathe. Can we try a different position? Maybe I can ride on top of you?"

"Mm... sure, you can be on top." Orion gave Soraya's flawless butt a light slap and consented to her request.

Soraya rose and straddled Orion's waist. She reached out and took hold of his hard cock, slowly lowering herself onto it.

Moments later, his cock sank into Soraya's vagina. When his head pressed against her cervix, Soraya knitted her brow slightly, clearly feeling intense pressure. But after shifting around a bit, she adjusted to the rhythm.

"Ah yes..." Soraya tilted her head back, her long hair draping over her shoulders. She let out a soft, content moan that filled the quiet air with the aura of unleashed passion. "Yes, this feels amazing..."

She quickly adapted to this position. Clamping her legs together, she swiveled her hips, letting Orion's cock ignite every most sensitive spot inside her.

The room grew hotter, and their two naked bodies twined together, both climbing toward the peak of desire.

Orion gripped Soraya's hips in both hands, thrusting upward to sink his cock in deeper. Each movement brought out beads of glistening fluids, splattering across the sheets.

"Oh... oh... this is so good... yes, yes, yes!" Under the urgent gasps and moans, the tip of his cock hit her cervix again and again. Soraya let out sultry cries, and her arousal gushed forth in a steady stream.

Before long, Soraya's movements sped up. Her hips began to swivel as though she were riding a wild horse across open fields. Her breasts bounced, accentuating her gorgeous figure. "Hah... oh... it's great, isn't it... oh..."

Soon, more of her juices flowed from her vagina, and its walls went into strong contractions, tightly gripping the cock inside. It felt like a vise that kept squeezing, triggering wave after wave of intense pleasure for Orion.

Soraya reached a peak of desire, her hair flying wildly as she shook her butt and cried out, "Ah... ah... oh my god! This orgasm is lasting so long... ah... I feel like I could almost take flight!"

The relentless stimulation inside Soraya's vagina drove Orion to his own climax. His cock unleashed a torrent of semen, shooting deep into Soraya's vagina.

Soraya could feel Orion's hot release flooding her body at that moment. Her own fluids gushed forth at the same time, trickling down Orion's cock, making a soft "puh... puh..." sound as she moved.

The overwhelming climax left her feeling utterly spent; she collapsed onto Orion, deeply satisfied.

...

"From now on, I'll leave Soraya City in your hands."

"You're the queen of the Scorpion Tribe. I believe none of this will be too much for you."

After their passionate lovemaking, Orion pulled Soraya into his arms. As they basked in each other's warmth, he laid out his plans.

Now that this battle was stable, Orion would certainly be returning to the Titanion Realm.

He also had other arrangements for the Stoneheart Horde and Stoneheart City.

As for how the Stoneheart Horde would develop in the Valkorath Realm, all it needed to do was follow the plan, and soon everything would run smoothly.

Soraya City was just the beginning. In Orion's grand design, the Stoneheart Horde would keep building cities in the Valkorath Realm.

Moonveil Plains was vast enough to host a hundred cities without an issue.

Most importantly, Soraya City contained an internal teleportation array, allowing trade and communication with the cities built by the Champions Alliance.

Orion believed that the Stoneheart Horde could gain enormous benefits from the settlements and civilizations established by Arthas, Alexander, Leonidas, Deputy Commander, the Commander, and more.

"Will the entire city's affairs be left to me?"

Soraya lifted her head. As a legendary level being, she recovered her stamina quickly. Her gaze took on a lascivious glint as she snuck another look at Orion's cock, silently inviting him again.

Smack!

Orion gave Soraya's pert backside a slap, a playful grin on his lips. "Dream on. I'll be sending in specialized personnel to handle outreach with other cities."

"Don't slack off. The war in the Valkorath Realm may have eased up, but we could stir up conflict in another realm at any moment."

"When that time comes, you'll have more than enough work on your hands!"

It was a warning, coming straight from Orion. In his plan, the Stoneheart Horde would never truly experience peace.

In truth, Orion was preparing to develop the Horde steadily in both the Valkorath and Titanion Realms, while waging war against dark creatures in the Emerald Dream Realm.

He wanted both outward expansion and stable growth. Development was needed to strengthen the Tribe's foundations, and warfare prevented them from getting complacent.

"Thank you. You've shown me a whole new world!"

Soraya responded with fervor, offering her body to express gratitude for Orion's faith in her.

"Honey, before we conquer other worlds, you should conquer me first!"

Chapter 520 520: Torin's plan

The next morning, Orion and Lich Vexis led a massive army in pursuit of the slime molds layer.

Likewise, other warzones were also busy driving away the fungal creatures.

Titanion Realm, Stoneheart City.

High above Stoneheart City rang the excited shriek of the Four-Winged Blood Bat. Delilah looked up just as the corpse of a flying-type Alpha-level dark creature came crashing onto the city wall with a resonant thud.

With the arrow tower's support, the Four-Winged Blood Bat had just slain an Alpha-level dark creature. Now it was looking to Delilah for praise.

Delilah's lips curled slightly, her face shining with a faint hint of delight.

In the southern winter, daytime lasts longer and the temperature is much warmer than in the north.

The dark beast tides are about to retreat!

If this were Blackstone City, it would still be a long night at this time of year.

But here in the south, daylight has already arrived.

"I wonder how Buffalofolk City, Obsidian City, Delilah City, and Lilith City are faring. Let's hope the losses aren't too great."

Still thinking about the four cities under construction, Delilah couldn't help feeling worried.

"The sky's getting lighter. Maybe we should send out the Sentinel Corps to get a better idea of what's happening in those four cities."

"And when is Orion coming back?"

"..."

Standing on the city wall, while Delilah was lost in thought, Godfrey raised his head to the sky, also deep in contemplation.

The human kingdom has always lived in the south. Growing up here, Godfrey knows the dark beast tides will soon recede.

Daybreak and spring rain are the two critical signals that the tides are leaving.

Glancing around at the various non-human bloodline warriors stationed on the wall, Godfrey felt something indescribable stir within him.

In the face of dark creatures, they all stood united and fought with bravery.

He has reached a point with these other races—strangers at first, then acquaintances, then allies—where he feels an emotion he's never experienced before.

He can't recall when it appeared, and he doesn't quite know how to describe it.

"What a pity that the dark creatures are about to withdraw!"

That lament came from the Giant Brundar, who stood beside Godfrey. He was Godfrey's best friend in Stoneheart City.

They had spent the whole winter side by side, helping and depending on each other.

"Godfrey, you fought with such courage and took down three Alpha-level dark creatures. Our lord will definitely reward you."

"A reward?"

"Yeah. In Stoneheart Horde, we always reward those who distinguish themselves. That's the lord's rule."

"The lord's rule?"

"Yes—Orion, the King of Giants!"

Godfrey found it hard to believe he would be rewarded by the Giant King—after all, he was still an outsider to them.

"Come on. I'll take you to my place for a drink!"

Godfrey nodded, following the towering Brundar down from the city wall.

Soaring Bird City.

In a makeshift tent, Torin and his two attendants—Mike and Wyatt—were gathered together, gazing toward Soaring Bird City and the world beyond its walls.

"Master, the dark beast tides will end soon. What should we do next?"

What should they do? Torin didn't really know.

After all, neither the slaves who built Soaring Bird City nor the soldiers and mercenaries who stood guard belonged to him.

Right now, Torin might as well be a prisoner with his hands tied.

He had been stripped of power; Soaring Bird City was his in name only.

Torin's expression shifted from anger to menace, then from menace to calm.

He'd spent the entire winter thinking about how to break free of this predicament.

Torin was well aware that he no longer had any path to victory inside the human kingdom.

To find a solution, he would have to rely on external forces.

That was Torin's plan to shatter the impasse!

And there were only three major races around his territory: the Blood Elves, the Giants, and the Ogres.

Blood Elves were impossible—they had too many ties to the high-ranking officials of the human royal family.

Approaching them would be suicide.

Ogres were hotheaded and mindless, so Torin immediately ruled them out.

That left just one option: the Giants, namely the Stoneheart Horde.

"Once the dark beast tides are gone, we're heading for Stoneheart City."

Mike and Wyatt exchanged looks, clearly taken aback.

"Master, are we going to abandon Soaring Bird City?"

Mike ventured softly, glancing at Torin's back.

"Do we have any control over it now?"

Torin's voice hardened the moment Soaring Bird City came up, as if barely able to temper his anger.

"At this point, there's no chance for us to take Soaring Bird City back."

"But we can still take charge of ourselves."

"Even if the giants have no interest in what little use we may have left, traveling to their territory and back will let us buy their rare goods. We can at least earn some coins."

This notion of personally braving the market was Torin's strategy to break out of his current predicament.

Under the guise of trading, he intended not only to earn the funds he needed to regain power, but also to secretly align with the Stoneheart Horde.

That was Torin's plan!

He still had a secret trump card, of course, but his two men couldn't know about that.

...

Valkorath Realm, and in the blink of an eye, another month had passed.

Orion had returned to Soraya City, sitting confidently on his throne.

During this month, Orion had often ventured alone into the slime molds layer, specifically hunting Legendary-level parasitic slime molds.

After many trials, he now knew how to wield his own power as well as the strength granted by the Titan Emblem.

Naturally, he had gained plenty in return.

After putting things in order, Orion focused on the Survivor's Platform to speak with his allies in the Champions Alliance.

Hulk: "Deputy Commander, the void passage in my world is about to close. I need to bring some of my people back and rotate in a new group. I'm hoping you can help me!"

Large-scale inter-realm teleportation is impossible without the large scrolls provided by Deputy Commander Edward. For that reason, every member of the Champions Alliance maintained a polite deference toward him—Orion included.

Edward: "I'll give you the scrolls in a couple of days via delayed trade. Keep an eye out."

Edward's prompt response surprised Orion. He had thought it would take at least half a month, since the Deputy Commander also had to repair the realm formation.

Leonidas: "Hulk, aren't you going to stay a little longer for a better haul? Once you leave, Squiddy's bound to surpass you."

Kraken: "Hey big boss, I'm the one who's sticking with you here!"

Now that everyone was on friendly terms, Kraken often jumped in to rib Leonidas and Orion.

Leonidas: "I'd love to help you out, but you're a marine species, and you can't do much about fungal creatures on land!"

Hulk: "I'll be back as soon as I can!"

Leonidas: "You'd better hurry. My territory overflows with fungal creatures waiting for you to herd them into the sea. If you delay too long, you'll miss out."

Orion nodded in agreement when he heard that.

Leonidas: "And Squiddy, knock it off—there are more than enough fungal creatures. When they move into open water, it'll be your time to shine."

Leonidas made it clear: those fungal creatures on land were Orion's opportunity. Once they entered the sea, it would be Kraken's turn.

Leonidas: "Squiddy, in a while I'll deploy a squad of aquatic beasts to assist you. Use them well."

Kraken: "Really? Thanks, Big Boss!"

Alexander: "Deputy Commander and I will hold off on wiping out the fungal creatures in our zones. You'll only get one shot at this, so don't blow it."

Indeed, this was the Champions Alliance's reward for the newer members—Orion and Kraken—who had proven their commitment to the war.

They were called "new" only compared to veterans like Leonidas.

Hulk: "I really appreciate all of your support!"

Afterward, Orion discussed some details regarding the fungal creatures, then logged out of the public channel.

Arriving at the trading area, Orion accepted some delayed trades from Scarecrow, securing a considerable amount of grain.

Since winter is Scarecrow's downtime, Orion sent him a quick message: "Hey bro, can the grains you sold me be used as seeds?"

It was an important question. Orion had carved out a vast territory in the Valkorath Realm, and once its soil regained vitality, his plan was to turn the land into farmland.

Naturally, farmland requires agriculture and planting.

"They can, but you need fertile soil."

"You've seen that the grains I sold you—while not magical plants—are high quality."

"If you need seeds, I can send you a batch of more resilient ones, but I can't promise a great yield."

Scarecrow was notably generous. After sending his reply, he immediately initiated a trade with Orion.

After receiving Scarecrow's seeds, Orion placed a portion of Alpha-level life essence on the table.