

Chapter 2.69 Tough to Chew

The first ranged volley blasted through the rushing horde. Some of the arrows or bolts didn't even slow the progress of the zombies, but some spells took a couple out here or there. Sally growled as she avoided a brief ice-storm that froze two undead to the ground. [Living Dead] pulsed around her to energize those who had been wounded.

Of course, if they were in ranged distance of the enemy, they were also in her range. A skull burned with a green flame in her hand and she lobbed it into the air in a high arc. Arrows and a couple of spells were sent from her right flank into their opponents.

The Golden regiments brought up shields and spears in readiness - the slow zombies soon to be skewered.

"Launch me," Sally ordered.

A tide of corpses washed past her as she paused. Theo and Humphrey grabbed her arms and turned to fling her like a slingshot. She spun into the air, careening over the first row of spears. Some of them rose to try to impale her landing, but bandages shot out and pulled them out of the way.

[Endless Dead]

Past their defensive line, the zombies she had saved pushed up out of the ground, creating a hole where the charging horde could push themselves into. Her Mortis Bomb had struck somewhere amongst the crowd, but those zombies probably wouldn't last long. Immediately, the melee turned to chaos.

She blocked the slash of a sword and dodged backwards, ducking beneath the legs of a zombie crab. Popping up on the other side, she plunged her dagger into the back of one of the golems. Dead, no brains to eat. Disappointing.

Humphrey plowed through the regiment beside her, knocking people over like a freight train. His armor flickered with red and black energy, and his sword burst into blue flame as the minor strikes taken on the way in had activated [Decimate]. Blood sprayed through the air as he carved through three figures, slowly cutting his way toward one of the Champions. Every so often, an assailant was grabbed around the neck or leg by a bandage, allowing him to slice into them unhindered.

From her other side, heads burst into the air like fireworks as a blur of pink slid in beside her. Theo gave her a quick bow, his crimson-eyed shadow giving her a wink, before he vanished and appeared behind a Player, sinking his fangs into their neck as Lucius stabbed through their guts.

A fireball, alongside a dozen arrows peppered the battle in front of her. Edward was standing atop the golem still, ordering the targets for the ranged attackers on their side. A couple of arrows struck the obsidian skin of his ride ineffectively, before the vampire bisected the guilty parties.

The undead continued to flood in around her. They had lost a few dozen on the approach, but were soon replenishing their ranks. If they could keep up momentum, then they'd eventually overcome them...

She moved from a mace being swung at her, then grabbing the offending weapon and pulling the attacker toward her. Headbutt and then a stab to the side of the neck. Even as the body fell, she jumped over it to grab onto the next Gold trying to brain one of her zombie pals. Kidney stab, duck beneath the wide side swipe, stab into the weapon arm and then kick the knee out. As they buckled, took their helmet off and ate their brains.

A crossbow bolt landed in her upper arm, and she glared at the man just before a handful of zombies took him to the floor. The Eaglebear zombie with the bear-body strode past, a golem in its mouth, and she grabbed hold and climbed up onto their back. They had made it about twenty percent of the way through the regiments, with the Champions languishing around the sixty percent mark.

There were bloody swathes where Humphrey and Theo were carving their way ahead - although the Death Knight was slightly slower. She withdrew another skull and launched a [Mortis Bomb] to land on someone just a little ahead, so that the zombies could weaken the formation of the enemy before he got there.

"Let's head straight down the middle, big guy." She gave the large monster a pat on the back of the neck and it turned to the side, dropping the body from its mouth to screech out. From behind her, the yells of her Player allies charging in under the lead of Dent filled her ears. The regiments were so dense that a melee focused group couldn't flank super well, but if they powered through the weakened side behind Humphrey, then they could eventually help him out.

Arrows passed over her head, the occasion one striking the Eaglebear. [Living Dead]. Theo had done a good job of focusing on taking out the spellcasters or ranged Players. As much as she wanted those brains, the System-created and golems didn't seem to have many skills, if any at all.

Sally withdrew her own crossbow and started taking potshots at the enemies ahead of her mount. Humphrey pulsed with dark energy as his skeletons rose up around him and he used his area stun. Norah used the opportunity to summon a sarcophagus and launch it through the melee, knocking a dozen Golds down before snaking bandages around the necks of two.

Theo was a whirlwind of blood and pink energy. Lucius was slashing out at unprotected legs with his shadowed sword, leaving the vampire to carve through necks as they wavered in pain and surprise. He was starting to lag with his progress, taking longer per engagement.

She narrowed her eyes. He was definitely lower Level than everyone, so he should be struggling - but perhaps the army was organized by Level as well. They had started with the lowest and would be slowly fighting against tougher opponents, so that they would get tired out and discouraged.

Pretty smart. Sally wished they had some aces up their sleeves. Archie with some random skills, would have been nice. A powerful ally at the last minute, even. She had scoured her Inventory and not found a lot of things that would be useful, without risking more errors. If only she could have used the bugged Necroblast in the direction of the dragon.

She rocked as the Eaglebear slammed through some bodies. From her Inventory she withdrew the [Tornado Wand] and pointed it ahead. The next regiment waiting to engage her was suddenly enveloped by a swirling wind. They panicked and tried to resist - but the weakest of them were flung from the area to land amongst the melee.

A wide smile crossed her face before she frowned and looked behind. Something was moving along the side of the battle, heading towards Dent's group.

"Look out!" She called back to him.

He caught her warning as he dropped a golem and dived to the side. A massive snake burst out from the crowd and bit down on the man standing behind him, the venom instantly killing the plated knight. Dent jumped back to his feet and leaped toward it, a flicker of amber beams following his sword as he cut straight through it.

Sally growled as she turned her eyes back ahead. Thirty percent ahead, halfway to the Champions, but slowing. The Champion on the left where Humphrey was heading was the snake-man and she was sure that wasn't the last attack from afar he would try.

She narrowed her eyes. The one Theo was heading for looked to be the Golemancer - an old man sitting in some manner of mech suit made of silvers and dark metal. He seemed to be weaving his fingers along something that, from this distance, looked like a keyboard.

Directly ahead of her was a rotund pigman, with a large mallet over his shoulder. He had a wide belt across his stomach like a wrestler and fidgeted side to side as if he was way too impatient for this kind of battle. His beady eyes were focused on her, so she flipped him off in hopes he could see it at this distance. She wondered if those Champion-Outsider match-ups were the best. Only time would tell, and they could always help each other out.

If anything, it was a shame the System hadn't given them their due experience for this event. Rebellion had to be worth something, and she would have loved if they could have gotten into this with their Ultimates. Well, at least she and Theo had them already.

She frowned and refocused her eyes. The pigman was gone. Surely they couldn't have gone for reinforcements or cut their losses yet? They still had at least three quarters of their forces remaining and hadn't needed to get their own hands dirty. Not that she cared, currently. The less gristle to chew through, the more tasty brain-meat that was all hers.

With a quick glance behind, it seemed as though the zombies were mostly stable. They were slow, but in taking advantage of the weakened forces in the wake of the Outsiders their numbers were stable enough to gradually make it through the regiments.

"Sally! Watch out!"

She turned to see Edward atop his golem. His bright blue eyes were wide with worry.

Another snake? She bared her fangs and drew her dagger. As she tried to look around, a large shadow flooded over her.