

Carefree 861

Chapter 861: Bestow

Fifteen days later.

“Boss!”

Fiery Lotus was once again at full strength. All the pirates stood in a line with both hands behind their backs and their chests out.

“Butcher! Wilson! Bill!”

Fang Yuan was wearing a cape and a pirate captain hat, along with a golden-hilted cutlass on his waist. Rolisa and the newly joined witch, Cassenia, were standing behind him submissively, just like two maids.

As he called out each name, the corresponding pirate stepped forward with a solemn expression.

Fang Yuan looked around and asked loudly, “Do you know who they are?”

“Of course. They’re our gallant Butcher, an average chief officer, and a cowardly captain!”

A voice of ridicule rang out from among the pirates, and they soon burst into laughter.

Pirates were a group of difficult people and scum. Those who were active in the Nightmare Ocean and the Golden Ocean were the worst among them.

The pirates recruited in Hokululu Port were of a higher quality on average than before, but they were also more unruly.

They did not dare challenge Fang Yuan’s authority, as he was the captain, but they definitely did not have any respect for those that they disliked.

Butcher was still fine, but Wilson and Bill somewhat lacked in ability.

“Bill and Butcher have been following me since offshore Ettoman, and everyone knows about Wilson’s diligence... Me promoting them to higher positions is not only a reward but also a hope that they can play an important role.”

“Boss...” Bill said with a shaky voice. “I really can’t serve as a captain. Please let me return!”

Indeed, he did not have the ability. In particular, he was unable to suppress the pirates since his strength was too weak. If he continued to take charge, there was a fear that his subordinates might kill him during a rebellion.

“Bill, you’re good at handling odd jobs and also quickly complete my tasks every time. I haven’t forgotten.

“Wilson is a qualified chief officer with abilities in management!

“And Butcher is always right at the front during every assault... He’s also sustained the most injuries. All his scars are proof of his meritorious service!”

Fang Yuan's voice was getting louder, and he looked into the eyes of each pirate. "I want all of you to know that if you follow me, offering your loyalty and your life, I will see everything and reward you as you deserve."

"Boss, there's no doubt that you're generous with your rewards!"

Many pirates responded immediately.

"No! Just this isn't enough!" Fang Yuan laughed heartily. "This time... I shall bestow the three of them with true extraordinary powers! I will let you possess strength above ordinary people."

"What?!"

There was an uproar among the surrounding pirates.

In the Nightmare Ocean and the Golden Ocean, there were countless dangers, and strong people emerged one after another.

Perhaps an ordinary farmer living in the Opher Continent might never meet an Extraordinary in their whole life, but these pirates definitely had seen them before, having even fought them and felt the terror of extraordinary powers.

"Boss, are you serious?"

This caused an uproar among the pirates.

"I'm serious. I'm not just bestowing one or two extraordinary items but helping them become true Extraordinaries!" Fang Yuan nodded. "The three of them will advance to Extraordinary today!"

"Boss?!"

The three of them revealed excitement on their faces.

"In my name as Arcane Trickster Roche, you will possess the abilities of an Ocean Warlock. From now on, the ocean will be your domain, and you will possess the power of water!"

Fang Yuan snapped his fingers.

Cassenia immediately went forward, holding a gold cup that was fully embedded with gems in her hands.

Rolisa held up a waterskin and poured seawater inside.

Fang Yuan added seagull feathers, fresh sea monster blood, and other items in succession. He did not fear the pirates that were stretching their necks to look.

This ceremony was originally planned by him, and now he had also altered it. The crucial point was still his main body's permission and powers participating.

Given its nature, the process and ceremony could naturally be more casual. If these pirates were to secretly learn it, ninety-nine percent of them would not have a good outcome.

Bloop! Bloop!

The seawater in the gold cup started to boil, and thick white smoke started to emit and overflow from the cup.

“Bill, drink this and you’ll become an Extraordinary!”

Fang Yuan drew his cutlass and placed it on Bill’s shoulder.

“Boss, I will be your most loyal subordinate for all eternity!”

Bill, this small pirate, was practically crying his eyes out. After he knelt down and vowed, he slowly drank from the gold cup in his hands.

“...”

His eyes were wide open while looking at himself.

A stream of water appeared before his eyes and started hovering around him. Of course, his hair did not turn green!

The side effect of changing hair color had been eliminated after Fang Yuan’s improvements. Currently, Bill’s appearance did not have the slightest difference from an ordinary person’s.

“What a fantastic feeling...”

Bill had an intoxicated look on his face. A water dragon continuously revolved around his body as his fingers danced.

“Bill, someone tarnished your reputation earlier. Go take back your dignity!”

Fang Yuan waved his hand.

“Yes, Boss!”

Bill laughed sinisterly and waved his hand.

A turbulent stream of water directly dashed into the group of pirates and pulled out the pirates who had mocked him earlier.

“I’ll give all of you a chance. Either get rid of me, or I’ll get rid of you!”

Bill rubbed his knuckles.

“Let’s go all out!”

“Kill!”

The pirates exchanged panicked glances, drew their weapons, and formed a circle.

Smack!

A cutlass chopped down violently, but a stream of water stopped it.

One of the pirates had a bad feeling. However, just as he wanted to retreat, he was immediately captured by a tall blue figure. With one palm strike, his head was forcibly pushed into his chest.

“Who else?”

With punches and kicks, Bill cleanly disposed of the pirates who were attacking from all sides and then roared into the sky.

The surrounding pirates immediately cowered, and no one dared to step forward.

“Who... else...?”

Bill returned to his usual figure and had a terrifying aura as he scanned his surroundings.

*This is the perfect representation of how strength is usually accompanied by ambition... *

Upon seeing this, Fang Yuan fell into deep thought. *Previously, Bill didn't have the strength to suppress the fierce pirates under him, so he was content with being below others. But now, it seems like there are some foreboding signs. *

More often than not, such people were likely to go to extremes.

However, he was confident that with his control over the overall situation, nothing much could happen.

“Butcher! Wilson!”

He then looked at the remaining two people.

“Thanks, Boss. In the name of our souls, we swear that we'll definitely be loyal to you for all eternity!”

Wilson and Butcher immediately stepped forward emotionally and took the gold cup.

Practically all the pirates were enviously watching them do this.

After all, they were becoming true Extraordinaries!

For pirates, they were not afraid of giving their souls to the devil in exchange for power.

Even if it was only for a single extraordinary item, they would still recklessly tear each other apart like dogs, much less becoming true Extraordinaries.

It was possible to lose an item, but it would be very difficult to snatch away one's powers.

“Hmm... Wilson will be Slavery's captain, with Butcher as the chief officer, while Bill will be Fiery Lotus's chief officer!”

After thinking about it, Fang Yuan revised their positions.

After all, it was already proven earlier that Bill was unsuitable to be in a position to make decisions even with sufficient strength.

Furthermore, his disposition was relatively weak, and he needed to be placed near him for further observation.

“Yes, Captain!”

The three saluted immediately. Of course, Bill’s expression revealed slight discontentment. Fang Yuan observed it but was unconcerned.

“Anyone who is loyal to me and does their utmost in battle will not shed blood in vain...”

In the end, Fang Yuan raised the gold cup. “In my name as Arcane Trickster Roche, I swear that all pirates who serve me will receive equal treatment! As long as you accumulate enough contributions, I’ll help you become an Extraordinary!”

“Long live the boss!”

“Long live the captain!”

...

All the pirates immediately cheered and were full of enthusiasm.

“Very good. Set sail for the Nightmare Ocean!” Fang Yuan waved his hand, and the sailors jumped into action, as though he had whipped them.

Even the original pirates did not have the slightest objection.

With three living examples among them, while feeling envious, they also made up their minds to follow Fang Yuan unhesitantly even if he intended to go to the netherworld.

“Boss!”

Fang Yuan stood on the deck with the sea breeze blowing against him.

At some point, Cassenia and Rolisa arrived behind him with a worried look.

“I know... you’re worried that my ability will be leaked and be coveted...” Fang Yuan looked at his right palm. “The reason why I picked today and left right after the promotions was precisely to limit the effects as much as possible... After this time, the entire ocean’s pirate forces will experience a huge reshuffle. We either succeed and gain reputation or fail and be crushed into oblivion, so there’s no need to consider too much...”

Fang Yuan gazed toward the Nightmare Ocean, and his eyes glistened.

How could he be absent and miss the closure of an era and the beginning of a great era?

“Sea voyage is the theme of this world. If I want to reap the greatest benefits, I must constantly be at the head of the tide and influence it while evading the world’s counterattack...”

After reaping so many worlds during his dream-traversing, Fang Yuan was already highly experienced.

Furthermore, he had a premonition.

As his influence on this world deepened, perhaps when it reached a certain threshold, there would come a time when his main body could break into the real world and truly advance to Demon God!

“The ocean’s future will certainly be an era of steam cannons. If I want to have a footing in that era, I must have something to rely on...”

Fang Yuan sighed and took out the crystal ball.

The smoke inside the crystal ball suddenly moved. The originally upright pillar of smoke bent and pointed toward a certain direction.

Chapter 862: Specter Ship

“This undead aura—Specter Ship!” Cassenia looked at the crystal ball and cried out in alarm. “It’s within the crystal ball’s detection range, not far from the Golden Ocean!”

“Not only that, it seems like we thoroughly pissed it off when we blocked its curse last time...” Fang Yuan sneered. “Once it detects us, perhaps the ship might come to cause trouble for us...”

Plop!

Click! Clack!

As soon as he finished speaking, Jaffa, who was approaching him, collapsed, and his jaws started clattering.

“Jeez... Are my subordinates a group of fellows like this?”

Fang Yuan rubbed his forehead.

“Captain... That’s because you have absolutely no idea how terrifying Specter Ship is! It’s been wandering the oceans for over a thousand years, yet no pirate nor navy was able to destroy it! It’s rumored that Specter Ship can freely traverse to the netherworld and even other world boundaries... You won’t be able to imagine what frightening undead creatures there are on board—Ghoul Tyrant, Undead King, Demigod Lich, and many other existences that are beyond description... There are even rumors that the captain controlling Specter Ship is an Evil God!” Jaffa said in a trembling voice.

“Impossible. Although Specter Ship has many powerful undead creatures, it doesn’t have an Evil God...”

In this aspect, Fang Yuan had the most say, as he had previously fought with its curse power from afar.

If Specter Ship really had an existence that exceeded the limit, even with the powers his main body had sent over, he still might not have been able to rescue the witch and Rolisa.

“All right. Even if so... what does Specter Ship have? A ship of undead? Captain, even if you see Specter Ship, what benefits are there? Wait a minute...”

As Jaffa murmured, his eyes suddenly opened wide.

“Yes... Don’t you think the legendary Specter Ship is very suitable as the Purgatory Pirates’ new flagship?”

Fang Yuan laughed arrogantly.

The ship continued forward and soon reached the border of the Hell of Lightning.

During the voyage, an unending stream of information had reached Fang Yuan through various means.

“The Queen of Ettoman formally visited the royal port for a military parade and reviewed the new ironclads in service. Their appearance shocked the entire Opher Continent...”

“Presently, the royal navy has already completely transformed and established the Invincible Steel Fleet. They’ve announced that they’ll be suppressing the Nightmare Ocean’s pirate governor, Blackbeard!”

“Shockingly, the target they’ve picked is Blackbeard’s home base, Blackbeard Island. It’s his largest colonial kingdom and has seven ports, three large-scale shipyards, and almost half of his troops... Blackbeard can’t tolerate it any longer and has no other choice but to battle.”

“The Pirate Prince announced support but not many significant actions were actually taken. It’s said that it’s because his encounter with Specter Ship led to heavy losses...”

...

“Pirate Prince Edward isn’t able to handle Specter Ship?”

Fang Yuan shook his head and looked at the crystal ball in his hands.

The pillar of smoke rose and was vibrating even more.

Standing behind Fang Yuan, Cassenia said a panicked voice, “Specters! I see numerous specters approaching at high speed!”

“Troubled times...” Fang Yuan sighed. “Full speed ahead! Enter the Hell of Lightning! We’ll fight Specter Ship there!”

“Set sail! Accelerate!” Bill immediately yelled after receiving the order and did not hesitate to use his Ocean Warlock’s abilities to give the ship a boost.

Barely half a month later, Fiery Lotus and Slavery once again entered the Hell of Lightning.

Kaboom!

Dark clouds were looming overhead as streaks of lightning danced across the sky.

The roaring waves of the black ocean were like monsters, engulfing everything.

“Lower the sails!” Fang Yuan shouted and went to the edge of the deck.

Unknowingly, his surroundings were suddenly covered in a white fog.

The already poor visibility instantly plummeted to an extremely low level.

“Boss, we’ve lost track of Slavery!” Helga yelled hurriedly.

“No need to fear. Slavery has two Ocean Warlocks, Butcher and Wilson, on it. The Hell of Lightning won’t pose a problem for them... as long as our guest comes to our side first!”

Fang Yuan took large strides and kicked the sluggish pirates into action. "Load the cannons, unsheath your cutlasses, and prepare for battle!!!"

Splash!

A bolt of lightning suddenly flashed, causing the surroundings to shine as bright as day.

Amid the dense fog, the outline of a large ship could be vaguely seen.

The ship's ram pierced through the dense fog, and there was an amber hanging lamp lit at the ship's bow.

"Is it Slavery? It's caught up?"

Bill was slightly confused.

"Something's wrong... That isn't an ordinary ship!" Helga yelled from the crow's nest. "Quick, look at the sea surface around the ship!"

Bill rubbed his eyes and immediately saw an extremely strange scene.

The originally surging sea had actually calmed down, and the sea surface was as smooth as a mirror. The large ship moved as though it were skating on ice, sailing forward gracefully and soundlessly.

As the two ships continued to approach each other, the pirates on Fiery Lotus began to clearly see the full view of the other ship.

It had a black hull, a decayed deck, and black sails that were full of holes.

Most importantly, there were numerous undead creatures standing on the deck. Some had physical bodies and some were specters, causing those looking at them to be extremely frightened.

"Enemy attack... it's... Specter Ship!"

On the deck, each and every one of the pirates' legs was trembling as they thought of the famous legend. "We're doomed. Specter Ship won't spare anyone on the ship!"

"Idiots!" Fang Yuan kicked a fellow in front of him and then stepped on this unlucky fellow. "If no one has ever survived an encounter with Specter Ship, then how did those legends get circulated? Now, if you want to continue living, then pick up your weapons and fight!"

After beating and scolding, he finally banded together a group of subordinates to prepare for the battle.

Caw! Caw!

On Specter Ship across from them, numerous white skeletons were biting on to short knives and swinging over using mooring ropes.

"Fire!"

Bill waved his hand, and a row of musketeers in front of him pulled their triggers. Amid the rising plumes of white smoke, large numbers of skeleton sailors exploded into pieces and fell into the ocean.

Unfortunately, this batch of skeleton soldiers was clearly only their cannon fodder.

After this failure, there was no uproar on Specter Ship at all. Instead, even more skeleton soldiers swung over.

Fang Yuan could feel from his soles that there were some abnormal movements under Fiery Lotus.

“Bill, lead a team and head below to guard against those skeletons that were smashed into the ocean. They’re trying to climb up!”

On this thought, Fang Yuan immediately commanded, “Also... everyone is to come here before fighting!”

In front of him was a huge water tank.

Fang Yuan extended his hands and produced a light orb, which he then tossed into the water tank.

Buzz buzz!

A ball of light formed inside the water tank, looking like a small sun.

This pure yet strong light attribute power made Fang Yuan’s subordinates, who had committed countless crimes, to squint their eyes in pain.

“Before fighting, everyone’s weapons must be immersed inside the water tank to receive the light’s blessing! Now get moving!”

Fang Yuan roared and drew his cutlass.

Swoosh!

The sound of horses galloping rang out from across.

Thirteen knights in black dashed over in the heavy atmosphere. Impressively, the horses they were riding were all Nightmares, which had raging flames burning across their entire bodies and the ability to walk freely in the air.

Poof!

It only took a single confrontation for the five ghost riders that Jaffa had summoned with all his might to turn into ashes, showing an absolute gap and disadvantage.

“Kill!”

The pirates howled. After being driven into a corner, it immediately stimulated their last ferocity, and they started a bloody fight with the incoming death knights.

Some pirates even covered themselves with gunpowder and oil and charged at the knights.

“Bring out the cannons! Fire!”

Fang Yuan had his second officer place a few small cannons on the deck. After several rounds, although the knights remained uninjured, the terrifying thrust still pushed them back. A few unlucky knights even fell off their Nightmares and into the ocean.

Unfortunately, all of this was merely small fights for the other party.

Fang Yuan could acutely sense that multiple forces were hiding within Specter Ship, and some had already reached the level of Demigods!

It could be said that these black knights, skeleton soldiers, ghouls, and so on were all cannon fodder among cannon fodder. The kind where no matter how many of them perished, it would not cause any distress.

In fact, in terms of average crew member quality and strength, perhaps Specter Ship was deservedly first in the oceans.

Even for the current Fang Yuan, it would be very troublesome if he encountered the truly high-level crew members on Specter Ship.

“Counterattack!” However, he did not have the slightest bit of fear and grabbed a mooring rope. “Board their ship!”

Thump!

The mooring rope drew a huge arc, and Fang Yuan smoothly landed with both feet on the deck.

Specter Ship was not large, about the same as Fiery Lotus, and its black deck carried the smell of decay.

Stepping on Specter Ship, Fang Yuan suddenly had a strange feeling.

The space and scenery around him became hazy all of a sudden.

It was as if the space where Specter Ship was located was entirely different from the real world. This feeling was extremely similar to his main body’s state as an absolute observer!

“Specter Ship indeed deserves its reputation as a ship that traverses world boundaries...” Fang Yuan praised, not fearing the terrifying undead creatures that were gathering around him at all. Then he suddenly laughed loudly. “Such abilities are exactly what I need!”

Specter Ship could traverse to the netherworld and even other dimensions.

Fang Yuan’s main body also existed in this world, but it was isolated in a different realm.

Although he had already tried to break out several times, gaining this incarnation as a result and could even transmit powers, it was still not enough.

However, the appearance of Specter Ship and its characteristics gave Fang Yuan a glimpse of hope of breaking the seal earlier!

Chapter 863: Thunder God

On Specter Ship.

The boundary between life and death had never been so blurred.

The strong power of death attacked Fang Yuan directly, penetrating his skin and making him look extremely pale.

An ordinary person would become a corpse as soon as they stepped onto the deck.

Even Extraordinaries would have to retreat when attacked by the power of death.

"If I don't take any action, there's a thirty-percent chance that I'll lose my life and become an undead creature after three breaths..." Fang Yuan murmured as a small sun suddenly emerged before his chest.

Rumble!

The milky white light spread immediately, reacting violently with the fog around the pirate ship and making explosive sounds.

As white smoke rose, the undead creatures surrounding the light shrieked in agony and retreated.

The pure power of light and life could even heavily injure mid-level undead creatures.

"Hehe!!!"

As the plume of holy light emerged on the deck...

A shrill, weird laugh sounded, as if it were from hell.

A ghostly white claw extended out from nowhere, piercing space and reaching Fang Yuan. It then grabbed and crushed the plume of light.

Smack!

The light plume exploded, but the pure power of light only deprived the ghost hand of a few patches of skin.

"Ghoul Tyrant?"

Fang Yuan stepped back and gazed at this powerful ghoul that had just appeared. The specter effect and light magic on his body suddenly vanished.

It was a giant figure with huge claws and teeth, and it had summoned a large number of ghouls and skeleton soldiers nearby to act as cannon fodder.

Bone spikes formed a crown on top of this tyrant's head.

Clearly, this was one of the three masters on Specter Ship, the Ghoul Tyrant, who had the ability to summon an almost infinite amount of cannon fodder.

And behind the Ghoul Tyrant was another giant silhouette that was in a black cloak.

Under the cloak, there was a skeleton decorated with seven-colored gems. It was holding a demigod wand formed from nine snake heads intertwining with one another, and the Soul Flame burning in its skull was giving off the light of wisdom that common skeleton soldiers did not possess.

It was beyond doubt that this was a Demigod Lich, a wise and knowledgeable spell caster.

The last one, the Undead King, was only a vague shadow. It stood aloof in the air, overlooking the scene indifferently.

“Three beings at the Demigod level...”

The Great Voyage World was protected by powerful rules, whereby any beings that exceeded the limit would be expelled immediately, causing them to be unable to interfere with the main world.

Since these three could stay on Specter Ship until today, they had not reached the level of Fang Yuan’s original body.

Despite that, they were still very fearsome.

According to Fang Yuan’s estimates, they were equivalent to three Golden Immortals or Ancient Gods!

Although they were no match for his original body, it would not be too difficult for them to kill this incarnation.

“Specter Ship has the ability to travel across realms. If I can take full advantage of it, it may be the key to my original body’s breakthrough... Of course, before I can take control of Specter Ship, I have to deal with these three undead creatures at the Demigod level...”

Fang Yuan took a deep breath and suddenly gazed at the sky.

He had been preparing to hunt Specter Ship for a long time, but why did he choose the Hell of Lightning as the battlefield?

This was naturally because the geography here was advantageous to him. Moreover, he discovered last time that there was definitely some secret hidden in the Hell of Lightning.

This huge secret was most likely associated with a dangerous Evil God.

Right now, the aura leaking from his original body, together with Specter Ship, was sufficient to stimulate a sudden change in the entire Hell of Lightning!

Fang Yuan’s idea was simple. He would lure this dangerous hidden being that had alerted his original body to attack Specter Ship!

After all, he was on Specter Ship as well.

“When you stare at specters, specters stare back at you!”

The Demigod Lick gazed at Fang Yuan as its Nine Snake Wand emanated a mysterious light. “Decree: Shock! Decree: Death!!”

Two streaks of light fell on Fang Yuan’s body. He was almost unable to move and felt the conviction of death.

Fang Yuan laughed lightly and recited the name of his original body.

“Dream and Armament Master!”

A film of sinister crimson light emerged from his body and expanded to form sturdy armor with strong resistance.

The Demigod Lich retreated quickly, looking at Fang Yuan as if it had seen a ghost. "You're... blessed by a god?!"

"Yes. The great Dream and Armament Master blesses me!" Fang Yuan nodded. "I'm willing to make an exchange with Specter Ship... If the three of you surrender and work for me using Specter Ship for three years, I will grant you freedom. How about it?"

"The sin of greed will certainly drag you into hell!" the Ghoul Tyrant roared loudly. "Your blood and flesh will be my sacrifice!"

"We don't have to kill each other. If you surrender... as the captain, I could remove all the curses on you and even... give you the chance to get rid of your bonds with the ship and step onto shore!"

In fact, these undead creatures on Specter Ship were very wretched existences.

They could only sail at sea like homeless ghosts, unable to step onto land at all.

"Impossible!" The Ghoul Tyrant disagreed immediately. "The captain of Specter Ship has to be undead!"

But the Demigod Lich seemed to be hesitant.

The reticent Undead King in the air suddenly sent out a thought. "Finish the battle quickly. A huge danger is approaching us!"

"It's finally here!"

Fang Yuan heaved a long sigh.

Rumble!

The next moment, the Hell of Lightning, which had been peaceful due to the presence of Specter Ship, suddenly underwent a frightening transformation.

Strong winds howled, torrential rain poured, and waves beat continuously. The ocean seemed to have been enraged.

Most importantly, the lightning in the sky merged into a giant palm and pressed down.

What a giant hand!

It consisted entirely of lightning that had an inexplicable grand aura, blocking the sky and destroying everything, and the target was obviously Specter Ship!

"As expected, there's a huge secret in the Hell of Lightning. Is this an Evil God? Not expelled, but sealed? Furthermore, he can break through the power of the seal temporarily?"

Fang Yuan's eyes glistened.

At this point, the most mysterious Undead King suddenly started to chant. "The eternal death is the destination of all souls in the world... The undead fate possesses and surrounds the ship of specters..."

Chi chi!

With its chanting, Specter Ship went through a great change immediately.

Threads of dark fog emerged on the ship and spread continuously.

An enormous number of specters suddenly appeared in the fog.

They were translucent, mostly wearing white clothes, with lifeless expressions and an indescribable aura of death.

They said softly with a hoarse voice, "How sacred! The great ship of the netherworld... you are the bridge joining life and death!

"You transport souls and witness death!

"Your glory is superior to everything in the world!"

...

The specters murmured prayers like zealous believers, worshiping the ship as if it were a god!

In fact, given the long history of Specter Ship and its terrifying reputation, if it had been a person, it would have accumulated enough to become a god!

The Undead King triggered the foundation of Specter Ship resolutely. A giant black hand suddenly emerged and clashed forcefully against the lightning palm.

The two god-like giant hands pushed against each other in the sky, and the black palm of death was even slightly stronger.

Traces of the power of death directly diminished the size of the lightning palm.

"Ah... Who dares defy... the authority of the Raging Thunder God?"

Such a sudden change immediately caused chaos in the entire Hell of Lightning.

Bolts of lightning danced wildly like snakes in the dark clouds and formed a grand human face.

Its eyes seemed to contain the creation and destruction of lightning, giving off a bright light as it looked down.

"Raging Thunder God, Aida Huna Inchester Borgou..."

A stream of name sounded from the Undead King's cloak.

Evidently, to Evil Gods like this, even a name could be the gate to sacrifice. Therefore, the Undead King in the black cloak omitted the second half. "We have no intention of being your enemy... But a thief coveting Specter Ship has to be punished!"

"Understandable!" The giant lightning face smiled, but in the next moment, frightening lightning struck down from all over the sky. "But... once I obtain Specter Ship, I can immediately break through the seal and leave this place!"

The Raging Thunder God's situation was very similar to that of Fang Yuan's original body.

Both were under some restriction, and both could partially overcome the limit and send down power.

The Raging Thunder God was obviously greedy now.

Countless bolts of lightning struck Specter Ship, reducing many low-level undead creatures into ashes.

Only Specter Ship could withstand such attacks. Despite its dilapidated state, it was protected by the concentrated power of death and faith. If it had been Fang Yuan's Fiery Lotus, it would have become dust within a moment.

And even though Specter Ship was one of the legendary ships, it was having a hard time enduring the fury of a being whose ability exceeded the limit of the world.

Numerous sparks bounced everywhere, leaving behind holes on the deck and the sails as they exploded.

Other than the three Demigods, the other undead creatures turned into green smoke and dissipated immediately upon encountering the lightning.

This Thunder God... seems to have a strong desire for Specter Ship... Could he have thought about something like this before?

Fang Yuan was deep in thought as he watched this scene.

His speculation was rather close to the truth.

In the long river of history, there were records of Specter Ship entering the Hell of Lighting, but this Raging Thunder God had not broken through some parts of the seal at that time and could not send down much power, so he could only watch his target leave.

But this time, the stimulation from both Specter Ship and Fang Yuan made him attack recklessly.

Chapter 864:

Robbing the Ship

The Ghoul Tyrant, the Demigod Lich, and even the Undead King... were actually no more than high-level crew members of Specter Ship. They could at best be considered chief officers. Most terrifying was the ship itself...

Amid the thunder and the undead, Fang Yuan walked leisurely toward the hold of Specter Ship.

"So... what do I have to do to take control of Specter Ship and become its captain?"

This hold on Specter Ship was extremely dim, and green will-o-wisps covered the wooden walls.

Upon closer inspection, one would discover that these flames sat on ornaments that looked like the bones of a clasped hand. The rug on the floor was very weird as well, seeming to be made of human hair.

In conclusion, an ordinary person would faint upon seeing this ghost ship.

Despite an Evil God crazily bombarding things outside, all was peaceful within the hold. There was an eerie serenity to the place.

"In terms of true power, my original body can only project some of its powers. Due to the limited faith, the channel is still very narrow... In contrast, the Raging Thunder God, despite being unable to leave the Hell of Lightning, can unseal part of his powers within it. He can then wield that terrifying power... The difference in power is immense.

"However... if it wasn't for him delaying those three Demigods, I wouldn't be able to make it here."

Fang Yuan hastened his pace. His hand pressed something casually.

A headless knight that had appeared from the wall was pressed into the neighboring wall.

"However... even if I'm not as powerful as the Raging Thunder God, I'm not weak to the point of being unable to deal with these undead beings..."

He looked at his palm. A thick layer of radiance gathered and illuminated the surroundings like a diamond.

Behind Fang Yuan, a giant's silhouette faded in and out of sight.

It was his original body, which had been expelled from the world.

Then, through the channel of faith and the special qualities of Specter Ship, a very special overlapping phenomenon occurred. The amount of power that Fang Yuan's incarnation could borrow from his original body increased dramatically.

"Scram!" Fang Yuan boomed.

Suddenly, the Four Symbols of Earth, Fire, Wind, and Water materialized behind him and fused together, seemingly having enough power to destroy everything.

Crack!

The floor cracked open. Huge amounts of specters, zombies, mummies, banshees, and so on poured out from below.

However, their expressions were still lifeless, and they were quickly reduced to ashes in the face of the chaotic torrent.

Fang Yuan continued his journey downward and arrived at the Specter Ship's core. There, he was met with a simple bronze door

It stood silently in the darkness. The silence was immense and possessed a calming power.

Vast amounts of specters surrounded it. Despite being illusions, they were nevertheless unnerving.

"Hmm?" Fang Yuan covered his heart with his hand. "Even my original body is issuing warnings... The danger could actually cause me to die!"

He laughed as he approached the door calmly.

"Oh... Supreme Lord of Specter Ship!

"Please honor your promise! Allow us to wade past the sea of suffering and attain reincarnation!

“You will bear the weight of all life and death in the world and give guidance to the specters!”

...

Numerous specters closed in as they chanted the holy words

A pressure that was steadily growing heavier landed on Fang Yuan.

“So it’s like that...”

As he looked at the specters turning into specks of light that clung on to him, Fang Yuan came to a realization while starting to feel strained. “This Specter Ship was supposed to connect the netherworld and the mortal world, to act as a bridge for specters... But for some unknown reason, it lost its captain one day and could no longer fulfill its obligations. The grievances of the specters fused into a curse!

“The ship’s crew and those three Demigods outside are all creations of the grievances!

“I must shoulder the grievances of this bunch of specters before becoming the Specter Ship’s captain...”

Naturally, a single Specter Ship could not be in charge of all life and death.

Fang Yuan suspected that the souls that awaited salvation were limited to the shipwrecked. There were definitely many other ‘bridges’ and ‘passageways’ in other places of this world

Of course, the number of shipwrecked in even a single region would amount to a horrifying number given enough time.

Even Demigods were unable to bear that much power.

As a result, Specter Ship grew more and more terrifying as it continued to absorb the souls of the dead without sending them to the netherworld. Instead, their souls lingered endlessly in the mortal world, causing the crew members to become evermore bloodthirsty and crazy. It was a vicious cycle.

“Regardless, even if a Demigod can’t do it, it doesn’t mean that I can’t!”

Fang Yuan held the insignia of the Omnidirectional Divine Demonic Armament Dao as a confident smile spread across his face.

Although he was merely a Magical Clone, his original body’s power rivaled that of a Demon God and had the intrinsic quality of indestructibility regardless of the extent of damage taken.

“I will shoulder the weight of the souls of the ocean!

“Even if I’m mistaken, I would lose a Magical Clone at worst.”

With this in mind, he took a deep breath and walked forward.

“Holy! Our captain is a marvel that conquers the seas, sailing at the ends of night and day!

“Our captain will send the specters of the sea to their destined resting place!

“Holy, our captain, your name will become sacred!”

Many specters sang as they entered Fang Yuan’s body.

This horrifying transformation was immediately reflected in Specter Ship itself.

"This is... Specter's Hymn?" The Demigod Lich was terrified. "That arrogant kid is commencing the inheritance of the captain!"

"We must not let him... succeed. Otherwise... we... die!" Ghoul Tyrant roared as he sounded each word loudly

"..."

"Ah! That damn bastard"

In front, the face made of raging lightning was furious. "He who dares to use Raging Thunder God Aida must be turned into ashes by countless lightning strikes."

Unfortunately, when he tried to board the ship in a mixture of fluster and exasperation, the Ghoul Tyrant and the Demigod Lich blocked his advance with large amounts of high-level undead creatures.

"Damn it..." Aida flew into a rage. "Would you rather bow before that shameless thief, that despicable burglar, over me... the great Raging Thunder God?"

"The captain of Specter Ship can only come from the ship's crew. That was our agreement!"

The Ghoul Tyrant and the Demigod Lich joined forces and blocked Aida's advance once again. "The Undead King is going to settle it personally... That human won't succeed!"

"You fools!" Raging Thunder God Aida shouted at them. "Do you really think he's an ordinary human? Would an ordinary human dare to sail to the famous Specter Ship and declare war? Would an ordinary human dare to jump onto Specter Ship and manage to survive until now? Would an ordinary human dare to venture deep into the specter region and uncover its secrets?"

"..."

The Ghoul Tyrant and the Demigod Lich exchanged glances, fear flashing across their faces

"That bastard isn't someone blessed by a god. He's actually the incarnation of a god!" Aida transmitted hastily. "If you don't wish to be enslaved by that man, your only option is to help me!"

...

Rumble!

At the same time, Fang Yuan reached a bronze door and pressed his hands on both sides of it.

Countless ant-sized specters were covering his body, as though he was wearing thick armor. Nothing could penetrate it.

Upon closer inspection, the specters seemed to be screaming something, and their hands were clutching Fang Yuan tightly.

Even Blackbeard would not be able to save his own soul from destruction under such circumstances!

However, Fang Yuan tightened his lips and steeled his nerves. With his will that was as cold as ice and as tough as steel, he pushed at the door nonchalantly.

Crack! Crack!

The simple bronze door grew warm at the touch of his hands and opened slowly.

Fang Yuan found a great hall beyond the door. It had the structure of the conference room of a king, and black flags and insignias decorated the surrounding pillars.

Right in the center of the room, there was an ashen-white throne made of bones!

“The Specter Ship’s previous captain... no one knows who he was or what had happened to him...”

Fang Yuan stepped forward and reached the throne of bones.

“One must bear the burden of the crown before wearing it!”

Suddenly, something flashed across the room, and a black silhouette appeared above the hall. It was none other than the Demigod, the Undead King.

Among the three ruling cores, it was the most eccentric.

It floated in the air while repeating the same line over and over.

“You... Are you prepared?”

“Of course... I founded the Purgatory Pirates in order to purge the world with the flames of the Fiery Lotus!”

Fang Yuan laughed heartily and sat down on the throne of bones.

It was an extremely unsettling sight.

The surface of the throne was made of numerous open-mouthed skulls.

While sitting on the throne, he felt as though countless beasts were biting him. It was an extreme psychological test.

“...”

The Undead King did not speak but instead slowly descended.

The black fog that had been surrounding it suddenly exploded and revealed its true form—a black cloak!

Whoosh!

As soon as the black cloak landed on Fang Yuan, another intense transformation began.

Bright green flames burst out spontaneously all over Fang Yuan’s body. Many specters shrieked, cursing Fang Yuan and the world before they perished.

“The final test? It’s really something to be reckoned with!”

Fang Yuan mumbled something and waved his hand. A layer of Fiery Lotus flames immediately appeared and devoured the specters and green flames on his body.

“My grand goal is to use the Fiery Lotus to purge the world!

“My grand goal is to become the captain of Specter Ship and bring order to the netherworld and the mortal world!

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Let specters rest in peace!”

The originally intense Fiery Lotus flames turned absolutely gentle.

A white silhouette being purified was vaguely visible. Its anger had subsided, and it was now qualified to enter the netherworld and begin a new cycle.

Chapter 865: Dramatic Change

Nightmare Ocean, Blackbeard’s territory.

At the center of this region was Blackbeard Island—Blackbeard’s base.

After the military parade and review, Ettoman’s Invincible Steel Fleet had headed toward the Nightmare Ocean in a towering fashion.

At this time, Ettoman was the most powerful empire of the ocean. Relying solely on brute force, it wantonly eliminated the pirates in the Nightmare Ocean.

This Invincible Fleet’s primary firepower was the new ironclads, of which there were more than thirty. This fleet defeated the combined forces of the five admirals under Blackbeard’s command during an initial skirmish.

Three of Blackbeard’s five trusted subordinates were killed in that battle. His favorite—Black Lasso, who was fond of skinning—was blown to bits by the huge cannons on the spot.

After tallying, Ettoman’s fleet sank three first-level warships, seven second-level warships, sixteen third-level warships, and countless small vessels. It captured an incredible amount of prisoners as well.

The large ironclads used this shocking power to announce their presence to the world.

Any slightly intelligent sea merchant or country immediately understood that the situation at sea was about to undergo great change.

Even as Ettoman’s main fleet approached Blackbeard Island, it still had forces to spare. Under the command of the numerous Royal Pirates, the remaining forces regrouped into a number of massive fleets that headed straight for the pirate ports and free ports.

Although the main fleet was going to engage Blackbeard, the forces of Ettoman were so immense that every dispatched fleet had a first-level warship overseeing. Ordinary pirates were no match for them at all.

All of a sudden, fear enveloped the entire Nightmare Ocean. Countless famous pirates were captured and hanged to death on masts.

The pirate ports that once bustled with life suddenly became lifeless.

In the Nightmare Ocean, only Ettoman's flags flew high.

Those lucky enough to survive either tried to head for Blackbeard's main fleet to prepare for a final clash with Ettoman or were disheartened and prepared to leave the Nightmare Ocean and head into the depths of the Golden Sea Route.

"Hurry up! We need to be there before the battle begins!"

Atop a first-level warship, Orlando was in full dress uniform with a wig as he peered into the distance with a simple spyglass.

"Report! According to the latest news, Captain Huchak has defeated the Red Rose Pirates and hanged its captain!"

"Captain Dodoro has relayed news that he's managed to take over Green Fragrance Island and has taken control of all its ports and shipyards..."

...

Behind him, news of all sorts arrived continuously.

"Map!" Orlando said and immediately spread open a map of the Nightmare Ocean. Pointing with his finger, he said, "This is Blackbeard Island. The main fleet has remained here all this time, tying down Blackbeard's main fleet! Really outstanding move by Ettoman!"

In the time that the two main fleets were engaged with each other, Ettoman had used its overwhelming numbers and a batch of conquered pirates acting as vanguards to raid pirate forces all over the Nightmare Ocean.

After eliminating these pirates, the fleets would sail for the center and meet up with the main fleet at Blackbeard Island to form a giant net with one sole purpose—capturing the Nightmare Ocean's pirate governor, Blackbeard!

Even if the pirates realized what Ettoman was trying to do, they would not be able to do anything about it. The difference in power was just too vast.

Ettoman was able to send out secondary forces to attack while the main fleets engaged each other, but Blackbeard was unable to.

After all, his greatest force besides his own fleet was that of the five admirals, who had been defeated at the start of this war.

He was as good as dead!

"A textbook war!"

Even Orlando could do nothing but admire Ettoman's strategist after reviewing the situation.

“Of course... it’s only this time. After defeating or eliminating Blackbeard, the remaining pirate governors will definitely join forces. Maybe even elect a Pirate King to continue the fight with Ettoman!”

Orlando pondered in silence.

Admittedly, Blackbeard was unfortunate to have to face Ettoman’s new warships full force.

Prior to this, the pirate governors did not know the full extent of Ettoman’s power and could still sit on the sidelines and enjoy the show, perhaps wanting to use Blackbeard to test the waters as well.

This mentality had provided Ettoman with the initiative in this war.

Compared to the other sea regions that lacked any substantial targets, the Nightmare Ocean that Blackbeard resided in was the most worthy to start a war.

However, after this, there would never again be such an opportunity.

“Actually... the pirate governors should be reacting now. Regrettably, it’s too late... Pirate Prince Edward was prepared to help and was the only one who could make it before the final battle begins, but Ettoman managed to call forth Specter Ship... To resort to such cruelty means that it’s crucial for Ettoman to kill Blackbeard! Ettoman determined to use Blackbeard as a sacrifice to honor its flag!”

Naturally, Ettoman did not have an effective way of controlling Specter Ship.

The method it used to control the ship was extremely primitive and cruel.

As the largest island kingdom in the world, the number of merchant ships and transit hubs that Ettoman had was first in the world as well.

Occasionally, there would be leads to Specter Ship.

In order to steer Specter Ship, there naturally had to be blood sacrifices. Merchant ships full of sacrifices that could fulfill the bloodthirst of the specters were used to lead Specter Ship to where it wanted.

As far as Orlando knew, Ettoman had sacrificed no less than one hundred merchant ships to lure Specter Ship to the Golden Ocean. Nearly ten thousand slaves and sailors had been sacrificed!

Unquestionably, even some countries would be unable to realize an operation of such magnitude.

However, this great sacrifice had also managed to reap great rewards.

Specter Ship sent terror all over the Golden Ocean. Even the Pirate Prince was no match, and he had had to abandon his plan to assist Blackbeard.

There was no one left in the entire Nightmare Ocean that could help Blackbeard. The pirate governor of the Nightmare Ocean, the captain of the Blackbeard Pirates, seemed to be finally meeting his end.

Of course, it would not be too hard for Blackbeard to escape by himself and even take Monster with him.

But if he were to leave the Nightmare Ocean, he would have to forsake his roots, territory, military power, and so on... He would fall from being a pirate governor to a pirate captain with a soiled reputation.

For some pirates, this was a fate worse than death.

Furthermore, anything could happen in battle. Blackbeard was willing to put it all on the line.

"I've heard that... all pirates in the Nightmare Ocean who still want to fight are heading for Blackbeard Island... Arcane Trickster Roche escaped quickly and should already be in the Golden Ocean by now. Rest assured... Even if the Royal Pirates were to rest, we privateer captains will surely be ordered to clear the way. There'll be an opportunity eventually!"

Orlando stomped the deck a few times, looking pleased with himself.

The ship that he was on was the absolute main force in the days of wind-powered sailing ships. It was a first-level warship with three decks, more than two hundred cannons, a displacement of three thousand tons, and a crew of more than a thousand, and it could reach a maximum of twenty knots carrying all of that. It was absolutely a fortress at sea.

If the past Octopus Marauder Team had such a flagship, it would have been over the moon.

But now, Orlando had bought it from the navy for a low price using the wealth that he had accumulated over a few successful pillages.

"By following the royal navy, I've gained a great deal... Next step, although an ironclad is out of the question, it's time to think about getting an extraordinary ship for myself!"

Orlando pondered in silence.

Ironclads were truly a formidable national-level weapon. However, it was too bulky for private use.

Most importantly, even if the navy were to gift him one, he did not have enough trained sailors nor a new shipyard.

In other words, even with a steam-powered ship, ordinary pirates might not be able to use it. Furthermore, he would be tied to Ettoman forever because the logistics were entirely under Ettoman's control! Only if... he built an entire supporting industrial system to accommodate the steam technology.

The clever Orlando realized early on that, despite its merits, ironclads were simply too expensive to even consider.

The kind of ship that he was suited for was still the first choice for all major pirates.

"It's a pity... I didn't run into Cecil's great merchant, Formosa. I really did take a liking to that Mermaid of his..."

Perhaps having caught on to his thoughts, the Pirate System broke its silence and displayed a quest.

" *Ding* ! Quest triggered: Great Pirate!

"Quest explanation: How could you who aspires to become a great pirate not have an extraordinary ship that is compatible with your status? Take over Mermaid within three months! That's right, that ship that can go underwater! Capture a giant octopus on top of that, and the system will reward you additionally with the title 'Deep Sea Hades'!

“Quest reward: 2000 experience!”

...

“Why does it have to be Mermaid?”

Orlando would naturally not understand the system’s profound evil intentions. Instead, he was puzzled.

“On top of that... I need to capture a giant octopus...”

“Is... this Pirate System customizing quests according to my thoughts? What does all of this have to do with the Dream and Armament Master?”

He was utterly confused as he looked at his stats:

“Name: Orlando

Level: Civilian Level 5, Sorcerer Level 3

Strength: 3

Speed: 3

Physique: 2.5

Psyche: 6

Identity: Privateer Captain (Under Ettoman’s command)

Specialization: Sailing (Proficient), Firearm Manipulation (Proficient), Cutlass Techniques (Master), Battle Casting (Basic), Sorcery (Basic)

Experience: 100 (Experience required before reaching the next level: 4000)”

...

“Boss! We’ve reached the target location. Blackbeard’s territory lies just ahead!” shouted the pirate on the observation tower.

Chapter 866: Great Naval Battle

Blackbeard’s territory.

A massive fleet was slowly gathering.

With over a hundred ships and more than ten thousand sailors, the scale of this fleet could definitely be considered enormous.

The flagship at the core was Blackbeard’s ship—Monster!

The Blackbeard flag that represented the Nightmare Ocean’s pirate governor hung on the mast, waving in the wind. In addition, there were numerous other pirate flags along the periphery of the fleet.

The pirates who really wanted to take the risk and fight had all already gathered here.

This fleet was the last of the pirate forces in the Nightmare Ocean.

With such a force, it might not be unrivaled across the world, but at least any country in the Opher Continent would not be able to beat it easily.

Even the past Ettoman would not dare to brazenly fight Blackbeard in fear of obtaining victory at the cost of sustaining heavy losses.

However, the gathering of this fleet now had a hint of solemnness.

“Captain... the negotiator is back!” Blackbeard’s most trusted chief officer stepped forward. “He returned with Ettoman’s latest terms. They demand that we abandon sovereignty of Blackbeard Island and the Nightmare Ocean and retain only one colony. Furthermore, we are to turn over seventy percent of all our wealth! If we do this, Ettoman’s newly established Far Ocean Development Corporation will accept us as privateer captains...”

Far Ocean Development Corporation—another new thing that Ettoman had invented.

Colonial methods were too underhanded. Using official means to carry them out would inevitably leave blemishes behind, while private means would not have too many scruples. Furthermore, a company’s paramount objective was to pursue its own interests. Thus, its operations were simple and highly efficient. It could also accept a certain amount of private capital to participate in its business.

“This isn’t a peace agreement, but a humiliating unconditional surrender!” Blackbeard suddenly stood up, and his iron leg produced a string of sounds on the deck. “Even if we fight till the last man, I won’t surrender! Pass the order down—prepare for battle!”

“Your will shall be carried out!”

The chief officer hesitated to say something, but he eventually obediently retreated.

Soon, Ettoman’s enormous fleet appeared in the Blackbeard Pirates’ line of sight.

Taking the lead were dozens of black smoke pillars soaring toward the sky, like a grim reaper’s cage that was continuously approaching at lightning speed.

An ordinary sailing ship could at most sail at twenty knots, but these experienced pirates only needed a glance to realize that all these warships sailed above twenty knots.

Soon, a group of densely packed black dots emerged from the horizon and was growing larger, eventually turning into numerous steel mountains giving off incomparable pressure.

“Their entire hull is made of steel. Even using our largest cannon, it probably won’t be able to cause any damage...”

“The smallest ship is over a hundred meters long, not to mention its displacement tonnage. It’s practically a steel mountain...”

“Even without doing anything, our ships would definitely sink if they collide into us...”

The old pirates instantly gained a huge amount of parameters from observation, and their faces lost color.

One would not be able to understand the terror of Ettoman's Invincible Steel Fleet before seeing it with their own eyes.

"What are you scum afraid of?" On Monster, Blackbeard's voice could be heard from afar. "We are pirates! Free pirates! The rulers of the sea!!! Now, someone wants to banish us, the sons of the ocean, away from our home. Can we agree to this?"

"Can't!"

No matter what, the pirates currently gathered here were still relatively determined to fight. Upon hearing this, they immediately drew their weapons and shouted. The extremely low morale due to seeing the ironclads slightly rose.

"Besides, we aren't fighting by ourselves!"

Blackbeard continued his speech vehemently, "Golden Ocean's Pirate Prince, Coral Ocean's Merfolk King, as well as Devil Ocean's and Star Clusters Archipelago's pirate governors are all supporting us! As long as we obtain even the slightest victory and advantage, our allied forces will not hesitate to dispatch troops and tear Ettoman into pieces... When that moment comes, all of its colonies and ports across the world and even its mainland will face the fury of pirates!"

"Long live the son of the Nightmare Ocean!"

"For freedom!"

One could not help but admit that Blackbeard's speech was quite provocative.

The lowest rung of pirates was obviously unaware of the fact that the allied forces were nowhere to be seen at all and cheered wildly.

Soon, the full view of Ettoman's Invincible Steel Fleet entered their vision.

Behind the thirty ironclads, it was thickly dotted with large sailing ships that were at least third-level warships.

They were surrounding Blackbeard's forces like an open pocket.

The cheers suddenly stopped.

Facing an absolute disadvantage in numbers and ships, only fools would believe that they could still obtain victory today.

"Battle!"

Blackbeard took a deep breath and drew his cutlass.

"Roar! Roar!"

Monster immediately roared and slowly sailed forward.

A naval battle of the largest scale was about to break out!

Swoosh!

Right at this moment, a high-speed water arrow came flying over from outside the battlefield. However, it did not dash into the battlefield and took the stance of an onlooker instead.

Only after the waves fell did it reveal the ship's smooth hull and the flag that was famous across the Golden Ocean.

"It's Wanderer! The Golden Ocean's Pirate Prince Edward is here!"

This caused an uproar among the royal navy, but it soon quieted down.

This was because Wanderer was only one ship, and it would not be able to change anything. Furthermore, it was only waiting from afar at the periphery and did not attempt to enter the battlefield.

The pirate governors wanted to make use of Blackbeard's fall to obtain more data on the ironclads. Of course, there was also the tacit understanding that it would be most ideal if they could deplete the navy's forces to the greatest extent.

Wanderer was quietly towering in the ocean with an aloof attitude.

There was no one from the navy attacking it.

After all, Wanderer was absolutely deserving of its reputation as the fastest in the oceans.

Even the fastest ironclad now was still unable to catch up to Wanderer's speed. If they dared to besiege it, it would only be embarrassing themselves.

Even so, cheers could be heard coming from Wanderer.

After all, from the pirates' perspective, the Pirate Prince's reputation had intimidated the navy, and thus they did not dare to provoke him.

It was not only the Pirate Prince either.

At the edge of the battlefield, numerous strange pirate teams were also quietly appearing and watching this battle from afar.

These were all great pirates who were once famous on the Golden Sea Route, and perhaps there were even some low-profile pirate governors hiding among them.

They all had extremely grave looks while gazing at Monster's enemy.

Bang!

At the center of attention, the royal navy's flagship, Fearless, suddenly fired its main cannon.

Rumble!

The entire ocean shook.

The third-level pirate warship opposite had half of its deck explode into flames.

"How's this possible? It destroyed a ship with merely one shot?"

Edward instantly became despondent after seeing this.

He could not sense the slightest hint of extraordinary powers from Fearless. If it were an extraordinary ship that had fired a cannon with extraordinary powers, he would have nothing to say about accomplishing this feat.

However, everything at this moment had proven that the ironclad had achieved this purely with the powers of technology.

This was undoubtedly very terrifying.

This was because the ordinary represented mass production.

What if the number of ironclads increased to a hundred in the future, and every warship fired a similar main cannon at the same time?

Cold sweat immediately fell from Edward's forehead.

Even with Wanderer, he was still uncertain if he would be able to escape the cannon fire's attack range in a split second.

"What if such an attack landed on Pirate King City?"

Edward had viewed Pirate King City as an unsinkable stronghold.

However, his originally impregnable confidence had wavered slightly after this.

"We must join forces!"

"Elect a Pirate King!"

"Share data and information on ironclads!"

"Everything must be fast. Otherwise, we'll only be eliminated by this era!"

...

For a moment, almost all of the pirates spectating the battle had such a thought cross their minds.

"Captain!" At this moment, a sailor came over hurriedly with a strange expression. "There's a lifeboat approaching. The man on board claims to be Vice Admiral Norton, and he wishes to meet you!"

"Invite him on!"

Edward rubbed his chin with a contemplative expression. Shortly after, he saw a middle-aged, Ettoman gentleman wearing the royal navy's military uniform coming onto the deck.

"Good day, Invincible Fleet's chief advisor!" Edward laughed exaggeratedly. "What do you think would happen... if I throw the man who planned this battle into the ocean to feed the sharks or kidnap him for ransom?"

"Nothing much!"

Vice Admiral Norton had distinct facial features and fox-like eyes. He laughed exaggeratedly after hearing what Edward said. "Such actions would only be deemed as challenging the royal navy and thus face an all-out attack from Admiral Philip! Besides... you can't be thinking that Blackbeard's defeat is due

to my plan? In reality, with Ettoman's current strength, regardless of which pirate governor it attacked, the chances of victory are very high!"

"Although it's the truth, hearing it really causes one to be dispirited..." Edward's eyes glistened.

"However... it isn't like we don't have the ability to strike back, such as Sea God, King's Throne, and Specter Ship..."

"Specter Ship? It still needs a captain!" Vice Admiral Norton smiled. "I'm here with Ettoman's goodwill. As long as you pledge allegiance, the Queen is willing to pardon all of your crimes and issue you a privateer permit, and even let you become one of Far Ocean Development Corporation's shareholders!"

"You're asking few pirate governors to surrender?" Pirate Prince Edward tugged at his collar. "Then I can tell you right now that Wanderer was free in the past, is free now, and will continue to be free in the future!"

Chapter 867: Ending

Rumble!

As the ironclads fired one round after another, Blackbeard's forces suddenly greeted cannon fire.

One wooden ship after another exploded under the bombardment. Before the pirates even had a chance to show off their bravery with their boarding battle skills, the cannon fire tore them to pieces and sank them to the bottom of the ocean.

"Scatter!" Blackbeard closed his eyes and issued an order from atop Monster. "Scatter and break out!"

In a split second, the pirate force suddenly scattered and tried to break out in all directions, much like a pack of wolves that had just lost its leader.

Despite knowing that taking this course of action was equivalent to admitting defeat, Blackbeard had no other choice.

After all, if he were to try to stand his ground, all the forces under him could be eradicated.

Furthermore, after dispersing and breaking out, the pirate ships would be able to demonstrate their strengths to the fullest extent.

Pirates were, at the core, a free and undisciplined lot. They were the polar opposite of the disciplined military.

The great battle transformed into many small-scale pursuits. The pirates would frequently counterattack with vigor, causing heavy losses among the first, second, and third-level sailing ships that were yet to retire.

Naturally, in stark contrast were those thirty ironclads. They rampaged through the sea while pirates scurried to evade their wrath. Nothing but doom awaited those that were targeted by them.

As the leader of the Blackbeard Pirates, Blackbeard was obviously prioritized.

A total of seven ironclads were aggressively trying to surround him.

“Faster!”

Of course, as a pirate governor, Blackbeard would not simply surrender.

As he tapped the deck of Monster, the entire ship suddenly roared, and it sped up multiple times. After evading a round of cannon fire, it smashed savagely into the blockade formed by sailing warships.

“Crunch! Crunch!”

Monster opened its large mouth and bit one of the sailing ships as though it were a snake trying to swallow a rat. With a toe-curling sound, it quickly devoured the entire battleship.

Bang! Bang!

Several cannons shelled Monster in that short period.

However, as its body was far sturdier than ordinary wood and able to regenerate, it managed to endure the bombardment and carve a bloody path out through the sailing ships.

“Are these the final glorious moments of Monster?”

Despite the tremendous courage displayed, it was nothing good in the eyes of Edward, who was overlooking the battle.

“Blackbeard... What exactly are you thinking?”

Monster was like a peerless general caught between two forces. Despite finding a way into the opposition forces, displaying tremendous courage, and felling countless enemies, it was eventually surrounded by the armored guards.

Despite their clumsy appearance, the ironclads were actually extremely nimble in water, and they completely surrounded Monster.

“The royal navy’s fleet commander must be Philip. He wanted to use these wooden ships that should have been retired to lure my attention and then surround me with the ironclads...”

Blackbeard stood at the bow of Monster, looking at the scene. A cold smile broke out. “However, I’ve held back one of the legendary powers of Monster! He really dug his own grave this time!”

After all, Monster was ranked second among the extraordinary ships and almost as good as legendary ships.

Blackbeard was cunning. After getting his hands on Monster, he had used his magic to grant the ship an additional power.

Monster came with the ability of Devour, able to destroy enemy ships and enhance itself using the pillaged parts.

The legendary power that Blackbeard had granted to Monster was to accumulate the energy obtained by Devour and unleash it all at once. It was a terrifying ability!

“Legend—Annihilation!”

After it devoured the final first-level battleship, the ironclads had completely surrounded Monster. Blackbeard raised his right hand and bellowed, “Experience agony!”

Rumble!

A layer of black light suddenly appeared on top of Monster and converged on Blackbeard’s hand. Its color grew richer and richer until it suddenly expanded.

Buzz buzz!

A formless wave swept over everything.

All of a sudden, the decks of the ironclads that came into contact with the wave cracked, folded... and eventually turned to ash, annihilated without a trace.

“Abandon ship!”

Bursts of flustered screams and scrambling erupted all over the ironclads.

However, the sailors were too slow.

Their expressions froze as soon as the black wave caught up to them.

A gentle breeze blew past, and the heads of the statues fell to the ground and turned into sand.

After the black wave left, three of the ironclads were severely damaged and began to sink slowly.

“Long live Blackbeard!”

“Long live pirates!”

...

The pirates exploded into cheers. They were as excited as a dying man suddenly seeing a glimmer of hope.

The God of War-like presence of the ironclads suffered a loss of three ships after just one attack from Blackbeard.

It was, without a doubt, the greatest victory against the Ettoman forces thus far.

However, Blackbeard was actually disheartened.

This attack required a long recharge period. After the attack just now, it could not fire another for the next three days.

According to his thoughts, he could have destroyed over ten ships if they were wooden ships. Even if they were ironclads, he had hoped to completely destroy the seven that were after him. It would have been an unforgettable lesson to the Ettoman Royal Navy. After he had rid himself of the pursuers, he would have been able to leave the battlefield at his leisure.

However, reality gave him a cruel slap across the face.

The defensive power of the ironclads was well over Blackbeard's estimates. Sinking merely three ships had spent all of Monster's energy in the Annihilation attack.

As a result, not only could he forget about teaching Ettoman a lesson, he now had trouble escaping.

"Fire!"

After seeing three comrades fall, the remaining commanders on the other ironclads were seeing red and immediately ordered the counterattack.

Bang! Bang!

With loud blasts, terrifying attacks landed on Monster.

Regardless of the toughness of the material, several holes opened up on the ship. Monster was like an injured animal caught in a trap and surrounded by hounds.

"Faster! Breakthrough!" Blackbeard roared.

Unfortunately, the equipment and energy that Monster had pillaged were all spent in the Annihilation attack. Even the ship's recovery ability was hindered.

After the successful attack, one ironclad rushed head-on toward Monster.

Monster was a giant among the sailing battleships. Its size and displacement level were even greater than that of first-level warships. The same was true for the ironclads.

Bang!

With a loud blast, both behemoths vibrated violently.

Then a huge gap appeared on the hull of Monster.

"Aw! Aw!"

Monster cried out like an injured animal. The bow suddenly raised, and its horrifying large mouth expanded several times like the mouth of a giant python.

With a crack, it swallowed the bow of the ironclad that had charged at it.

Creak! Creak!

The toe-curling sound rang out once again.

After a short while, Monster retreated on its own accord. A battered ironclad appeared, but cheers sounded from on top of the ironclad.

In contrast, the pirates on Monster remained silent. Those with sharp eyes could even see several scars covering Monster's bow.

Obviously, Monster had tried to Devour the ironclad like it had the other sailing ships, as well as recover some energy in the process.

However, not only was the ship huge, its sturdiness was well past Monster's expectations, and it had lost numerous teeth.

Monster's plan to escape had failed completely.

Unless Pirate Prince Edward intervened personally, there was no hope of survival. Such was the cruel reality of the battle.

But would Edward try to save Blackbeard?

Even disregarding the danger that Edward would have to put himself in, he would not save Blackbeard. They were not on good enough terms to warrant it either. After all, they had fought fiercely with each other many times before.

"Attention, prepare for battle!"

Blackbeard opened a bottle of rum with his teeth and took a huge gulp.

As a pirate, he had long come to terms with the possibility of dying at sea at any time!

As a pirate captain, he should sink with his ship even more!

...

"A respectable opponent!"

After sensing the signals and movements from Monster, the commanders of the remaining ironclads were impressed. That did not, however, stop them from issuing the order to attack.

They knew that Monster would fight even with its back against the wall. As such, despite it being an extraordinary warship, they would not risk sustaining heavy losses to obtain it. Letting it sink was the best choice.

The four remaining ironclads pointed their main cannons at Monster and fired.

Rumble!

Four giant explosions landed on Monster, sending countless pirates flying and meeting their end without a burial.

Amid the gore and the flames, Blackbeard's pirate flag slowly fell, declaring the end of an era.

The navy's wretched 'no contact battle plan' allowed Blackbeard no room to use his magic. He could only watch as his ship was torn to pieces, and then he was thrown into the sea as well.

Whoo! Whoo!

While in great pain, he seemed to hear a horn.

With his extraordinary eyesight, he saw shipwrecked souls converge one after another to a single point, as though there were a vortex there.

A giant but blurry and translucent ship appeared, sailing toward him slowly. It was emanating an aura of specters that made one's heart palpitate.

Pirate Prince Edward saw the familiar mist that had appeared out of the blue and cried out in shock, "It's Specter Ship!"

"Specter Ship!"

The royal navy had also noticed the uninvited guest. The sailors cried out in terror, as though it were doomsday.

Splash!

The mist dispersed and revealed a half-rotten sailing ship. It tossed out a rope that seemed to have a life of its own. The rope agilely caught Blackbeard and placed him on the deck.

Chapter 868: Plague

" Cough cough ..."

Blackbeard spat out some seawater. He was in bad shape. The explosion had completely destroyed a number of defensive magic tools that he had on him. Now that he was on Specter Ship's deck, its cold aura penetrated his body, causing even more damage to his wounds.

After seeing several undead creatures close in on him, especially the Ghoul Tyrant in the lead, Blackbeard chuckled wryly and gave up any attempt at resistance.

However, after he was brought before the captain of Specter Ship, his jaw dropped in surprise. "Why are you here?!"

In horror, Blackbeard saw that Specter Ship's captain, who was surrounded by various undead creatures, was the pirate who he had hunted down and had let escape into the Golden Ocean, Arcane Trickster Roche!

In less than a month, he had transformed from an outcast to the captain of Specter Ship. The change was so fast that Blackbeard did not even know how to react.

"We meet again, Governor Blackbeard!"

Fang Yuan looked handsome and fashionable, even donning a Death cloak. He looked condescendingly at the pirate governor that had once hunted him down.

After he had endured the tests on that day, he had automatically obtained the authority to become the captain of Specter Ship.

All the undead creatures on the ship, including the Ghoul Tyrant and the Demigod Lich, were bound to his orders under the contract's power.

With them under his command, he had more than enough to escape from the wrath of the Raging Thunder God, who was not yet fully unsealed.

After all, the opponent had not yet attained complete freedom either. In fact, he was unable to pursue Feng Yuan after he had left the Hell of Lightning

However, even though he had obtained Specter Ship and the ability to travel across realms, Fang Yuan's original body was unable to exist in the real world immediately. On top of that, he had to start fulfilling the captain's responsibility—guiding all kinds of shipwrecked souls to the afterlife.

Otherwise, even with his intrinsic quality, he would not be able to bear all the grudges of Specter Ship for too long.

According to the agreement, the two Demigods will only obey my orders for three years. After that, I will return their freedom to them. Furthermore, Specter Ship is responsible for guiding souls to the afterlife at all times. While it can be summoned occasionally into battle, it doesn't really work as a flagship... The average pirate won't be able to live on Specter Ship either.

Every living man on Specter Ship could very well turn undead after spending too much time on it, and even Fang Yuan would not be able to reverse the process.

Therefore, I need to obtain another legendary pirate ship. Blackbeard will be useful in that regard... Fang Yuan thought as he looked at his prisoner.

Not only did Blackbeard have the last fragment of the treasure map, but there were the riches of the entire Blackbeard Pirates as well.

They could very well have more than one extraordinary ship on top of that.

Even if there wasn't, just a portion of their riches would be enough to start building a first-class extraordinary ship.

This was why Fang Yuan had saved Blackbeard's life.

"Fire!"

"Even Specter Ship must succumb to the great Ettoman flag!"

Victory had excited the entire royal fleet, and it decided to attack even after finding out that it was facing Specter Ship.

"Spiritualize!" Fang Yuan commanded at the same time as the cannons fired.

The entire Specter Ship instantly turned phantasmal. The huge cannonballs flew right through the ship and eventually exploded on the surface of the sea.

"Pure physical attacks, while powerful, do have their flaws. For example... the Spiritualize ability of Specter Ship renders all physical attacks ineffective!"

It was a peculiarity of Specter Ship, but it was limited to only pure physical attacks.

If the cannonballs had been Monster's Annihilation, the only thing Fang Yuan could have done was to run away.

All things had their strengths and weaknesses.

"Lich! It appears that these sailors have taken our kindness for weakness. They've even forgotten to fear Specter Ship!" Fang Yuan said to the Demigod Lich as he sneered.

"Captain, as long as you command it, I can remind them of the terror of Specter Ship!" replied the Demigod Lich with a weird laugh.

"Okay, go ahead!" Fang Yuan waved his hand. Immediately, a dark green mist surrounded the Lich and carried it into midair. "Death Cloud!"

A giant dark green cloud appeared and enveloped the surrounding ironclads.

The poison was accompanied by the sound of erosion.

Undead monsters released freaky screams as they floated about, killing the sailors who had drifted apart from their crew.

"All right!" Fang Yuan no longer paid any attention to the battlefield and looked straight at Blackbeard. "Shall we begin our negotiations?"

"Heh... are you lusting after the riches I've accumulated over the years?" Blackbeard laughed weirdly, removed the seaweed on himself, and slowly rose. "That's right... As the Nightmare Ocean's governor for so many years, I have indeed accumulated a huge amount of riches. Unfortunately, they were all left on those islands. Lucky Ettoman!"

"Those are only the treasures from your public treasury. I don't believe that you, as the leader, didn't keep any personal treasures." Fang Yuan laughed mischievously. "Or would you rather I ask you after turning you into a specter?"

As the captain of Specter Ship, he had even more ways to deal with specters than live people.

Blackbeard's expression changed immediately.

Currently, his situation was not much better than dying at sea.

The high-level undead creatures would not fear his magic. Furthermore, his greatest fear was exactly the situation that Fang Yuan had described.

Blackbeard finally decided to spill the beans after staring at Fang Yuan for a long time. "Fine! I do have a secret stash. I've hidden priceless treasures there. If you let me go, I'll give you the map!"

"We'll discuss that later! I need that treasure map fragment first!"

A light flashed on Fang Yuan's hand, and a treasure map with a section missing appeared. "Don't tell me that you don't know what this is!"

"The Soro Pirates' treasure map... My god, you managed to collect three pieces of it?"

Blackbeard looked shocked.

"Pfft... your slave trader subordinate had done many deeds behind your back." Fang Yuan laughed mockingly. "So how about it? You have to first present that fragment to me as a token of your sincerity!"

Blackbeard's face twitched as he reached into his shirt and tore his clothes apart.

A treasure map fragment that emanated a curious radiation appeared on his hand.

Fang Yuan grabbed it without missing a beat and put the two pieces together.

A light flashed, and the two pieces slowly fused together. The lines on the map seemed alive as they moved about. Finally, they marked out the treasure's location and a route leading to it.

At the spot where the treasure was marked, an additional symbol that represented a ship also appeared.

"According to the rumors... the Soro Pirates left their treasures and an excellent legendary ship in the depths of where they hid it. That's why I valued the treasure map so much..."

Blackbeard could feel his heart bleeding.

His fragment was crucial since it marked the treasure's location. After collecting information, he had a good idea of what exactly the treasure contained.

But now, someone else had claimed all the fruits of his labor.

He was furious at the thought.

"Plague!"

The Demigod Lich was cleaning up the battlefield.

After trapping the enemy inside the Death Cloud, it immediately used the Plague spell that struck terror into the hearts of pirates.

In fact, in terms of pure combat ability, the Demigod Lich was leagues above Blackbeard.

With the incantation's sound, the royal fleet's marines instantly started to foam at the mouth, falling onto the deck and coughing relentlessly.

The more unfortunate ones even saw black spots appear all over their bodies and two egg-sized cysts appear under their armpits.

"It's the Death Sickle!!!"

All the sailors started to scream in terror and back away at this sight. Some even chose to plunge into the sea and swim toward allied ships.

It was obvious that the Demigod Lich's Plague reminded the Ettoman marines of something extremely unpleasant, as they now looked at the Lich in fear.

A massive translucent specter army also marched out from Specter Ship, killing marines at will.

They were completely immune to physical attacks. Only attacks imbued with extraordinary attributes were able to damage them and make them disappear temporarily. Some of the specters were even able to suck the life out of the living.

The ships immediately start to flee. An ironclad even hung up a white shirt as a sign of surrender.

"It seems that... I've taken things a bit too far!"

Fang Yuan rubbed his forehead. He suddenly felt that it was a mistake to promise these guys freedom after a mere three years.

It was not a matter of not having enough underlings but the possibility of them turning the world into a living hell.

“Time to go!”

He clapped.

“Let’s go!”

Like a receding tide, the white specters returned to Specter Ship.

Under a thick cloud of smoke, Specter Ship slowly left the battlefield.

“Investigate!”

“Why did Specter Ship appear here? Investigate everything!”

After returning to Fearless, Norton saw Philip in a rage.

Specter Ship was indeed unaccounted for, but it’s merely a single ship. It can’t possibly change anything... Norton thought to himself. He immediately suggested to Admiral Philip, “Our primary course of action should be to take over Blackbeard Island and seize the treasures... We need to remember to seize everything! Then we need to win over one or two pirate governors to our side using this victory. They don’t necessarily need to produce any results. Just a slight uncertainty on their part in critical moments would go a long way.”

Chapter 869: Solomon

World Calendar 667. It was a year of many happenings all over the world.

The Ettoman Royal Navy had broken the the Nightmare Ocean’s pirate governor, Blackbeard, and began their monopoly at sea.

They based their monopoly around ‘The Influence of Sea Power’, which was written by a renowned economist and published in the same year.

This glorious victory spread the name of the economist Donald and the ironclads all across the land of Opher, gaining both immense fame.

Although both the Pirate Prince and Specter Ship had outstanding performances in that grand sea battle, the biggest winner was undoubtedly Ettoman.

Not only did they crush the main force of the Blackbeard Pirates with a single attack, but they had also managed to destroy all the pirate forces in the Nightmare Ocean.

The Nightmare Ocean’s pirates were history since then.

The few that managed to escape had to continue to avoid the navy's pursuit, a task that grew increasingly difficult with each day.

Riding on this wave of success, not only did the island nation Ettoman take control of the Nightmare Ocean, they monopolized the entire Golden Sea Route. On top of that, the Ettoman Empire sent out many privateer captains to raid merchant ships from other countries, even attacking their lands. Ettoman did everything in their power to hinder the sea trade development of other countries.

There was even a saying that went—'Everything the sun touches is under Ettoman's rule'. The Ettoman Empire was known as the strongest ocean empire.

After taking control of the Nightmare Ocean, Ettoman did not rest content. Instead, it set its sights on the neighboring Golden Ocean.

In contrast with the unpredictable weather of the Nightmare Ocean, the Golden Ocean was a utopia that overflowed with gold and spices. It housed many plantation colonies that produced wealth for their respective countries.

In particular, the Solomon Strait guarded the route that connected the East and the West, and it held the greatest Ettoman stronghold in the Golden Ocean.

The governor of Solomon Strait was an acquaintance of Fang Yuan and his beautiful prisoner's father, Viscount Quaid.

"Sunshine, beaches, babes... pity there aren't any bikinis..." Fang Yuan said with a smirk after ordering his subordinates to bring Elizabeth.

"..."

Elizabeth merely looked at him, too tired to say anything.

Spending a long time as a prisoner had long since erased any temperament and pride that she had as a noble.

"What's wrong? Is Lady Elizabeth not the least bit excited? You should be... for you are going to regain your freedom at last..."

"Pirate... what are you trying to do? Gods... even if you auction me off again, I have nothing to say," Elizabeth mumbled resignedly.

"Oh! I forgot to tell you. We're now in the Golden Ocean. It will take us just a day to reach the Solomon Strait!" Fang Yuan said calmly.

Elizabeth's eyes flashed with life. Apparently, she had not given up all hope, despite what her appearance might suggest.

"If there are no surprises, the governor will surely pay an immense sum to purchase your freedom!"

"Rest assured. I have divined that Governor Quaid will agree for sure." The black-teethed witch smiled flirtatiously.

Although she was not particularly beautiful, many pirates on board looked at her with lust in their eyes.

These pirates are indeed like wolves, constantly craving battle even after gaining so much.

A brilliance flashed across Fang Yuan's eyes.

Fang Yuan was the biggest winner right after Ettoman in that war.

Just capturing Blackbeard was a great harvest.

There were no bounties on the pirate governors because no country dared to incur their wrath.

However, Ettoman had placed a bounty of a million gold coins and a viscount position on Blackbeard's head, breaking the record for the biggest bounty ever put on a pirate.

Naturally, since Fang Yuan had participated in the battle with Specter Ship and saved Blackbeard, his bounty had also increased tremendously. It rose to a solid seven hundred thousand gold coins and made his name known all across the oceans.

Fang Yuan ordered Elizabeth to be sent back to her cell and 'invited' Blackbeard over.

"How is everything? Have your wounds healed?"

Truthfully speaking, Fang Yuan's incarnation was also a mortal at this time, so he naturally preferred Fiery Lotus's environment.

As for Blackbeard, placing him on Specter Ship when he was severely wounded was no different from killing him.

Although he was now the captain of Specter Ship, the ship had long since grown used to operating independently of its captain. Fang Yuan only had to communicate rough orders through the two Demigod specters from time to time.

Not long after, Blackbeard arrived with a cold demeanor.

His feelings toward Fang Yuan were rather complicated.

Technically speaking, Fang Yuan did indeed save his life. However, he was confined immediately after. Coupled with the fact that he had tried to hunt Fang Yuan before... it really was a complicated mess.

"What else do you want from me?" Upon seeing Fang Yuan, Blackbeard's eyes darkened. He said solemnly, "Her father will probably agree to your terms and hand over the Sea God's skin. Furthermore, he'll probably let us through the Solomon Strait as well!"

As Ettoman's most important stronghold in the Golden Ocean, the defense of Solomon Strait was not weak by any means.

Not only were there permanent defensive structures and cannon towers atop all the peaks, but a fleet of over ten ironclads guarded the area as well, and the one leading the fleet was a rear admiral.

This setup would prove difficult to take down for even the Pirate Prince.

"That's right... we must pass through the Solomon Strait before embarking on the route in the treasure map..." Fang Yuan nodded. "As for you... rest assured, you are very useful to me. For now, what do you say to becoming a pirate captain under me? Ninety percent of what you pillage will be yours!"

"Not interested!" Blackbeard's complexion was dark as he rejected the offer.

What a joke!

As the former governor of the Nightmare Ocean, he would be the laughing stock of all pirates if he were to work under someone else!

"Spit it out... You wouldn't be so naive to think that I'd agree. Why did you save me?" Blackbeard asked without beating around the bush. "The treasures of the treasure map don't seem reason enough for you to wage war against the royal navy."

"After obtaining the riches of the Soro Pirates, I will head straight for Pirate King City!" Fang Yuan paused for a while before continuing, "The rise of Ettoman has raised fear in the hearts of all pirates, so the next Pirate Conference will be held there! We need a leader to lead us, an assertive leader that will allow pirates to fight against Ettoman!"

"You want to become the Pirate King?" Blackbeard exclaimed.

The Pirate King was not someone who existed in every generation. On the contrary, a Pirate King was extremely rare.

After all, it was difficult enough to earn the respect of the common lawless pirates, and it was even harder to earn the respect of the pirate governors.

"That's right. As a pirate, how could one not yearn for the position at the top!" Fang Yuan bluffed. "To become the Pirate King, one has to be first nominated by a pirate governor. Naturally, you have nominated yourselves in the past..."

"So, you want to bring me to the Pirate Conference and have me nominate you?" Blackbeard smiled wryly and shrugged. "Then you might be disappointed. I'm no longer the Nightmare Ocean's pirate governor! The pirates might not recognize what I have to say now that I've lost my territory!"

"Haha... The top rule among pirates is that there are no rules! I'm not as naive as you!" Fang Yuan waved his hand. "I only want your nomination in name!"

"Nomination in name... *Hiss* ..." After understanding what Fang Yuan meant, even someone as daring as Blackbeard gasped. "You couldn't possibly want to..."

"Hush! Don't say it! Don't say it!"

Fang Yuan had a bone-chilling smile.

...

Beneath the moonlight.

A few naval ships sailed silently toward a deserted island before lowering some small boats.

"Those damned pirates... how dare they kidnap my Elizabeth..."

Viscount Quaid was a respected gentleman and a qualified politician who did not show his emotions on his face. However, he was rather at a loss today.

Ever since he got word of his daughter running into pirates, he had been worried about Elizabeth's safety.

However, the pirates had only let him know that his daughter was still alive.

He looked at the naval officer beside him.

"Rear Admiral Jackson, I leave everything to you!"

"Rest assured, Governor. After confirming the young lady's safety, I will hang every last one of those pirates!"

Rear Admiral Jackson was a handsome young man in his thirties. Upon hearing the governor's request, he immediately patted his chest in guarantee.

"No! What I meant was that we don't need to capture the pirates. I'm only worried about our safety. According to previous reports, the last time Elizabeth appeared was in the hands of the great slave trader Heathfrey. It's possible that she's in the hands of the Purgatory Pirates now..."

Viscount Quaid wiped his sweat with a clean white handkerchief.

"You're saying... that the witch we encountered earlier is from the Purgatory Pirates?"

Rear Admiral Jackson flashed a cold smile. "Then I'm all the more interested... surely a mere Purgatory Pirates can't stand up to our ironclads?"

"No! You don't understand..."

Before Viscount Quaid could finish, the boat reached shore.

They alighted from the boat and went to the center of the island. They immediately saw Fang Yuan and his group with Elizabeth in the middle.

"My daughter..."

Regardless of how skilled Quaid was at keeping his emotions in check, he cried out in excitement upon seeing his daughter.

On the other hand, Rear Admiral Jackson cried out in shock.

Chapter 870: Sun

"Specter Ship! Blackbeard!"

Rear Admiral Jackson's pupils shrank in fear.

He was prepared for Fang Yuan, but Specter Ship and Blackbeard made him exclaim in fear.

Despite hearing many tales about Specter Ship, the rear admiral still thought them mere rumors.

He had thought that Specter Ship merely had some extraordinary power that allowed it to control some specters, frightening most average sailors.

However, now that he saw the netherworldly Specter Ship in person and felt the chill that pierced his soul, he knew that the bloody legends were no old wives' tale.

In addition, Blackbeard, who was accompanying Fang Yuan, was the pirate governor of the Nightmare Ocean. Even after losing his forces, his prestige was still there.

He could not figure out how the Purgatory Pirates had managed to recruit a pirate governor given their current capabilities.

"My daughter!" Viscount Quaid was almost on the verge of tears. "I agree to all your terms. Return my daughter to me quickly!"

He signaled his sailors to bring a plain crate over.

"Jeeps!" Fang Yuan nodded and had Jeeps step forward. Jeeps opened the wooden crate to reveal layers upon layers of thick leather.

The moment the crate opened, Fang Yuan seemed to hear the sound of waves. He knew then that the viscount had given him the genuine goods.

At this time, Viscount Quaid was nothing more than a panicking father in his eyes.

All right... I've overestimated the Ettoman nobles.

Fang Yuan chuckled to himself before focusing his attention on Mr. Jeeps.

The old man was caressing the leather as though he were caressing the skin of his lover. His eyes glowed with love and seemed unable to put it down.

After putting down the material in his hands with great reluctance, Mr. Jeeps said confidently, "I can guarantee... this is authentic Sea God's skin!"

Back then, the majority of the materials were used to craft Sea God. It's a surprise that so much remained. Could the real body of the Sea God be a sea giant? Fang Yuan wondered leisurely.

Viscount Quaid thought that the kidnappers were unsatisfied with the ransom, so he clapped his hands. His servants presented a couple of heavy crates.

Upon opening them, Fang Yuan could see that they were full of treasures.

"Hehe... great governor, you're too kind!" Fang Yuan could not help laughing. However, he was not one to reject a gift, so he ordered his men to accept the treasures. "Actually... besides the Sea God's skin, we have a humble request... we want to pass through the Solomon Strait..."

"No problem!" Viscount Quaid nodded hurriedly.

"A pleasant answer. She's yours!" Fang Yuan pushed Elizabeth gently, and she stumbled into Viscount Quaid's embrace.

"Father..." The female prisoner could finally no longer endure and began sobbing.

"Protect the governor!" Jackson issued a signal, and a platoon of marines rushed forward to put the governor and his daughter at the back to protect them.

Jackson then walked toward Roche. "Captain Roche of the Purgatory Pirates, are you planning to head east after passing through the Solomon Strait?"

"This seems unrelated to you?"

"As the highest commander of Solomon Strait, it actually is related to me." Jackson smiled coldly. "As long as I order the cannons to fire, even Specter Ship wouldn't survive!"

"Great governor, what's your take on this?" Fang Yuan looked at Viscount Quaid.

"Although I've agreed to let you through, Jackson does have a point... I can't possibly issue a direct order to each and every soldier!" Viscount Quaid was back to his sly old fox ways.

"Is that so? That's a pity!" Fang Yuan shrugged. "Looks like we'll have to meet again during Lady Elizabeth's funeral!"

"What do you mean?"

Viscount Quaid and Rear Admiral Jackson took a few steps back in caution.

In the faraway darkness, a few columns of fire appeared. They looked exceptionally bright against the pitch black night sky.

They were the flames of steam chimneys!

The rear admiral had long set up an encirclement!

"We have no intention of waging war against the royal navy... Great viscount, why don't you take a look at the neck of that adorable daughter of yours? Well... how should I put it? Before she left, my men added a small insurance on her neck!" Fang Yuan said softly.

"What?" Viscount Quaid immediately pulled open Elizabeth's collar in panic. He saw a ring of green around her neck, like that of a plant's root. The color extended along her blood vessels and formed a ring-like necklace.

"What... is this?"

Jackson's face grew dark.

"Allow me to introduce. This is a magic poison that my subordinate, Miss Cassenia, personally made. She is a witch... The poison can kill an elephant in ten seconds with a dose as big as a fingernail... Let me add that the recipes of a witch's magic poisons are known only by the witch that made them. Even if you find another witch, you won't be able to make the antidote! "

Fang Yuan shrugged.

"Very well! Rear Admiral Jackson, order your men to retreat!"

Viscount Quaid suddenly stepped forward and grabbed Jackson's shoulder.

"Understood!"

It was not until this moment that Rear Admiral Jackson realized that he might have underestimated this governor.

He had another face hidden behind that of the caring father and qualified official.

"I understand... I will give you all of the rights to pass through the Solomon Strait. I swear in the name of the Queen!"

Viscount Quaid said coldly, "However... it's only this time!"

"Deal!" Fang Yuan nodded. "We will pass through tomorrow. You can send ships to follow us. We'll hand the antidote over before we leave. Let's have a pleasant cooperation!"

"Hmph!" Viscount Quaid snorted coldly. He took off his coat and put it on Elizabeth. Then they left, surrounded by a bunch of marines.

"Sir?!" Witch Cassenia stepped forward. "At my level, I'm not skilled enough to brew unique potions..."

"That's why the green color on Elizabeth's neck was just some stubborn paint!" Fang Yuan shrugged. "It's good enough as long as Viscount Quaid doesn't know about it... Besides, we investigated earlier that there weren't any witches in Solomon. They won't be able to figure out that it's only a bluff in just a single night."

"You really are a sly bastard!" Blackbeard concluded after witnessing the entire thing.

"I will take that as a compliment, Mr. Blackbeard!"

...

Noon the next day.

All the citizens of the Solomon colony saw a curious sight.

Ten ironclads and even more sailing battleships were 'escorting' two pirate ships to pass through the Solomon Strait.

Many exclaimed at this sight.

Even the Pirate Prince had to disguise his ships as ordinary merchant ships before passing through, and he had to pay every single cent of tax.

Otherwise, the only way through was by force.

If that happened, the layers of cannon towers and solid defensive structures were sure to knock off the front teeth of any pirate who tried.

The last option was to circle around and take a longer route.

However, that was very uneconomical and filled with danger.

Uncharted sea routes were filled with natural disasters and sea monsters. Less than a tenth of merchant ships survived. As such, even merchant ships backed by pirate governors had to pass through the Solomon Strait.

Luckily, Ettoman did not go to extremes when checking for contraband. As long as the items were not too dangerous, the ships would be allowed through.

They did not even dare to go overboard when collecting taxes.

First, they understood the value of long-term corporation. Second, the pirates were not a bunch that anyone would want to upset. Not only was it possible that they could attack if pressed into a corner, but they also controlled many key transit hubs along the Golden Sea Route, including Pirate King City. If Ettoman was too strict in the Solomon Strait, the pirates could do the same in other parts of the route. In that case, no one would be the winner.

However, today, two pirate ships passed through the strait blatantly. Furthermore, they were doing this right after Ettoman's victory in the Nightmare Ocean.

Suddenly, countless pirates in disguise sounded their horns. The Purgatory Pirates were now officially known in the Golden Ocean.

...

"That's it, that current!"

Fang Yuan stared at the treasure map while standing on the deck.

As an extraordinary item, the route on the map was also extremely strange and changed constantly.

Blackbeard approached him from behind and asked, "The navy left?"

"Yeah. I passed them a piece of candy as the antidote. What can they do about it?"

Although they had released the hostage, poor Lady Elizabeth was still a weapon of Fang Yuan.

Blackbeard looked at the sea. With a hint of unease in his voice, he said, "After passing through Solomon Strait, Ettoman's forces will reduce dramatically... We should be able to reach Pirate King City safely..."

"After fulfilling your promise, I will let you go. However... are you really not interested in the Soro Pirates' treasures at all?" Fang Yuan wore a mischievous expression. "After all, the legendary ship Sun is among those treasures!"

There were three different ranks of extraordinary ships.

Even the flagship Monster was not in the legendary class.

However, Sun, along with Sea God, Throne, and Specter Ship were all real legendary ships!

According to legend, it had technologies from an unknown civilization on board. This technology was said to produce an inexhaustible energy source, and things like producing freshwater was a piece of cake. Most terrifying of all was the attack that used its fusion reactor to fire!

This was the most powerful single-target attack among the legendary ships!