

Ocean Lord 231

Chapter 231: Skeleton Uprising, Skeleton Lizards (2)

Realizing this, Ji Chen immediately shouted loudly, “All troops, climb up and build a defensive line at the top of the sand dune!”

“Half-orcs, be prepared as the reserve force to support our allies!”

Upon hearing this, the troops, who had just snapped out of their resting state, charged up the sand dune without hesitation. They quickly joined forces with the night watch troops and constructed a defensive line spanning hundreds of meters based on the circular shape of the sand dune.

Seeing this, Ji Chen let out a sigh of relief and followed suit by climbing up the sand dune.

Despite having already defeated tens of thousands of skeleton monsters on their way here, the sight of the approaching skeletons still sent a shiver down his spine.

Under the illumination of the blood moon, countless skeletons, resembling a sea, were rushing towards the defensive line.

The blood-red flames flickering in their eye sockets filled the entire field of view.

There must be at least over a hundred thousand of these skeletons to present such a formidable front!

Where did all these skeletons come from!?

However, he soon noticed that these skeleton monsters’ attack lacked organization and order. They were simply swarming forward with their numerical advantage, seemingly without any commands from a skeleton leader.

The defensive line constructed by the army stood firm like a mountain, resisting the wave-like assaults of the skeleton horde without budging.

Yet, the number of skeleton monsters was just overwhelming. Shoulder to shoulder, they surged forward, pushing and shoving to get through.

When they caught a whiff of Ji Chen and his allies’ scent, they grew even more frenzied. Their jaws clamped together with a clatter as they pushed and shoved, even breaking their own ribs and those of their allies in the process.

While most of the skeleton monsters were blocked by the defensive line, a portion of them was gradually pushed to the edges of the line, creating openings.

Seeing this, Ji Chen frowned and ordered Daro to lead the waiting half-orcs to fill in the gaps, killing off the invading skeletons and sealing the breaches.

Whether it was due to the blood moon or the night itself, these skeletons with blood-red flames in their eye sockets seemed to possess slightly greater strength on average than the blue-flame counterparts they had encountered earlier. They attacked fiercely and fearlessly.

The Naga Berserker swung their dual blades, slicing through three or four skeleton monsters with each strike, reducing them to pieces.

The Dragon Blood Murlocs hurled their tridents with great force. Each trident, resembling a charged crossbow bolt, brutally shattered several skeletons lined up in a row.

The Elemental Sea Pixies, now advanced from Tier Three to Tier Four, had significantly enhanced firepower.

Their water arrows were created a chain reaction, with the main arrow exploding among the enemy group and hundreds of secondary arrows blooming like a flower, releasing a violent energy that swept over a radius of thirty to forty meters, creating temporary gaps.

With each explosion, over a hundred skeleton monsters were torn apart. Even the surviving ones were left in tatters.

In terms of killing efficiency, they were the strongest troops under Ji Chen's command.

The sounds of battle echoed through the red desert. Two hours had passed, yet the number of skeletons before them showed no sign of dwindling. Instead, more kept pouring in from the distance.

Ji Chen gritted his teeth and decided to deploy the self-detonating water spiders that he had not yet used.

He wanted to witness the power of the Tier Three 3-star creatures when their strength was concentrated in an explosion.

After giving the command, a wave of fifty self-detonating water spiders moved around to the sides from a distance.

With their eight slender legs moving swiftly across the gravel, they quickly arrived at the flanks of the skeleton horde. Under Ji Chen's control, they lunged at one skeleton first.

Seeing the approaching self-detonating water spiders, the skeletons, oblivious to life and death, immediately charged forward.

Their sharp bone claws struck out violently, piercing into the bodies of the self-detonating water spiders and agitating them wildly.

At the next moment, the moving forms of the self-detonating water spiders momentarily froze, emitting a faint green light from within their bodies before violently exploding.

Boom—

A small mushroom cloud suddenly rose up, accompanied by intense air currents carrying rapidly expanding energy, impacting everything around and kicking up numerous pieces of gravel.

As the gravel settled and the dust dispersed, a scene unfolded.

Centered around the point of explosion, within a radius of fifty meters, all the skeleton monsters, whether common skeletons, more advanced skeleton hounds, or black skeletons, were turned into a cloud of white dust. They lay scattered on the gravel, forming a white desert.

A hint of astonishment appeared in Ji Chen's eyes, and he almost held his breath. He hadn't expected the power to be this immense; it was much more potent than C4!

Coming back to his senses, he broke into a crazy smile.

This time, he was determined to blow these skeleton monsters to pieces!

With a thought, the remaining forty-nine self-detonating water spiders charged forward as well.

Boom-

Boom—

On the battlefield, small mushroom clouds would sporadically rise, accompanied by thousands of skeleton monsters being reduced to dust.

Continuous explosions created large gaps in the skeleton horde, which took a while to fill back up.

With each self-detonating water spider's explosion, system notifications sounded one after another.

“Ding- Your troops have killed 536 ordinary skeletons, gaining experience...”

“Ding- Your troops have killed 215 black skeletons, gaining experience...”

“Ding- Your troops have killed 87 skeleton hounds, gaining experience...”

“Ding- Your level has increased (22—23).”

“Ding- Your level has increased (23—24).”

“Ding- Your level has increased (24—25).”

Witnessing his levels rapidly ascending as if taking flight, Ji Chen couldn't help but break into a broad smile, revealing his almost visible teeth.

This wasn't just gaining experience from killing monsters; this was experience farming.

Whose character could level up this quickly?

Several hours later, no more skeleton monsters appeared in the distance. When the last one was split into pieces, his level had settled at 27.

Apart from him, the other heroes had also gained several levels.

Alice had the highest level, reaching 28, while the others were all between levels 25 and 28.

This wave was a massive boon!

By now, Ji Chen's initial frustration from the sudden attack had been cast aside, replaced by a sense of satisfaction. He wished for a few more waves of this scale of skeleton horde.

At this rate, reaching level 35 before leaving this mystic realm would be a breeze!

After hours of intense battle, the army began to show signs of exhaustion.

Glancing at the blood moon slowly disappearing behind the clouds, Ji Chen's heart gradually relaxed. He spoke loudly, “Leave some guards on watch and the rest can rest.”

With that, he descended the sand dune and returned to his tent, resuming his rest.

The next day.

After the army had finished regrouping, they set off again, heading towards the depths of the vast red desert.

However, this time, there seemed to be something different.

After marching for two hours, amidst the monotonous sea of red, a black stone forest came into view.

A multitude of skeleton monsters were encamped around the stone forest.

Seeing this scene, Ji Chen couldn't be more aware that it was another skeleton camp.

However, the number of skeleton monsters here was much larger than in the previous camp.

Among them, new types of skeleton monsters had even emerged.

Resembling lizards, their bodies were formed by bones, stretching four to five meters in length. They had only a pair of forelimbs, while their thick, muscular tails took up half of their total length, clearly not meant for aesthetic purposes.

Between their necks and heads was a circular bone shield, and atop their pointed skull grew a fierce bone horn.

This image appeared quite mighty and domineering.

[Skeleton Lizard]

[Tier]: Fourth Tier, 2 stars

Bone Poison (Purple skill, claws carry poison, causing negative effects like paralysis to enemies)

Sturdiness (Blue skill, 50% increase in overall bone strength)

Agility (Blue skill, strong forelimbs allow for rapid climbing, 35% increase in movement speed)

[A special presence among the skeleton tribe, possessing strong ambush capabilities]

Ji Chen's pupils contracted slightly.

Fourth Tier, 2 stars...

This was the first time he had encountered a fourth-tier skeleton monster, and it didn't seem like a pushover.

Fortunately, these skeleton lizards didn't appear to be mere cannon fodder. With a quick glance, there were only about a hundred of them on the outskirts of the stone forest, a number still within controllable range.

Observing the skills and traits of these skeleton lizards, Ji Chen's mind gradually formulated a plan..

Chapter 232: Blood Moon, Strange Skeleton Creatures

Skeleton Lizards, which were as high as Tier 4, 2 stars, could burrow into the sand and attack from beneath, making it easy to be ambushed by them.

Therefore, Ji Chen's plan to deal with them was quite simple: lure these Skeleton Lizards out and then let Alice control them to fight for their side.

To attract them, bait was needed. Ji Chen looked around and his gaze settled on the Self-Detonating Water Spiders.

These spiders possessed excellent mobility in the sand, making them suitable as bait.

Ji Chen led the army to retreat about two or three kilometers away and set up an ambush at the top of a sand dune.

With a wave of his hand, fifty Self-Detonating Water Spiders left the group and scurried towards the stone forest with their eight long legs, approaching from various directions.

Sensing the presence of living beings, a large group of skeleton monsters quickly headed towards them, including a significant number of Skeleton Lizards.

The blue flames in the eye sockets of the Skeleton Lizards flickered, and their jagged mouths made clicking sounds. Their sturdy forearms dug into the ground, kicking up sand. Their entire bodies burrowed into the sand, creating a slender sand tunnel on the surface as they moved toward the enemy.

Seeing that the Skeleton Lizards were successfully attracted, the

Self-Detonating Water Spiders ignored the other skeleton creatures and turned around without hesitation. They quickly fled at a speed that the others couldn't catch up with.

The Skeleton Lizards moved swiftly within the gravel, quickly distancing themselves from the other skeleton creatures and leaving them behind. They closely trailed the Self-Detonating Water Spiders, almost leaping out of the gravel multiple times, as if on the verge of pouncing on them.

Behind each Self-Detonating Water Spider, one or two Skeleton Lizards trailed. Their escape directions differed and their routes were winding and twisting.

However, when observed from above, it became evident that they all ended up at the same location the sand dune where the ambush had been set.

In this game of cat-and-mouse, it didn't take long for them to venture beyond the sensing reach of the other skeleton creatures. With their targets lost, they hesitated and lingered in their initial positions.

On top of the sand dune:

Watching the sand consistently rise in arcs behind the Self-Detonating Water Spiders in the distance, Ji Chen's confidence solidified. He signaled to Alice that the moment had come to act.

Alice nodded and stood at the forefront of the sand dune.

Soon, the fifty Self-Detonating Water Spiders converged from various directions and sprinted up the sand dune, splitting apart from both sides of the army.

Not far behind, hundreds of Skeleton Lizards suddenly leaped out of the sand, raising a cloud of dust and accompanied by a gust of foul wind.

The timing was perfect!

Alice was already a Purple-Rare Tier and had reached the impressive level of 28. Dealing with these Tier 4 beginner-level Skeleton Lizards was not just easy, but also a walk in the park.

As her song resounded, these massive creatures that had been fierce just a second ago turned into well-behaved little dogs the next second, crawling quietly on the slope. If they had tongues, they might have stuck them out to please their owner, just like a pet dog.

Seeing the mission to lure the monsters completed perfectly, Ji Chen wasted no time and immediately ordered the army to eliminate these Skeleton Lizards one by one.

Because of their unique method of control, the Skeleton Clan was among the few races that Alice couldn't easily manipulate to betray their own kind. As long as the opposing higher-ranked Skeleton wasn't more advanced than her, she could, at best, render them immobile. Yet, she couldn't outright take control away from them.

So, luring them out one by one for elimination is the best choice.

“Ding- You have killed 106 Skeleton Lizards, gaining 52,520 experience points. Current experience: Level 28 [5%/100%].”

Another tens of thousands of experience points were added to his account, causing the just-leveled-up experience bar to fill up a bit more.

Ji Chen was in high spirits.

Dealing with these Skeleton Lizards meant the skeleton camp nearby didn't hold much significance for him anymore.

For him now, as long as the quantity of these low-tier, low-level skeleton monsters didn't exceed a certain threshold, handling them was just a matter of time.

The army set out once again, returning to the stone forest and launching a direct attack.

After a few hours:

Having eliminated the numerous skeleton creatures that had been lurking around the perimeter, the group proceeded to enter the stone forest.

When they emerged, Ji Chen's backpack held a low-level bone forge and two white Heroic Soul Essences. The smile on his face hadn't faded.

Why did it seem as if acquiring heroes was such an effortless task?

In the blink of an eye, the Crown of the Ocean could welcome two more white heroes.

It's like a wholesale of heroes!

In high spirits, he led the army out of the stone forest and headed towards the red desert, continuing to search for the next skeleton camp.

Little did he know, the Skeleton King, thousands of miles away, had already taken notice of the events at the two skeleton camps.

A colossal ancient castle built against the mountainside, towering on a cliff's precipice.

This was the supreme entity within the entire mystic realm, the residence of the being to whom all skeleton monsters pledged their allegiance -the Skeleton King.

In the dimly lit hall:

The hoarse voice of the Skeleton King echoed.

“Yesterday and today, two low-level skeleton camps located in the Red Desert region lost contact one after the other. Can someone tell me what happened there?”

A skeletal commander kneeling on the ground with a staff in hand spoke, “Reporting to our king, it’s currently unclear what has happened, but perhaps it’s just a temporary interruption.”

“But what if the few Skeleton Commanders stationed there also lost contact simultaneously?”

“This...” The skeletal mage commander’s heart stopped a beat, and the flicker of the soul fire in its eyes trembled.

If the Skeleton Commanders had lost contact with the king, didn’t that mean they had fallen?

Chapter 233: Blood Moon, Strange Skeleton Creatures (2)

But within this realm entirely ruled by the Skeleton Clan, how could there be a sudden downfall without any warning?

Glancing at his silent subordinates, the Skeleton King spoke slowly, “Just yesterday, the portal that I was about to forcibly open to the outside world was disrupted. This means that the human from the outside world might have become aware of our plans.

He very likely activated the portal on his own and has entered this realm.

So, it’s possible that this human is the one responsible for defeating these two low-level Skeleton Camps.”

“How dare that human? This is our sacred land!” The Mage Skeleton Commander flared up in anger.

“Your Majesty, I am willing to lead an elite force to exterminate him and bring him before you for punishment! I’ll let him know of your greatness and inviolability!”

After pondering for a moment, the Skeleton King nodded. “Very well, I permit it. Yaska, you must bring that human back, either dead or alive, before me.

Since this human managed to swiftly defeat two Skeleton Camps, his strength should not be underestimated. Moreover, he previously killed Malevolent Wind. This time, let’s turn this human into our comrade to fill the gap left by Malevolent Wind.”

“Your Majesty is wise!”

“Go.”

Upon hearing this, Yaska stood up and saluted, then slowly left the hall.

Soon, beneath the towering castle, a legion of elite skeletons with an average tier approaching the fourth tier surged forth. Under Yaska's leadership, they headed towards the direction of the red desert.

"Lord, this is the low-level bone forge of this Skeleton Camp, along with a white Heroic Soul Essence."

"Only one?" Ji Chen took it, somewhat disapprovingly.

This was the fifth Skeleton Camp they had breached, and like the previous four, it was also a low-level one. However, within it, there was only a single white Skeleton Commander.

Up to this point, the five Skeleton Camps had produced five low-level bone forges and ten white Heroic Soul Essences.

However, there hadn't been any sightings of the more advanced green Skeleton Commanders or intermediate bone forges.

He speculated that only larger-scale Skeleton Camps might have them.

Thinking about this, Ji Chen looked around at the still vast red desert and couldn't help but sigh.

Despite their considerable gains, they had already devoted three full days to their journey and were still within the confines of the red desert.

Could it be that this realm was entirely comprised of red desert terrain?

A bigger issue was, where should he find the Skeleton King?

Advancing aimlessly in the red desert without a clear direction was proving to be inefficient for searching.

It would be great if the Skeleton King could come to him...

With such thoughts in mind, Ji Chen led his army away from this devastated Skeleton Camp, searching for a suitable camping spot.

Just three hours after they left, Yaska arrived with the Skeleton Legion.

Seeing the already ruined Skeleton Camp and no sign of enemies, it couldn't help but angrily roar.

"Damn it!! How did we arrive late again!? If I catch that human, I will definitely torture them before escorting them to the King!"

Following the King's orders, it led the army to set out overnight for the two Skeleton Camps and then tracked the enemy's traces all the way here.

However, whether due to luck or some other reason, they always narrowly missed encountering the enemy.

Every time, they arrived a bit too late.

Before they could see the enemy, they ended up losing three Skeleton Camps.

Looking at the chaotic camp, Yaska felt like the fire of its soul was about to cease burning due to frustration.

After venting its anger in curses, as if not feeling relieved enough, it raised its staff and launched dozens of Soul Fireballs towards the camp. Only after blowing up the remaining few bone structures into pieces did it stop.

At this point, one of its trembling subordinates dared to speak, “Your Excellency, it’s almost evening, and the Blood Moon is about to rise. We need to set up camp quickly.”

Upon hearing this, Yaska finally looked up and saw the Blood Moon gradually emerging from behind the dark clouds, sending a shiver down its spine.

Even though it was confident, it didn’t dare to march during the night in this red desert.

After all, in this red desert, there were many taboos, especially for their undead race. Lightly violating these taboos could lead to losing consciousness and vitality, while more severe violations could result in the dissolution of the soul, completely disappearing into the desert.

Legend had it that this was related to a powerful undead being from beyond the world...

Despite lingering reluctance, it had to command the establishment of a camp here and await the next day to resume the pursuit.

Behind a sand dune several dozen miles away from the Skeleton Camp, Ji Chen and his group set up camp, but they didn’t rest immediately.

The army was neatly arranged as if waiting for something.

Soon, in the dim desert in the distance, burning red flames appeared, accompanied by the unmistakable sound of bones grinding against each other. A large number of skeleton creatures came into view, surging from far to near, replacing the pitch-black desert with a white tide.

Seeing this, without a moment’s hesitation, Ji Chen ordered the attack to begin.

Tridents, water arrows, bone spikes all shot out, and Naga Berserkers and other melee units swung their weapons to fend off the tide of skeleton creatures.

The sounds of battle echoed throughout the night.

By the time the battle was over, it was already midnight.

Ji Chen looked at the disappearing skeleton creatures behind the sand dune and then glanced at the Blood Moon slowly disappearing behind the thick clouds. His brows furrowed slightly.

Tonight was their third night here and the third time they encountered a large-scale attack by skeleton creatures at night.

Initially, he thought it was the Skeleton King discovering their presence and sending out numerous skeleton creatures to besiege them.

But later, Ji Chen quickly dismissed this idea.

The reason was simple: the enemy wouldn’t appear when the Blood Moon was present and then disappear immediately when it vanished.

What's the point of that?

They would depart as soon as evening began?

As soon as night fell, the Blood Moon in the sky would appear on schedule, without fail.

Not long after its appearance, a large number of skeleton creatures with eye sockets burning the same color as the Blood Moon's flames would inexplicably emerge from the depths of the desert.

These skeleton creatures were different from those within the Skeleton Camp, displaying extreme aggression and madness.

What was even more incredible was that such a massive number of skeleton creatures didn't have any commanding Skeleton Leaders. This in itself was a perplexing situation.

Ji Chen had deliberately left a few of them behind, quietly following them after the Blood Moon ended to try and figure out where they came from.

But miraculously, when they followed and climbed a sand dune, they suddenly found that these strange skeleton creatures had disappeared right before their eyes, leaving no trace.

If this scene were on Earth, it would be considered at least one of the top ten unsolved mysteries.

Shaking his head, Ji Chen snapped out of his thoughts.

Anyway, it didn't matter. These numerous skeleton creatures actually brought them a lot of benefits.

Having exterminated the skeleton camps during the day and defended against the skeleton tide at night, their experience points soared, causing their levels to skyrocket.

Ji Chen's level had now reached a high of 31, a level that would typically take at least thirty days to achieve outside this realm, given the rate of leveling up.

However, with the breakthrough past level 30, not only did the experience required for leveling up increase exponentially, but the experience gained from killing these low-tier skeletons was also severely reduced.

The difficulty of leveling up had increased by more than just a little bit.

Fortunately, there were plenty of skeleton creatures. As long as the experience gained from killing one was not zero, the accumulation of these small gains would eventually yield a decent amount of experience.

Looking at the sky, Ji Chen stretched and yawned, then went into his tent to rest.

The next day, the well-rested heroes and their army set off again.

However, they hadn't traveled far before they saw a vigorously advancing skeleton army chasing after them from behind.

At the forefront was none other than Yaska, who had been pursuing them for days.

When it saw Ji Chen and his group in the distance, its soul fire flickered intensely, and a wild delight surged within its heart.

Damn it!

They had finally caught up with the enemy!

It was determined to unleash all of its power, to make that human understand the consequences of angering the great king, and the consequences of angering Yaska!!

Chapter 234: Skeleton Army, Counterattack

Whoosh

The wind swept up a layer of gravel, raising a sky full of sand dust.

Under the hazy sky, amidst the vast desert, a battle was about to commence.

The moment the enemy was spotted, the entire army swiftly transitioned from a marching formation to a combat formation.

Ji Chen gazed at the rapidly approaching horde of skeletal creatures, his expression growing unusually solemn.

This skeletal legion... couldn't be underestimated.

Their numbers weren't excessively large, around fifty thousand, yet they were all composed of "elites

Among them, there were no common white skeletons, which were typically used as cannon fodder. The lowest rank among them was the third-tier Black Skeleton. The composition mainly consisted of Black Skeletons and Skeleton Hounds, interspersed with a multitude of Skeleton Mages.

What's more, Ji Chen also spotted over a hundred Skeleton Behemoths emerging from the ground and even thousands of Skeleton Knights that he had never seen before.

Their attack formation was powerful yet disciplined, suggesting a skilled Skeleton Commander behind it all.

With such elite composition and clear objectives, their origin was unmistakable.

These were the Skeleton King's forces sent to hunt them down.

Ji Chen couldn't afford to be careless. He chose a defensible sand dune as the battleground, setting up defensive lines on the slope.

As the saying goes, fight from a higher position to a lower one, leaving your opponent stupefied.

By engaging the enemy from above, not only could they maximize their firepower advantage, but also weaken the enemy's attacks.

In this kind of terrain, even those obviously high-tier Skeleton Knights would struggle to unleash their feared charging ability.

Seeing this, the enemy's Skeleton Commander must have realized this too. Instead of directly sending the Skeleton Knights charging, it had the Black Skeletons initiate the attack.

These Black Skeletons accounted for a significant portion of the army, numbering over twenty-five thousand.

in an instant, this number enclosed the entire sand dune in layers, not charging all at once but rather only a portion attacking.

Approximately five thousand Black Skeletons began to climb the sand dune.

The defensive lines were about seventy meters from the bottom of the dune, with a slope of thirty to forty degrees. Even the agile Skeleton Hounds struggled to move in such terrain.

At this moment, the soft sand became the best obstacle. The skeletal creatures struggled to climb, their hollow leg bones preventing them from standing properly, and sand constantly trickled out from the gaps.

At a glance, countless Black Skeletons were burying their heads, exposing their most vulnerable skulls.

Seeing this, Ji Chen smiled slightly with a touch of satisfaction.

The reason he chose this sand dune for defense was naturally because he spotted this vulnerability.

Without wasting any time, he immediately ordered an attack.

At this distance, the attacks of the Dragon Blood Murlocs and Elemental Sea Pixies could be fully unleashed.

Tridents and water arrows pierced directly into the skulls of the Black Skeletons. These deadly attacks instantly obliterated hundreds of them, a remarkable achievement.

However, the skeletal remains that ended up buried in the gravel became hard surfaces, providing leverage for the subsequent Black Skeletons to avoid the sand and climb even faster.

The Black Skeletons were using their own lives and bodies to pave a path forward for their allies.

Yaska watched as his Black Skeletons were slaughtered like pigs, feeling no emotional attachment and even displaying a hint of displeasure.

For Yaska, these Black Skeletons weren't much different from the ordinary White Skeletons; they were all cannon fodder. The only distinction was that the Black Skeletons were slightly more advanced cannon fodder, capable of consuming a bit more of the enemy's stamina and mana.

What displeased Yaska was that the progress of the Black Skeletons was painfully slow.

Immediately, he sent another five thousand Black Skeletons to attack. As long as they could defeat the enemy, it didn't matter even if all the Black Skeletons died.

Amidst this relentless assault:

Within the seventy-meter distance between the defensive line and the base of the sand dune, numerous Black Skeletons were shattered, covering the ground with a dense layer of bone carpet.

The Skeleton Legion had lost a full one-third of their Black Skeletons before they finally managed to reach the frontline.

Leading the charge was the Naga Berserker, already evolved into a fourth-tier unit with its strength multiplied several times.

Facing these Black Skeletons, it no longer required several strikes to deal with them as before. Now, a single swing was enough to easily take down one.

The Naga Berserker, adopting a strategy of using minimal effort to defeat the enemy, flashed with a red light in its eyes. Its dual blades crossed, slicing off the heads of two Black Skeletons in an instant, causing the soul fire to extinguish as the decapitated heads rolled away.

Half-Orc Warriors were also at the forefront. Compared to the Naga Berserkers, they had a tougher time, but they still relied on their strength advantage to swiftly eliminate the enemy.

Ji Chen observed the Black Skeletons that had reached the frontline, tightly enveloping them, but his face remained calm.

With just these advanced cannon fodder, it was absolutely impossible to breach the defensive lines. The only true concerns were the legitimate fourth-tier Skeleton monsters and the concealed Skeleton Commander.

That was the real threat.

Taking advantage of this moment, he glanced at the panels of the Skeleton Knights.

[Skeleton Knight]

[Race]: Skeleton

[Tier]: Fourth Tier, 5 Stars

Ji Chen's eyebrows twitched.

My, oh my, a fourth-tier Skeleton Knight with 5 stars.

The power of a charging cavalry at full speed was no joke. If these thousands of Skeleton Knights managed to charge, it would probably collapse the defensive line with a single encounter..

Chapter 235: Skeleton Army, Counterattack (2)

Fortunately, he was clever enough to secure this steep sand dune in advance, which alone caused significant casualties to their forces.

Today, I won't retreat any further. I'll make a stand right here!

As a mage, Yaska knew that his personal defense was not remarkable, so he understood the need to hide himself.

At this moment, he inconspicuously hid within the crowd of skeletons, secretly commanding the Skeleton Army.

He was also somewhat surprised.

He hadn't anticipated that the army brought by this human would possess such extraordinary strength, effortlessly blocking the Black Skeletons' assault. His assessment of them was elevated as a result.

Quietly communicating with the other Skeleton creatures in his mind, he gave commands.

The Skeleton Lizard that had been staying in the rear received the order. After diving into the ground, it emerged at the base of the sand dune, plowing through numerous obstructing Black Skeletons, and then burrowed into the gravel once again.

Seeing this scene, Ji Chen became instantly alert.

He was concerned about these Skeleton Lizards capable of launching attacks from underground.

The Skeleton Lizards might not be able to inflict damage on his forces. Still, if they managed to break through the defensive line due to their size, it could provide an opening for other Skeleton creatures to exploit, creating a troublesome situation.

The Skeleton Lizard, a massive one, plunged into the gravel, evading ranged attacks along the way. It suddenly leapt out before the defensive line, its immense impact sending the Naga Berserker flying and creating dozens of breaches.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the area that had been bogged down just in front of the defensive line suddenly found an opening. Hundreds of Black Skeletons squeezed through the gaps.

Just as they were ferociously charging toward the vulnerable backline, a singing voice halted them all in their tracks.

Alice promptly employed the Enchanting Song, immobilizing the Black Skeletons and Skeleton Lizards that had broken through the defensive line in their positions.

Taking advantage of this moment of respite, the Naga Berserker who had been knocked aside quickly climbed back up, fiercely hacking and slashing. Working in coordination with the rear line, they gradually pushed the enemy back and reestablished the defensive line.

Seeing the Skeleton Lizard successfully breach the defense line and hundreds of Black Skeletons charge in, Yaska couldn't help but nod in satisfaction.

However, upon hearing the singing, its connection with the Skeleton Lizards and Black Skeletons was disrupted. It lost control over them, leaving it bewildered and suspicious.

Damn it! What's happening!? Why can't I control them anymore?

Could it be because of the singing? The song is somehow disrupting my control over the other skeletons. What kind of miraculous spell is this?

As he watched the breached defensive line being repaired while the Skeleton Lizards and Black Skeletons were helplessly slaughtered, Yaska's expression would have been incredibly grim if he had a face.

Although their previous assault was thwarted, they still had a massive numerical advantage.

This human relied solely on the strategic advantage of the terrain to halt their progress; there was no inclination whatsoever to confront them directly in battle.

Therefore, as long as they could temporarily contain him and send troops to nearby Skeleton camps for reinforcements, they could bring in more Skeleton creatures.

With enough numbers, they could overwhelm him!

Moreover, as long as the Skeleton clan's soul power remained unharmed, they could sustain an endless assault. This was an advantage beyond the reach of living beings.

The key was to bide their time until the enemy was utterly fatigued – that would be their moment!

With this thought in mind, Yaska immediately dispatched Skeleton Knights. He had them split into several groups to search for reinforcements at nearby Skeleton camps. He also sent more Black Skeletons to encircle the area, ensuring the enemy wouldn't escape before the reinforcements arrived.

On the sand dune, Ji Chen watched as the Skeleton Knights suddenly broke formation, charging outward and disappearing on the horizon. He was momentarily puzzled, wondering why they suddenly left.

However, as he witnessed a sizable horde of Black Skeletons swarming the sand dune, enveloping it entirely and cutting off any possible escape routes, he swiftly grasped the gravity of the situation, experiencing a sudden insight.

They're going to fetch reinforcements!

His heart was filled with delight rather than worry.

Let's see how he plans to overcome these Skeleton creatures without the assistance of those Skeleton Knights!

At the same time, Ji Chen pinpointed the approximate location of the Skeleton Commander.

He quietly said to Daro beside him, "During the counterattack, lead the

Half-Orc warriors and charge at this cluster of Skeleton creatures. You don't have to fully break through, but do your best to flush out the enemy Skeleton Commander hiding among them."

Upon hearing this, Dalo earnestly nodded. Ji Chen then turned to Anina and said, "Once Daro forces the enemy's Skeleton Commander out, you kill it directly."

"Leave it to me. I'll definitely complete the task," Anina said confidently as if it was a minor matter.

"Alice, as soon as the remaining Skeleton Lizards of the enemy move, immediately take control of them."

"Alice understands."

"Benbo, when the time comes, lead the Dragon Blood Murlocs and Elemental Sea Pixies to clear a path down the dune."

"Yes, great lord."

Everything was ready.

Ji Chen waited for some time, ensuring that the Skeleton Knights wouldn't return in the short term and had distanced themselves sufficiently. Then, he issued the order to launch the counterattack.

In an instant, the defensive army that had been holding its ground charged downward aggressively.

Tridents and water arrows rained down on the enemy like a deluge, using the concentrated assault to carve out a path dozens of meters long and twenty to thirty meters wide.

Seeing this, Ji Chen didn't hesitate to shout loudly:

“Execute the plan as scheduled!”

“Soldiers, charge!!!”

“Ura!!!”

The second line of attack was led by Daro and the Half-Orc warriors. At this moment, they charged downward through the cleared path, rushing toward a group of Skeletons.

The enormous axes they wielded swung up and down, smashing through a dozen or so obstructing Black Skeletons and Skeleton Hounds.

Following behind them, a multitude of powerful Half-Orc warriors marched like an unstoppable force, thrusting into the heart of the Skeleton horde like a formidable wedge.

Hidden amidst the Skeleton creatures, Yaska, upon seeing this scene, almost jumped in shock.

Damn it, this human actually launched a counterattack!? How dare he?

Yet, in this instant, its thoughts were consumed by a more immediate concern. These fierce Half-Orc warriors had inadvertently targeted its position for their assault, leaving no room to contemplate the impending issue.

Observing their advancing speed, they were probably going to reach its position in no time.

No, it needed to get away quickly.

Yaska began to maneuver backward slowly, attempting to retreat to a safer distance.

But this movement didn't escape the notice of Ji Chen, who had been closely observing the situation.

The reason was simple: among all the Skeleton creatures pushing forward, there was suddenly one that was moving backward, standing out conspicuously.

Ji Chen's eyes lit up instantly. “That Skeleton creature wielding a staff is the enemy's Skeleton Commander!”

Upon hearing this, Anina, who had been hiding among the Half-Orcs, immediately poked her head out and took a glance. Once she confirmed the target, she charged forward.

Any Skeleton creature blocking her path, whether it was a Black Skeleton or a Skeleton Hound, was cleaved apart with a single swing of her sword, advancing even faster than Daro.

Hearing Ji Chen's words, Yaska suddenly felt a sense of unease.

Seeing Anina, who was even fiercer than the Half-Orcs, charging straight toward it, it was almost scared out of its wits. It immediately ordered the remaining dozens of Skeleton Lizards to block her way, buying itself some time to escape.

However, it seemed to have underestimated the power of Anina, the humanoid whale.

Seeing a four to five-meter-long Skeleton Lizard charging at her, Anina felt no fear. With a sword in one hand, she delivered a powerful punch.

Krak—

The hardest part of the Skeleton Lizard's body, its skull, shattered in all directions around the point of impact, turning into countless fragments.

The force of that single punch was terrifying!

After taking down the Skeleton Lizard, Anina didn't pause for a moment, continuing her pursuit.

Everywhere she went turned into a storm of white bones.

But the Skeleton horde, having realized the situation, rushed forward recklessly under Yaska's control, using their bodies to block her path.

Uncontrollably, Anina's speed slowed down a bit, and Yaska managed to escape even further.

Seeing this, Ji Chen decisively gave the order.

“Elemental Sea Pixies, provide support! Don't be stingy with your mana. Blast them to pieces!”

Upon hearing the command, hundreds of Elemental Sea Pixies immediately changed their targets. Water arrows rained around Anina, exploding the blocking Skeleton creatures into bits and pieces.

With their support, Anina's speed picked up again as she continued her advance.

Watching Yaska getting closer and closer, a cold light gleamed in her eyes..

Chapter 236: Killing Yaska, Intermediate Skeleton Camp

Yaska heard the commotion behind and glanced back slightly, only to find Anina approaching it at a distance of less than a hundred meters, causing its soul to almost jump out of its body.

As the distance rapidly closed, a fierce determination overcame Yaska, prompting it to stop and turn around to face the oncoming threat.

Was it seriously going to be chased around like this? Yaska was no ordinary underling under the command of the Skeleton King!

Lifting its staff, Yaska chanted a brief incantation, conjuring forth a dozen or so Soul Fireballs. These orbs emitted scorching waves of heat as they formed a line, hurtling towards Anina.

Yet, Anina made no effort to evade, charging straight ahead.

A gleam of satisfaction appeared in Yaska's eyes. Was Anina underestimating it?

After all, Yaska was a capable Skeleton Mage Commander. The power of the Soul Fireballs it unleashed was several times stronger than that of an ordinary skeleton mage. And there were more than a dozen of them!

The exploding Soul Fireballs sent billowing clouds of sand and dust into the air.

However, before Yaska could fully revel in its presumed victory, a figure abruptly emerged from the dust storm. Anina strode out, unscathed, and poised for action.

This time, Anina wasn't giving Yaska another chance to counterattack.

With a single hand, Anina grasped her greatsword and hurled it like a dart. In the span of half a breath, the blade punctured Yaska's skull with pinpoint precision, pinning it to the gravel below.

Within the severed skull, the fire of its soul instantly dissipated into nothingness.

“Ding- Your subordinate hero, Anina, has slain the Green Elite-Tier Skeleton Commander, Yaska.”

Standing atop the dune, Ji Chen received the system notification and nodded in satisfaction.

To his surprise, this Skeleton Commander was actually of the Green Elite-Tier. According to the standard progression, it should yield a Green Heroic Soul Essence, allowing the Crown of the Ocean to acquire a Green-tier hero.

The value of a Green-tier hero far exceeded that of a White-tier hero.

If both are combat-type heroes, the difference in combat power between them is at least five times. A Green-tier hero could easily take on five white-tier heroes without any issue.

On the battlefield, with Yaska's command lost, the remaining tens of thousands of skeleton monsters plunged into disarray.

While their instinct for slaughter propelled them to continue their attack, they resembled scattered grains of sand, possessing numbers but lacking menace.

What followed was a massacre devoid of any visible bloodshed.

Two hours later, as the final skeleton creature fell, the unexpected battle concluded.

“Ding- You have achieved a victory brimming with glory. Your level has increased (31—>32).”

Ji Chen stood with his hands behind his back, leisurely descending from the sand dune. He arrived at the fractured skull of Yaska and picked up a Green Heroic Soul Essence.

Ji Chen was no stranger to this. Previously, when he had defeated Stain, the Malevolent Wind invading the New Moon Islands, he had obtained a similar essence from it.

However, back then, dealing with that behemoth had been a formidable challenge for the Crown of the Ocean. It required the deployment of almost all available resources to secure the kill.

Ji Chen couldn't help but sigh.

Despite merely two months passing between the two incidents, the resolution process had become remarkably simplified.

Presently, it only took a single charge from a Half-Orc, a protective cover from the Elemental Sea Pixies, and a straightforward assault by Anina to secure the victory.

However, considering the formidable abilities demonstrated by figures like Malevolent Wind and Yaska, along with the potency of this Skeleton Legion, it was clear that the Skeleton King possessed extraordinary strength.

It was likely at least a Purple-Rare Tier monster commander, capable of suppressing these Green Elite-Tier entities.

But now, the question remained: Where was the Skeleton King!?

Staring at Yaska, who was already beyond any further death, Ji Chen felt a twinge of regret.

If he had known, he would have spared its life momentarily, extracting the location of the Skeleton King before delivering the final blow.

Now, surrounded by an endless desert, Ji Chen found himself speechless.

After a deep sigh, he walked back to the dune.

At this moment, the army was cleaning up the battlefield.

The unexpected encounter resulted in considerable casualties. After tallying the numbers, over forty Naga Berserkers had perished, and more than a hundred Half-Orc Warriors lay fallen.

The Naga Berserkers and Half-Orc Warriors constituted the vanguard and the front line in this skirmish, thus they sustained the most damage and impact, incurring the greatest losses.

Particularly for the Half-Orc Warriors, when they stormed the enemy ranks to flush out Yaska, they faced heavy resistance, and most of their losses occurred during that phase.

Losing one-tenth of the Half-Orc warriors and Naga Berserkers in just one battle could be considered a significant blow to their morale.

In the subsequent encounters, which promised to be even more intense, the casualties would undoubtedly mount.

However, the Dragon Blood Mur Iocs, Elemental Sea Pixies, and Murloc Rangers who occupied the rear positions had suffered minimal losses.

At present, Daro stood with the remaining Half-Orc Warriors before the fallen comrades, engaged in prayer.

After considering for a moment, Ji Chen walked over.

Seeing Ji Chen approach, Daro and the Half-Orc Warriors all saluted in unison.

“My Lord!”

Ji Chen waved his hand casually and observed the rows of Half-Orc Warrior bodies laid out together. He couldn't help but feel a tinge of regret.

These were warriors who fought for him, yet now, they lay in this desolate desert.

As if sensing the remorse in his eyes, Daro's expression turned solemn, and he pounded his chest with his right hand.

“Lord, please don't feel sorrow or regret for them.”

“Falling in battle on the battlefield, in combat against the enemy, is an honor for Half-Orcs.”

Moreover, we fight for you. Even in death, it is the supreme honor..”

Chapter 237: Killing Yaska, Intermediate-Grade Skeleton

Camp (2)

“Those fallen warriors will eventually find their way to the Hall of Heroes of the Half-Orc God, forever basking in the glow of glory.”

Other Half-Orcs also thumped their chests in unison. While no words were spoken, their resolute gazes conveyed their inner thoughts.

Observing them for a while, Ji Chen nodded slowly.

“I am proud of all of you.”

“Bury these warriors here for now. Once we’ve slain the Skeleton King, we’ll come back and give them a proper burial on the New Moon Islands.”

“Thank you for your generosity,” Daro expressed his gratitude once more with a bow.

The bodies of the Half-Orcs and Naga Berserkers were temporarily interred in the sand dunes where the battle took place. A marker was placed to ensure they wouldn’t be easily buried by wind and sand.

The dry air and humidity of this place would preserve the bodies for quite some time, so rapid decay wasn’t a concern.

After thoroughly cleaning up the battlefield, they set out again, searching for an exit from this desert.

As for the departed Skeleton Knights, Ji Chen had no time to worry about them. He wasn’t sure whether they would follow orders to seek reinforcements or immediately return to the Skeleton King to report the situation here.

During their journey, contemplating the losses over the past few days, he recalled something he had acquired when he slew Malevolent Wind.

[Resurrection Altar Blueprint]

[Tier: Special]

[Effect]: Can resurrect units

[Usage Limit]: 2/2 times per month, each revival restores 1 unit to 5000 units

The Resurrection Altar could revive up to ten thousand units per month, a quantity more than enough to encompass all the troops except the Lizardmen in the Crown of the Ocean.

He had held onto this blueprint for some time, but at first, resource shortages and later distractions had prevented him from using it, causing it to gather dust in his backpack.

Considering the current Crown of the Ocean, the few thousand precious resources required for its construction were no longer an issue.

He decided that after dealing with the matters of this Illusory Realm, he would promptly construct the Resurrection Altar.

Indeed, Ji Chen's luck seemed to be holding up.

After another day's travel through the crimson sand, he saw a different hue on the distant horizon.

The dark land on the horizon indicated a departure from the desert terrain.

Seeing this, even the usually composed Alice couldn't help but smile, let alone the other heroes.

Daro and the Half-Orc warriors began to cheer and wave their weapons.

Ji Chen's face relaxed, and he let out a deep breath, shouting loudly.

"Everyone, pick up the pace!"

"Yes!"

Fueled by their exhilarating spirit, their pace immediately quickened significantly.

Half an hour later, they arrived at the pitch-black land.

It was an equally expansive marshy terrain, with the ground covered in smelly mud patches, large and small mud puddles, and eerie, twisted black trees rising from them.

Amidst the muck and mud, countless bare white bones were scattered, shrouded in a thick mist that obscured the view into the depths.

At first glance, it was a scene full of strangeness and unease, resembling something from a horror game.

However, as Ji Chen spotted the roaming skeleton creatures in the marsh, his unease instantly dissipated.

Looking more closely, these skeleton creatures appeared somewhat adorable.

Without much ado, he led the army forward, quickly capturing the attention of the skeleton creatures.

They rushed toward them with gnashing teeth and waving limbs, only to be shattered upon impact, their remains adding to the new white bones hidden in the mud beneath.

Fighting and carefully maneuvering through the mud and puddles went hand in hand.

Soon, they saw a grand skeleton encampment deep within the swamp.

Unlike the previous ones they had encountered, this camp was located on an island in the midst of a massive mud pool, resembling the central island of a lake.

A bony outer wall towering up to thirty meters high enclosed the camp, adorned with various watchtowers occupied by armored skeleton archers. Equally bony gates remained tightly shut.

Ji Chen gazed at this skeleton encampment with a slightly excited expression.

With such grandeur, there was a good chance that an intermediate-grade bone forge was nestled within.

As of now, there had only been one publicly known intermediate-grade bone forge, and the player who obtained it had become a formidable figure in the Undead faction.

One could easily imagine that if an intermediate-grade bone forge appeared on the market for sale, it would cause a massive frenzy, driving countless Undead players to madness.

However, they encountered five low-grade skeleton camps before finding an intermediate-grade one.

Clearly, capturing an intermediate-grade skeleton camp wouldn't be easy.

Just the thirty-meter-tall, clearly reinforced bony city walls in front of them posed a formidable barrier to breach.

The terrain was akin to that of a central island in a lake, with only a narrow road several dozen meters wide leading to the city gate, surrounded by mud puddles.

Such a defensive formation was inherently tough to breach, and the lack of siege weaponry made the task even more challenging.

After a moment of contemplation, Ji Chen decided to give it a try and test the city's defenses.

“Fifty Naga Berserkers in the front line, protecting twenty Dragon Blood Murlocs and twenty Elemental Sea Pixies attacking the city walls.”

Fifty Naga Berserkers stepped forward, forming a semicircular formation, while twenty Dragon Blood Murlocs and Elemental Sea Pixies remained hidden behind, filling the center of the semicircle.

This simplified formation proceeded along the road, slowly advancing toward the skeleton encampment.

The skeleton archers stationed atop the watchtowers quickly spotted them.

The entire camp burst into action as numerous skeleton archers ascended the city walls, drawing bows and nocking arrows.

Thanks to the height of the walls and watchtowers, the skeleton archers had an effective range of up to a hundred meters, slightly longer than that of the Dragon Blood Murlocs and Elemental Sea Pixies.

In other words, they had to endure several waves of attacks before reaching their optimal attack distance.

As they entered the enemy's range, a barrage of bone arrows was launched, forming a rain of arrows that descended upon them.

Although the bone arrows weren't as sharp as iron arrows, they still inflicted considerable damage on the Naga Berserkers. Many arrows penetrated their scales, embedding themselves into flesh.

However, the Naga Berserkers paid no heed to these wounds, using their broad bone blades as shields to protect vital areas like their heads and hearts.

As long as their vital points weren't targeted, and given their vitality and resilience, taking a few arrow hits wasn't a major issue.

Soon, braving the dense arrow rain, this unit of fewer than a hundred warriors entered their own effective range.

Among them, the Dragon Blood Murlocs wasted no time and launched an attack on the city walls.

Their tridents shot out with a resounding thud against the wall, producing a dull sound before they were deflected away.

The wall bore only a slightly concave mark.

Seeing this, Ji Chen's heart sank slightly. It seemed that the physical damage dealt by the tridents had minimal effect on the bony city walls.

Now it was up to the Elemental Sea Pixies to prove their worth.

In no time, as the distance shortened to the range of the Elemental Sea Pixies, streams of water arrows shot out.

Boom—

Amidst a continuous series of explosions, visible cracks appeared on the bony city walls.

Though short and thin, these cracks were enough to invigorate their spirits.

There's a chance!

Ji Chen immediately ordered the team to retreat and regroup into a larger force.

The Naga Berserkers continued to serve as the vanguard, while the Elemental Sea Pixies filled the ranks.

Soon, a force consisting of over a hundred Naga Berserkers and two hundred Elemental Sea Pixies set out. They braved the arrow rain and entered the effective range once again, commencing a fierce bombardment.

Sequential bursts of explosive water arrows hit the city wall, triggering explosions that disrupted the stability of the skeleton archers stationed atop. Their positions became unsteady, and their arrow accuracy notably declined.

Seeing this, the cuties launched their attacks even more enthusiastically.

They spared no magical energy, and the consecutive explosions vividly showcased their vibrant vitality.

The cracks in the wall gradually increased in number, expanding and lengthening.

With a snap, a damaged section of the bony city wall shattered into pieces, revealing a gap several meters wide. Skeleton archers stationed on top stumbled and fell from the wall, swallowed by the mud puddles below.

Seemingly unable to withstand such an assault any longer, the city gates slowly creaked open, unleashing a wave of skeleton creatures charging forth.

Witnessing this, Ji Chen cracked a smile.

He didn't fear their absence; his concern was that they might evade him.

They had no fear of facing the enemy head-on..

Chapter 238: Conquering the Intermediate-Grade Skeleton Camp: King Solin of the Skeletons

A more intense battle erupted on the narrow path.

Blood splattered on the elongated road, and broken bones fell into the mud.

Both sides, one aiming to capture the camp and the other to defend it, had deployed their elite warriors, engaging in a fierce clash.

This was a war between races.

There was no compromise or retreat.

Only the victorious side would stand at the end.

The Naga Berserkers displayed immense strength, each strike causing enemies to either die or be severely injured.

Dragon Blood Murlocs interwove within the gaps, using their Dragon Aura ability to affect the skeleton creatures.

These skeletons, whose life tiers were nearly at the bottom, trembled uncontrollably under the influence of the Dragon Aura. Their combat prowess was almost nonexistent.

Only a few of the mid to high-tier skeletons managed to resist to some extent, but their combat strength had also greatly diminished.

Protected by Naga Berserkers and Dragon Blood Murlocs, Elemental Sea Pixies had the opportunity to unleash all their da mage-dealing potential, releasing surges of magical energy that didn't cease.

While clearing the path of skeleton creatures, they also relentlessly attacked the bone walls.

Under this furious onslaught, the cracks on the city wall spread like a spider web, pieces of it broke off and sank into the mud, revealing several large gaps.

In terms of numbers, the skeletons clearly outnumbered Ji Chen's group.

Within this intermediate skeleton camp, there were at least a hundred thousand skeleton creatures of various sizes, and there were also a considerable number of high-tier ones. If they were to surge forward, they would still pose a threat.

However, Ji Chen's group had already taken the initiative to block the camp's only entrance and exit. On the narrow road of just a few dozen meters wide, the skeleton side couldn't fully utilize their numerical advantage.

The massive sea of skeletons inside the camp was like a reservoir with a tightened faucet. Only a trickle of skeletons could flow out each time.

The defensive line formed by Naga Berserkers, Dragon Blood Murlocs, and other units was akin to a reaping machine with spinning blades. It harvested the approaching skeleton creatures one by one, leaving none to pass.

The death of skeleton creatures brought about a continuous stream of experience points.

An ordinary skeleton creature might give a few or even just one experience point, but with enough of them, it piled up: hundreds of creatures gave hundreds of experience, thousands gave thousands, and tens of thousands amounted to tens of thousands of experience.

Watching the skeleton side struggling to break out of the camp and being soundly beaten inside, Ji Chen's worries eased. As he observed the steadily increasing experience bar, his mood improved even further.

This time, they had truly come to the right place. Continuing like this not only ensured steady leveling up but also promised them a secure gain of an intermediate-grade bone forge. A guaranteed profit!

Just as the battle raged on, the situation on the battlefield suddenly changed.

The Elemental Sea Pixies had bombarded the bone walls, leaving them in ruins. The walls had holes all over, and in some sections, they had completely collapsed, revealing the surge of skeleton creatures behind the walls.

Seeing that they had already sent thousands of skeleton creatures, but they couldn't break through the blockade and obstruction, the skeleton commander of the camp was growing impatient. When it spotted the collapsing gaps in the walls, it suddenly thought of a solution.

Immediately, they drove the low-tier skeleton creatures to jump out through the gaps, sinking directly into the mud pool.

One by one, the low-tier skeleton creatures jumped into the mud pool like dumplings, their struggles barely visible before they were swallowed and engulfed by the swamp, disappearing into the marsh.

This scene left Ji Chen stunned.

What were they trying to do?

Could it be that they lost their minds from the beating and were so ashamed that they chose suicide?

Ji Chen looked puzzled until he noticed a mud pool near the edge of the city wall gradually being filled by the bodies of the skeleton creatures. Then, it dawned on him.

They're reclaiming land from the sea!

They were freaking genius!

Low-tier skeleton creatures were essentially cannon fodder, and using them to fill the mud pool was a perfect idea.

One after another, skeleton creatures recklessly jumped into the mud pool, gradually building bone bridges within the swamp that connected to the outer land.

To construct this several meters wide bone bridge, at least one or two thousand skeleton creatures had been sacrificed. However, with the skeleton army numbering in the tens of thousands, this was merely a drop in the bucket.

Once the bridges were completed, a large number of skeleton creatures rushed out along the bone bridges.

Ji Chen couldn't disregard the situation, so he dispatched multiple squads of soldiers to intercept them.

The skeleton commander decisively ordered the construction of more bridges. After all, low-tier skeleton creatures were the least valuable, and as long as they could contribute some value, it wouldn't matter even if they all died.

Under the continuous sacrifice of skeleton creatures, a dozen or so bone bridges were built, and the skeleton creatures inside the camp poured out like a long white dragon.

At first, they could still hold them off, but as more and more bone bridges were constructed, numerous skeleton creatures surged out, forming a dense mass charging forward.

Seeing this, Ji Chen's expression became more serious.

With a wave of his hand, he dispatched Daro and the Half-Orc to engage.

At the same time, he ordered the army to advance.

Since they couldn't continue to smoothly grind experience points, they decided to go for the kill and take out the skeleton commander.

Naga Berserkers advanced without hesitation, slaughtering countless skeletons as they approached the camp.

The city gate of the skeleton camp had long been blown to pieces, so they quickly pushed into the camp.

Among the sea of skeletons, Ji Chen's attention was drawn to a skeleton commander clad in full armor, somewhat similar to Malevolent Wind.

After a quick glance, he confirmed that this was a green-tier monster commander..

Chapter 239: Conquering the Intermediate-Grade Skeleton

Camp: King Solin of the Skeletons (2)

After confirming its location, Ji Chen called all the troops stationed outside the area to come over and establish a defensive line on the road leading to the city gate. The majority of their forces were directed towards attacking the skeleton creatures within the camp.

The situation had now shifted from blocking the skeleton creatures inside the camp to preventing those outside from entering, all in an effort to buy time to defeat the enemy's skeleton leader.

This marked a complete tactical reversal!

Despite having already slain two or three tens of thousands of skeletons earlier, there were still around sixty thousand skeleton creatures alive.

About half of them were within the camp, surrounding the enemy's skeleton leader.

This number certainly didn't daunt them, considering they had previously overcome opponents numbering two, three, or even several times this amount.

Led by Anina's sharp command, the army pressed forward relentlessly, aiming straight for the enemy's core.

Realizing that they couldn't halt the advance no matter what, the skeleton leader chose to retreat rather unceremoniously.

It dove into the sea of skeletons and headed towards the depths of the camp.

Of course, Ji Chen couldn't let it escape.

This was a green Heroic Soul Essence, capable of granting an additional green hero to the Crown of the Ocean!

As the saying goes, when in doubt, unleash Anina.

"Anina, it's up to you now. Pursue quickly!"

Upon hearing this, the Deep Sea Dragon Whale sighed in resignation, took up her sword, and began chasing.

Under Ji Chen's command, the army cleared a path for Anina and systematically began eliminating the skeleton creatures.

Before long, they arrived before a colossal skull-shaped structure.

Compared to the lower-grade bone forge, this intermediate-grade one was much larger, standing over ten meters tall, with an open mouth large enough to accommodate skeleton giant lizards entering and exiting.

Ji Chen waved his hand and stashed it away in his bag.

This way, their journey into the skeleton realm had yielded a significant haul.

Looking around, Ji Chen saw Anina still in pursuit of the skeleton leader.

Seeing this, he led the army to join the chase, providing support for the kill.

Soon, the skeleton leader, who had been cornered within the camp all this time, found itself forced into a corner.

Realizing there was no way to retreat any further, it suddenly surged with a will to survive.

After all, it was a green-tier skeleton leader, commanding an army of a hundred thousand skeletons. It felt rather embarrassed to be pursued like this.

It just couldn't believe that a tiny being like Anina could defeat it!

With this thought, it raised a bone axe and charged towards Anina.

Seeing this scene, Daro's expression turned somewhat odd.

He had witnessed Anina's strength before. It wasn't an exaggeration to call her the strongest individual fighter among the Crown of the Ocean's forces. For a mere green-tier skeleton leader to even think about striking her with a weapon was simply suicidal.

The outcome was apparent – Anina swiftly unsheathed her broadsword and cleaved both the bone axe and the green-tier skeleton leader into two. The skeleton army immediately lost control and descended into chaos.

Ji Chen nodded in satisfaction.

Very good! A neat and tidy kill!

Just as he was about to approach and claim the green Heroic Soul Essence, a commotion outside the camp reached his ears, accompanied by ground vibrations.

In the sky, several dark dots appeared.

Narrowing his eyes, Ji Chen's expression changed drastically.

These dark forms were none other than skeleton dragons!

Dragons were formidable creatures, each possessing the power to easily destroy a city.

Although their strength would decrease significantly after transitioning from the noble dragon race to the skeleton one, they still retained a considerable degree of power that shouldn't be underestimated.

Thus, the moment these skeleton dragons emerged, Ji Chen immediately inspected their attributes.

[Skeleton Wyvern]

[Race]: Skeleton

[Tier]: 5th Tier, 1-star

[Skills]: Deathly Breath (Red skill, exhales a highly corrosive breath that damages both flesh and soul, causing enormous harm)

Bone Toxin (Purple skill, claws carry poison, inflicting strong negative effects like paralysis on enemies)

Resistance (Purple skill, increases physical and magical resistance by 30%, ignores most negative effects)

Flight (Blue skill, flight speed increased by 100%, limitless stamina)

[Unit Trait]: Dragon Bloodline (Former Skeleton Wyvern possessed a trace of dragon bloodline. Even after becoming skeleton dragons, they still possess robust vitality and can automatically repair injuries)

[A powerful flying unit among the skeleton race, with formidable attack and assault capabilities]

Oh, damn it!

5th Tier, 1-star!?

Ji Chen's face gradually turned grim.

He hadn't expected his first encounter with a 5th Tier unit to happen in this situation. Moreover, the crucial point was that these 5th Tier units were not on his side; they were the enemies'.

Without a doubt, this group of Skeleton Wyverns was an enemy force, arriving with boundless malice.

And if there were such formidable beings, the intentions behind their arrival were likely clear.

With this realization, Ji Chen's heart sank.

Gritting his teeth, he immediately gathered all his troops and heroes, assembling them together as if facing a formidable adversary.

Gritting his teeth, he immediately summoned all the troops and heroes to gather together, as if facing a formidable enemy.

The tremors in the ground gradually subsided, and the chaotic skeleton creatures around regained their composure.

But what surprised them was that these skeleton creatures didn't launch an attack; instead, they retreated hundreds of meters, creating an open space.

The dozen or so Skeleton Wyverns hovered in the air, emitting a piercing friction sound as they circled as if they were welcoming the arrival of their master.

A highly elite skeleton legion, surpassing even those commanded by Yaska, strode through the city gates. As they advanced, the skeleton creatures in their vicinity cleared a path.

However, at a glance, Ji Chen's eyelid twitched.

Though their numbers weren't numerous, slightly over ten thousand, each of them was at the 4th Tier, with an average of 4th Tier, 3-star.

Comparing this to his own army with only half of its units at the 4th Tier, he couldn't help but complain inwardly.

What's the point of fighting this battle?

Even disregarding those dozen or so Skeleton Wyvern, just trying to deal with this skeleton legion would likely result in his forces suffering heavy losses!

This skeleton legion also made way, and dozens of 4th Tier skeleton creatures carried a massive bone sedan chair as they walked in.

A skeleton figure, adorned with black armor, crowned with a regal crown, and wielding a longsword, stood within it.

The bone sedan chair gradually stopped, and the skeleton figure wearing the crown lifted its head, eyes flickering with golden flames.

There was an almost divine aura about it.

By this point, even the usually obtuse Daro had guessed that this crowned skeleton figure was the owner of this skeleton realm—the Skeleton King.

[Skeleton King: Solin Horton]

[Race]: Skeleton

[Level]: 50

[Tier]: Red-Legacy Tier

[Master of the Skeleton Realm, holds absolute control over all skeleton creatures]

Level 50.

Red-Legacy Tier.

This power surpassed Ji Chen's imagination by far.

Especially with a level as high as 50, it was the highest he'd ever seen for a monster leader. Moreover, with his current level at 31, there was a staggering 19-level gap between them, an immense chasm.

Level represented magical strength and mana points.

Ji Chen was a Tide Dominator, an orange-tier legendary class. While he might have been confident in an aquatic environment, in a disadvantageous swamp like this, facing such a colossal level disparity, he had little faith in defeating it.

As Ji Chen scrutinized Solin, Solin was also observing him.

Was this human the one who had thwarted the skeleton invasion last time?

Not only did he dare to counterattack the Skeleton Realm this time, he rapidly conquered several skeleton camps, even dispatching the skeleton leader and army sent by it.

It was evident that this human's army possessed substantial strength.

And this human himself, he seemed to possess audacity and strategy.

With these thoughts, a trace of admiration crept into Solin's heart, mixed with a sense of satisfaction.

Only individuals like this had the qualifications to become its subordinates, leading its forces to conquer the world!

Though it lacked eyes, Ji Chen could sense that the Skeleton King, Solin, had been sizing him up all along. For some inexplicable reason, he felt like Solin was rather satisfied with him?

Thinking about this, he broke into goosebumps all over.

Damn it, this Skeleton King couldn't possibly be gay, right!?

But that's absurd!

Just as Ji Chen was shivering involuntarily, the Skeleton King, Solin, spoke, emitting a voice from its skeleton body..

Chapter 240: Solin's Persuasion, Unexpected! Severed Arm

"Human, submit to me, undergo the great evolution, and conquer the world for me."

The hoarse voice of the Skeleton King Solin resounded, like metal scraping against glass, dry and piercing.

Regarding Solin's ability to speak, Ji Chen wasn't too surprised.

Although it belonged to the skeleton race, generally speaking, skeletons didn't have tongues or vocal cords and couldn't speak.

However, Solin, as a Skeleton King from a mystic realm and a red-legacy tier being, had reached a level where it could comprehend the ability and skill of speech and understand different languages, whether it was part of the skeleton race or not.

This was one of the rules of this world.

In just a moment, Ji Chen raised an eyebrow and said, "Great evolution?"

"Exactly, the great evolution. According to your flesh and blood beings, it's shedding all flesh and organs, completely transforming into a skeleton form.

Compared to flesh and blood beings, the skeleton body isn't afraid of pain, doesn't experience fear, fatigue, or negative effects of the physical body, and doesn't need to eat.

And as long as the soul isn't extinguished, it can easily achieve immortality and gain immense power over time.

Strength has a lifespan. Isn't this something your human race has always pursued?

Skeletons are the most perfect form of life!"

Looking at Solin, who raised both arms and spoke with fervor, Ji Chen first paused, then quirked his lips.

While it's true that the skeleton form does indeed possess numerous advantages, what Solin mentioned about not needing to eat, limitless stamina, and being impervious to pain was not entirely false.

However... what good are these traits?!

Aren't they just baseless claims?!

If one lacks those abilities to experience pleasure, then what meaning is there to life?!

But Ji Chen was also surprised that the Skeleton King Solin actually wanted to recruit him. That was a bit humorous.

He was known as the Player of the Fourth Cataclysm, so was he supposed to serve under a skeleton that wasn't even human?

(T/N: Player of the Fourth Cataclysm is a term used in Chinese gaming to suggest that the person mentioned holds a significant and powerful position in the game's universe.)

So he smiled and made an international gesture of goodwill towards Solin.

Although Solin didn't understand the exact meaning of the gesture, he deeply felt a sense of disdain and contempt, a burning anger rising.

The already hoarse voice turned even more grating as he said, "Pathetic and pitiful lowly creatures, limiting yourselves to these fragile bodies is truly foolish. Since you've foolishly rejected the invitation of the great Skeleton King Solin, I'll have no choice but to kill your physical body and then forcibly transform you into one of my kind."

Right after he spoke, the organized skeleton legion started moving forward, carrying a chilling intent to kill. Simultaneously, the remaining skeleton beings at the intermediate-grade skeleton camp also initiated their assaults.

The atmosphere instantly grew heavy, tension filling the air.

However, Solin didn't command the Skeleton Wyverns to attack because the Death Breath could destroy both the physical body and soul, leaving no bones behind. Once the bones and soul were completely obliterated, they couldn't transform into skeletons anymore.

In his eyes, not only did Ji Chen have value for transformation, but his army also held value for preservation.

Soon, the two most elite forces from both sides clashed, and the sounds of battle filled the air.

On one side, the skeleton legion, unafraid of pain and death, carried a desire to slaughter living beings.

On the other side, a mix of Naga, Murlocs, and other sea races, along with half-orcs, stared at the enemies before them without fear or retreat. Led by their Lord, they possessed the determination to overcome all odds.

As soon as contact was made, casualties appeared on both sides in an instant.

Watching more and more soldiers valiantly fighting, torn to shreds by the skeleton legion, and the casualties rising, Ji Chen began to feel distressed.

These armies were all recruited with resources and a great deal of time investment. They were falling in droves, dying at the hands of these skeletons.

With little time to spare, all the armies and heroes joined the battle immediately.

Alice's singing voice was in full swing as she controlled a large number of skeletons, rendering them defenseless against the onslaught.

Anina transformed into a humanoid giant whale, her every strike carrying terrifying power as she danced within the sea of skeletons.

Benbo and Daro, relying on the special effects of their units, provided substantial buffs to their troops, greatly enhancing their strength.

However...

As the Skeleton King, this time Solin not only brought his most elite forces but also most of his skeleton commanders.

Five of the blue excellent-tier, eleven of the green elite-tier, and over thirty of the white common-tier commanders.

Roughly calculated, excluding the leaders from both sides, Solin's side actually had slightly more high-end combat power.

This time, it was almost an evenly matched battle.

Watching his own army gradually dwindling, Ji Chen grew anxious.

If he exhausted his forces here, conquering this realm would lose much of its meaning.

Recruiting an army of this scale would take at least a month.

Making a swift decision, he immediately ordered the self-detonating water spiders that had been waiting in the rear to charge forward.

After several battles, the initial number of around 1,400 self-detonating water spiders dwindled to around 400.

Under Ji Chen's command, they charged forward without hesitation, exploding amidst the skeleton horde.

On the battlefield, mushroom clouds rose one after another, the ground trembled, and powerful explosions and shockwaves swept through a large area of skeleton creatures..