

Ocean Lord 271

Chapter 271: Backstabbing, Successful Ship Hijacking,

Mysterious Slaves (2)

The secondary cannons on both sides of the ship each aimed at their targets and fired projectiles of varying sizes, erupting like an ordinary rainstorm.

The raindrop-like shells crashed into the sea, sending the surrounding seawater soaring into the sky, forming dozens of meters high water columns.

The spotlight illuminated the area where the shells exploded, and after the water splashes fell, there were no body fragments or blood as one might imagine floating on the surface.

No matter how the shells exploded, nothing came up, only patches of foam.

And on the alchemical sonar, thousands of targets were displayed, not a single one had diminished. They hadn't even paused for a second due to the intense barrage, they were still rapidly approaching.

In the blink of an eye, the distance between the two sides had shortened to less than a thousand meters.

"Damn it! How can they swim so fast, these creatures are so agile!"

Watching the thousands of red dots on the screen coming from all directions, Ernesto muttered bitterly, "Prepare the deep-sea alchemical bombs, I refuse to believe we can't blast these damn things out of the water!"

The optimal range for deploying deep-sea alchemical bombs was 50 to 150 meters.

On both sides of the gnome merchant ship, gnome sailors had already prepared the launching devices. As long as the enemy entered the firing range, these bombs, each weighing as much as several people, would be launched immediately.

No creature could remain unscathed under the explosion of such bombs.

Even if a dragon were here, relying on its flesh and blood to resist, it would still be torn apart!

The enemy was 900 meters away from the merchant ship.

At 700 meters, all alchemical cannons stopped firing, allowing the merchant ship to stabilize.

500 meters, Ernesto stared closely at the alchemical sonar display, cold sweat trickling down his back.

300 meters, all the gnomes held their breath.

200 meters, the gnomes slowly gripped the launching levers.

150 meters.

"Get ready!"

When the distance between the two sides had suddenly been reduced to just over a hundred meters, Ernesto yelled furiously, "Fire!"

Just as the gnomes were about to press the release lever, a song suddenly drifted in from the distance.

In the quiet night, the song traveled very far, penetrating into every corner.

Ernesto was taken aback, seeing that the gnomes in charge of launching had all stopped and were inexplicably angry.

"What are you guys doing? Why aren't you launching the bombs yet?"

But these gnomes acted as if they couldn't hear him, their eyes vacant, as if they had lost their souls.

Seeing this scene, Ernesto's anger surged even more. He angrily grabbed one of the gnomes by the collar and berated them.

"What the hell is wrong with you guys? Why aren't you launching the bombs? Do you want to get me killed?"

But soon, he noticed that the gnomes had extremely vacant eyes as if they had lost their souls.

Even when lifted up, they remained unresponsive, as indifferent as puppets.

At this moment, Ernesto finally realized that something was amiss. Just as he was about to release the gnome's collar...

With a muffled sound, an incredulous expression appeared on his face as he slowly lowered his head.

This gnome had plunged a dagger deep into his abdomen, with the blade fully inserted.

Muffled-

The dagger was withdrawn and then thrust in once more.

Dozens of consecutive times, until Ernesto was completely dead, lying in a pool of blood.

At the last moment of his life.

He finally realized the reason was the song.

"The song sounds so beautiful..."

With no one to stop them, the army swiftly moving underwater quickly reached the side of the ship and, with the help of the mutinous gnomes, successfully boarded.

The gnomes who were still alive on the ship saw that ferocious alien warriors had already boarded, and without exception, they all surrendered, showing no sign of resistance.

Soon, a figure boarded the ship under the respectful welcome of many warriors.

As soon as Ji Chen came up, he happened to see Ernesto lying on the deck. At this moment, the gnome merchant who had been lively and vigorous just half a day ago was now lying in a pool of blood, lifeless.

There was still a trace of an incredulous expression on his face.

Perhaps he hadn't expected to die not at the hands of the enemy's swords but at the hands of his own people.

"My Lord, what should we do with these remaining gnomes? Should we eliminate them all?"

Ji Chen looked at the large group of gnomes gathered on the deck and smiled as he shook his head. "These gnomes still have enough value. We need them to teach us how to operate this gnome merchant ship."

"Understood!"

Hearing this, the gnomes who had been trembling finally breathed a sigh of relief. At least they wouldn't die right now.

Ignoring this group of gnomes, Ji Chen began to explore the ship.

Previously, he had only seen the exterior at the harbor but hadn't boarded the ship.

This gnome merchant ship showcased the gnomes' advanced alchemical technology. Massive gears, metal, and hinges exuded a strong industrial steampunk flavor.

The gun turrets standing on the deck made Ji Chen feel exhilarated. He was a fan of giant ships and cannons!

Bigger is better, and more is better!

The larger the caliber, the harder the punch!

This ship, brimming with various caliber alchemical cannons, was a heavily armored vessel with formidable firepower. It hit his sweet spot.

If they were to launch a direct attack through conventional means, even if they used all the warships he currently possessed, they might not be able to inflict significant damage to this gnome merchant ship.

There was a technological gap between wooden sailboats and ironclad ships that was hard to bridge.

The difference between the two was like the gap between white-tier heroes and purple-tier heroes; a purple-tier hero could easily take on dozens of white-tier heroes..

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With his strength, he could defeat it, but the consequence would be that the overwhelming magical energy would destroy the entire ship. This would contradict his initial intention of obtaining the ship as intact as possible.

Ji Chen had already planned everything. He disguised himself as an elderly avenger, attacked the ship, and deliberately damaged its propellers, causing it to lose most of its power. This would allow Alice and the others to catch up and seize the ship.

The end result was quite satisfactory. Not only was the ship relatively well-preserved, but there were also some gnomes left, who could be used to teach the Crown of the Ocean how to operate and use the vessel.

“Lord, we’ve found the cargo hold on the ship! There’s quite a lot of stuff stored inside!”

Anina stood at an entrance and waved her hand, saying.

Ji Chen’s eyes lit up.

Ernesto had been in the trading business for so long that it possessed an abundance of wealth, and what it had shown Ji Chen was just the tip of the iceberg.

Following Anina down into the ship’s hold, they navigated through metal passages, passed through more than ten metal gates, and arrived at a spacious chamber, roughly the size of two basketball courts.

The walls were all made of hard metal, and there was a metal door at the top that could be opened. This should be where Ernesto had hoisted the cargo.

Cargo crates with numbers painted on them were secured to the floor, including an empty crate labeled “No. 7”.

At a glance, there are more than a dozen of these large and small crates.

Ji Chen didn’t plan to open them here. He could do it later when they returned to the Crown of the Ocean.

Following a captured gnome as their guide, they arrived at another cargo hold located at the stern of the ship. This hold was even larger and served as a storage area for ordinary goods.

In addition to trading rare items, gnomes also traded in common goods like ordinary merchants.

Due to the return voyage, a large quantity of goods had been stored here, packed in wooden crates of equal size.

The crates were stacked one on top of another, completely filling the entire cargo hold.

Ji Chen turned to the guiding gnome and asked, “What are these goods?”

The gnome who was asked trembled and replied fearfully, “Reporting to the Lord, these goods are partly high-quality silk and fabric. They were specially purchased by the Lord Consul for sale to the human nobles in the Western Continent. There’s also some fine wine from the Eastern Continent, intended for sale to human nobles as well. They are highly sought after by these two groups.”

Wine was a commodity that always had a market wherever it went.

Unfortunately, the Crown of the Ocean was not an ideal place for winemaking, lacking the necessary environment, skilled personnel, and infrastructure.

“In addition to these, there are some more unusual goods... slaves.”

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen’s expression became serious.

“Where are they? Take me to see.”

“In order to avoid port inspections and escape, they are hidden in a secret compartment connected to this cargo hold...”

Guided by the gnome, Ji Chen and his group arrived at a section of the metal wall at the back of the cargo hold. After moving a row of heavy wooden crates, they saw a metal door locked with iron chains.

“Because these slaves are somewhat special and very valuable, only Consul Lord has the key...”

With a resounding “clang”, Anina directly broke the chain with her greatsword.

The gnome:

Under his instruction, two Naga Berserkers stepped forward and pushed open the metal door, revealing the interior.

When they saw the slaves imprisoned in the cages, even Alice and Anina couldn’t help but show surprised expressions.

Ji Chen looked at them with narrowed eyes.

He needed someone to tell him the definition of surprise..

Chapter 273: Elven Slaves, Return, Request for Thotmudo

The cargo hold in front of him was the size of two basketball courts, yet it only contained five cages.

Inside these cages contained two or three slaves each.

Their expressions were different from ordinary humans, and their distinct pointed ears clearly revealed their identity.

These individuals referred to as slaves were, in fact, elves, and what made it even more remarkable was that they were all female elves!

Ji Chen squinted his eyes and sighed inwardly.

While Ernesto claimed to fear the elves, he dared to personally engage in the trafficking of elves in secret. He truly lived up to the reputation of gnomes who were inconsistent in their actions, even daring to engage in such high-risk business.

Undoubtedly, the elves, who inherited and developed numerous technologies like alchemy, enchantments, forging techniques, advanced combat skills, and more, were a formidable force in this world. Their formidable national strength and military power were enough to deter the covetous intentions of most petty individuals.

But precisely because of this, the underground elf slave hunting teams and smuggling operations were incessant.

The more the elves struck out against them, the more difficult it was to sever this sinful business.

One of the main reasons for this was the elves' ethereal beauty as if they were carved by the gods themselves, and their extremely long lifespans.

This fact was exemplified by Elin.

Their exquisite appearance and their long lives initially bestowed upon the elves a value comparable to that of dragons.

Consider this, each dragon was a formidable force, wielding the immense power to obliterate an entire human city.

Yet, even so, countless human heroes still emerged among their kind, seeking to find and slay dragons, appending the prefix of "Dragon Slayer" to their names.

For fame, for the materials found in the dragon's body, or to bathe in dragon blood and become stronger.

Greed, the desire for wealth, the urge to conquer, and other desires provided humans with powerful motives to hunt dragons.

This aspect was somewhat analogous to the pursuit of elves.

Hence, the elves' strength did not completely eliminate the desires of humans.

But was it more difficult to capture an elf than to slay a dragon?

Clearly, the former is simpler.

Ironically, the elves' strength only fueled even stronger, uncontrollable desires in humans.

Their power, beauty, and haughty demeanor further fueled the humans' insatiable lust for conquest.

If one possessed an elven slave or servant, what an esteemed position that would be!

The stronger they were, the more intense their desire became. This paralleled the situation with dragons; just as warriors aimed to become Dragon Slayers, they also harbored dreams of taming a dragon as their mount.

However, there was a difference when it came to elves, especially female elves. Within the desire for conquest lay unabashed sexual desires, and within those desires, there was a significant amount of vanity.

Even though the elves repeatedly emphasized and combated the capture of elves, the underground trade of capturing elves continued unabated. These dealings were intricately connected to the human nobility and those in power, to the extent that the demand originated from them.

As confirmed by certain players' inquiries, in some secret slave auctions, the auction price for a single elven maiden was equivalent to a year's worth of tax revenue for a town, and it was considered priceless.

It was no wonder Ernesto was willing to take such risks and capture over a dozen elves.

"Lord, it appears that these elves are not in the best condition."

Ji Chen acknowledged, observing the cages containing over ten elven maidens. They seemed somewhat weakened, their bodies bearing bruises and clad in scanty clothing.

Most likely the aftermath of his previous assault on the gnomes' merchant ship with a tsunami.

Chapter 274: Elven Slaves, Return, Request for Thotmudo (2)

“Your situation has come to my attention. As victims of the elven trafficking trade, you deserve freedom. However, it won't be immediate. You will need to stay in my territory for a period, and a ship will transport you back to the elven gathering place. Do you understand?

Ji Chen glanced at the elves, their expressions ranging from astonishment to disbelief. He didn't say anything further. After instructing Anina to stay and take them to the deck, he left the area.

These elven maidens were indeed beautiful, with skin as fair as snow and features akin to finely carved jade. Their delicate bodies, barely covered by thin clothing, only made them appear more vulnerable after enduring persecution.

However, Ji Chen, being who he was, had no special thoughts about them.

Seeing Ji Chen leave after speaking, the elves, with various expressions of surprise or incredulity on their faces, glanced at one another. One slightly older elf bit her lip and stepped out of the cage.

“Sisters, no matter what, let's go out and see the situation first.”

Hearing this, the other elves nodded in agreement.

Locked in such a small space for so long, they had long grown weary. It would be a relief to get some fresh air on the deck.

Following the young woman named Anina, they walked out of the cargo hold and onto the deck, where a strong smell of blood immediately assaulted their senses.

As they looked around, their faces turned pale.

The deck was a mess, littered with the lifeless bodies of gnomes. Blood stained the floor and walls, so thick that even the sea breeze couldn't disperse the smell.

And by the ship's side, the gnome leader who had orchestrated their capture, with a dozen or so bloody holes in his chest, lay dead.

This scene resembled the aftermath of a fierce battle.

Witnessing this, the elves started to believe what the human man had told them earlier.

Amid their complex emotions, the gnomish merchant ship set sail once more.

Despite significant damage to its propulsion system, the ship's speed had not diminished much, and by the third day, it returned to the New Moon Islands.

Amid the astonishment of the residents of the Crown of the Ocean, gnomes in shackles marched through the crowd in orderly fashion.

But what surprised them even more was that behind the gnomes, there were more than a dozen pointed-eared elves.

Elves were not entirely unfamiliar to them. Some time ago, they had encountered a charming elven lady who had toured the New Moon Islands, and she had been very friendly with them.

“Good heavens! This is the first time I’ve seen so many elves! They all have those pointy ears, just like Miss Elin.”

“Are all elves as beautiful as they are? They’re even more beautiful than Widow Jennifer next door!”

“Tch, no matter how pretty they are, are they as gorgeous as Miss Alice?”

“Hehe, that’s true. Miss Alice is the most beautiful in the Crown of the Ocean!”

The elves walking behind naturally heard the human residents’ curious gazes and discussions. At the same time, they couldn’t help but become curious about the mentioned Miss Elin.

Were they not the first batch of elves to arrive on this island? Had other elves visited before?

The gnomish captives and the elves got separated on their way to the Lord’s castle.

The gnomes were escorted to a specially constructed prison, awaiting Ji Chen’s judgment, while the elves were taken to a reception building where they were treated to delicious food and drink.

After all, he was somewhat familiar with Elin, and in the future, there would be more interactions with the elven people.

Rescuing these elves could be seen as an effort to improve relations with the elves.

As Ji Chen had mentioned earlier, these elves would stay in the Crown of the Ocean for a while until Raymond and the others returned. Then they would be sent to the Northern Continent together.

Once the elves were settled, Ji Chen proceeded to the blacksmith’s shop.

The dwarf hero Thotmudo, with a few drinks of the Crown of the Ocean’s rare liquor in him, was hammering away at his work.

Thotmudo was unquestionably a legendary blacksmith. When he wasn’t teaching forging techniques, he had devoted his spare time to extensive research on the Ruins Guardians. Now, his focus had shifted from the Ruins Guardians to the Ocean Guardians.

Seeing Ji Chen approach, Thotmudo paused his work and said in a slightly intoxicated manner, “Human lad, what brings you here? Don’t tell me you’ve gathered some materials and want me to craft a treasure for you?”

Thotmudo had stated that he would craft a treasure as long as there were materials, which was one of the conditions for rescuing him from Krieg’s cage.

“Master Thotmudo, I’m not here for that this time.”

“Not for that?” Thotmudo, a bit tipsy, thought for a moment, then suddenly brightened up.

“Could it be that you’ve brought me some fine ale?”

Ji Chen’s mouth twitched. This drunkard.

“That’s not it either.”

The dwarf sighed, his intoxication evident. “Then it must be some troublesome matter.”

“Since I’ve shared your ale and you’ve let me research the Alchemy Guardians, I can help you with some minor issues. So, tell me, what is it?”

“Master Thotmudo, I recall that you have some knowledge of alchemical techniques, don’t you?”

At these words, Thotmudo became instantly alert. “You want me to teach you alchemical techniques? We never discussed this as part of our arrangement! Forget about it; it’s impossible! I don’t even have the facilities!”

The dwarf refused three times in a row.

Ji Chen sighed. “It’s not about that.”

“Then what is it? Speak quickly! Don’t waste my time!” Thotmudo exhaled and said impatiently.

“It’s like this: I’ve captured a gnomish alchemical merchant ship, and I want you...”

“What? You’ve captured a gnomish alchemical merchant ship!?”

Ji Chen was interrupted by Thotmudo, who shouted at him with eyes of disbelief.

“That’s right, it happened earlier...” Ji Chen briefly described the incident of seizing the ship. “Right now, it’s anchored in the harbor. If you don’t believe it, you can go see it for yourself.”

Seeing Ji Chen’s sincere expression, Thotmudo began to believe it to some extent and sighed.

“You human lad, you sure have some luck! You’ve managed to capture such a well-preserved gnomish alchemical merchant ship.

When it comes to pure alchemical and mechanical technology, the gnome race’s expertise is undoubtedly the best. I can’t tell you how many other races would love to get their hands on an intact gnomish alchemical merchant ship for research.

Every gnomish alchemical merchant ship is a technological marvel, containing numerous unique techniques. Just the gnome’s large-caliber alchemical cannons alone are enough to make even us dwarves envious.”

Ji Chen nodded in agreement. The alchemical cannons on the gnome merchant ships were indeed formidable.

If used in ordinary warfare, they would be a true reaper of life.

According to his estimate, the firepower of these alchemical cannons was comparable to the Gionn naval guns on Earth, which were incredibly powerful.

In the previous battle, if it weren't for the fact that the Crown of the Ocean's forces had submerged deep into the sea to evade most of the bombardment in advance, they would have suffered significant damage from these gnome cannons.

"Alright, do you mean you want me to help you open those locked crates?"

"That's correct. I dare not risk damaging them myself because there might be self-destructing devices inside these crates."

During the negotiations with Ernesto, it had been mentioned that the crates had multiple layers of protection and would automatically detonate if violently tampered with.

After all, Ernesto was a cunning gnome, and Ji Chen couldn't be sure whether this information was true or not.

To be cautious, it was better to have Thotmudo take a look.

Thotmudo stroked his beard. "This isn't too difficult. Among the alchemical techniques I've mastered, there's a method for bypassing these gnome devices.

But it's better if you take me there right now. I don't know if the gnome technology has advanced or changed over the centuries."

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen nodded and led him to the gnome merchant ship.

Under the sunlight, the somewhat damaged gnome merchant ship still stood majestically, easily overshadowing the wooden warships on either side..

Chapter 275: The Might of the Tyrant Azure Dragon, a Familiar Figure

The Gnomish merchant ship and the wooden warships stood side by side in the port like vessels from different eras, creating a striking visual contrast.

In one part of the harbor, the military had cordoned off an area and placed over a dozen metal crates there.

Thotmudo walked up and began to look around around with a serious expression.

After a while, he turned around and said, "It seems that the Gnomes haven't made much progress in this regard over the past few thousand years. Human lad, I can try to open these crates for you, but you need to place them in a location without anyone else around. If something goes wrong, it could destroy this place."

It appeared that Thotmudo wasn't absolutely certain about his ability to unlock the Gnomish crates, as he was more skilled in forging weapons than in alchemical technology.

Ji Chen nodded and called all the Murloc Rangers.

These creatures, several meters long and weighing several tons each, had enough strength and endurance to haul these metal lumps.

Soon, with a thunderous noise, forty to fifty lizard-like Murloc Rangers appeared at the harbor and securely connected them to the crates, placing round logs underneath them.

Clearing a path through the woods, they transported the crates to a clearing far from the Crown of the Ocean, where they were placed separately.

Seeing this, Thotmudo wasted no time and began his work of deciphering.

First, he began by cracking open the already empty Number 7 cargo crate. Everything inside this crate had been extorted by Ji Chen before, so there was nothing left inside. It was the perfect opportunity for Thotmudo to practice his skills.

As Thotmudo initiated the decryption process, everyone retreated a hundred meters away.

While the explosion of the crate might not harm Thotmudo, an epic-level hero, it could certainly be fatal to the soldiers of the Crown of the Ocean.

On the vast empty ground, only Thotmudo was busy at work.

One hour later...

Under a makeshift sunshade, Ji Chen lay on Alice's thighs with an utterly bored expression, enjoying her kneading and massaging.

Suddenly, he heard a noise coming from Thotmudo's direction.

"Human lad, I've successfully opened this empty crate."

Ji Chen promptly got up and walked over to see that the Number 7 crate had been opened, revealing four empty cabinets inside, and there was no sign of it being rigged to explode.

"Thotmudo, you truly are a master of your craft. You live up to your legendary status as a Dwarven blacksmith!"

Hearing this, the straightforward Thotmudo couldn't help but stroke his beard and laughed heartily.

"Of course, this is nothing for me."

Ji Chen chuckled inwardly, knowing that Dwarves were easier to deal with than Elves. A few kind words could make them happy.

"Well, in that case, please, Thotmudo, open the rest of the crates."

"Sure thing, but after I open them, you'll have to get me a few bottles of good wine. The ones from before are almost gone."

"Naturally, as soon as they're all opened, the wine will be delivered straight to your hands!"

For the mere cost of a few bottles of wine, he managed to enlist the services of an epic-level dwarf hero. Ji Chen couldn't help but feel a slight sense of pride and vanity about it.

Calculating based on the time it took to open crate number 7, it would take at least a day or two to unlock all the crates.

However, Ji Chen wasn't in a hurry for this time.

Returning to the Crown of the Ocean, he went to the Lobster Rider recruitment camp by the sea and took out the Tyrant Azure Dragon recruitment camp core from his backpack, using it.

As the seawater churned violently, a stepped pyramid over twenty meters high and the size of three basketball courts suddenly arched up from underwater, becoming the most conspicuous structure near the coast.

Wow, this 5-tier recruitment camp is truly something to behold. If the 6 and 7-tier camps require even more space, wouldn't they be on par with a small territory?

As Ji Chen looked up, he observed that the stepped pyramid was crafted from enormous, weathered stones adorned with seaweed, coral, and various underwater flora. It exuded an ancient and profound presence.

(Azure Dragon Pyramid)

[Tier]: 5th Tier, 5 Stars

[Recrutable Unit Type]: Tyrant Azure Dragon (5th Tier, 5 Stars)

[Weekly Recruitment Limit]: 3

[Current Recruitment Availability]: 3

[Recruitment Cost]: 800 units of crystal, 800 units of mithril, 800 units of orichalcum, 800 units of iron

[Click to Recruit]

Ji Chen was slightly surprised.

Recruiting just one of these required thousands of rare resources, and you could only recruit three per week. The slots were extremely limited, truly befitting a 5th-tier unit.

While it was costly, he believed it was worth it. After experiencing the Skeleton Ruins, Ji Chen witnessed the power of the 5th-tier Skeleton Wyvern, which, with a simple breath, could melt dozens of 4th-tier units. The Tyrant Azure Dragon, a 5th-tier unit with a higher tier and 5 stars, was bound to be even more formidable.

Without a moment's hesitation, he used up the available recruitment slots for the week.

"Recruit!"

"Ding- Consuming 2,400 units of crystal, mithril, orichalcum, and iron, recruiting 3 units of Tyrant Azure Dragons (5th Tier, 5 Stars)."

Several rare resources decreased significantly, causing Ji Chen's eyebrows to twitch slightly.

Fortunately, he had acquired a considerable amount of rare resources before heading out to sea, and he had discovered numerous resource points in the underground lizardman world. Therefore, the Crown of the Ocean's current reserves were still quite sufficient. Considering the consumption of recruiting Tyrant Azure Dragons, they could last at least a month.

The instant he activated the recruitment burton, the Azure Dragon Pyramid rumbled to life. Its central section split open, unveiling a creature stretching over thirty meters in length. It bore a resemblance to a colossal lizard with blood-red eyes, an enormous serrated mouth resembling a shredder, and a robust, muscular tail that made up half of its body. Each swing of its tail churned up substantial amounts of foam..

Chapter 276: The Might of the Tyrant Azure Dragon, a Familiar Figure (2)

This creature was a genuine sea monster, with every aspect of its body and organs seemingly designed for one purpose: destruction. Even just its presence, floating on the water's surface, exerted tremendous pressure on anyone who encountered it.

One, two, three...

The golden pyramid only began to close once the three Tyrant Azure Dragons were positioned in front of it.

As Ji Chen gazed upon these three creatures, he couldn't help but believe that the resources invested in them were truly worthwhile!

Leaving aside their strength, just their size and appearance alone were enough to be intimidating.

With this, the Crown of the Ocean had a high-end combat unit.

Ji Chen's excitement grew as he thought about testing the power of these Tyrant Azure Dragons.

He promptly approached the head of one of the dragons, manipulating the seawater to create a watertight shield around it. With a simple gesture, he ordered them to submerge into the water.

As soon as they were fully submerged, the seemingly short and thick fin limbs on the sides of the Tyrant Azure Dragons erupted with tremendous strength. With just a gentle stroke, their entire bodies leaped forward.

Their tails, which accounted for almost half of their body length, perfectly matched the swimming style of fish, providing a second source of propulsion, much like a crocodile wagging its tail.

Wherever they went, all the fish and low-level monsters were frightened and scattered in all directions by the enormous bodies and imposing presence of the Tyrant Azure Dragons. Some even trembled in place, afraid to move.

Ji Chen just glanced at them casually and ordered the Tyrant Azure Dragons to continue swimming.

These low-level monsters weren't worth his time.

In just a few minutes, they had already traveled dozens of kilometers and could see the boundary of the Stormy Sea in the distance.

In the shallower regions of the Stormy Sea, following the daily sweeps and patrols by the Ocean Crown's forces, high-level and prominent monsters had mostly vanished. They were either defeated, driven off, or retreated to the deeper sea to survive.

After some consideration, he commanded the Tyrant Azure Dragons to continue swimming toward the outer part of the sea.

Outside the Stormy Sea, the density and strength of monsters were still quite high. At the very least, they were all above the second tier, and there were also quite a few third and fourth-tier creatures.

After only a short time, Ji Chen saw a group of fish monsters swimming towards them from not far away.

[Toothfish Fiends]

[Race]: Toothfish

[Tier]: Third Tier, 3 stars

[Level]: 15

[Skills]: N/A

[Mutated Toothfish with a strong desire for group combat]

These mutated Toothfish Fiends are relatively common in the nearby waters, much like marching ants on land, with thousands and even tens of thousands appearing each time.

Although their tier isn't high, their sheer numbers deter many higher-tier monsters from approaching.

They typically don't attack large floating objects like ships, but when it comes to aquatic creatures, they show no mercy and have a strong inclination to attack.

At this moment, tens of thousands of Toothfish Fiends gathered closely together, their mouths filled with fine, sharp teeth, moving vigorously toward their prey.

Any other fish or creatures that couldn't escape in time were swarmed by them, leaving only bones behind.

At this moment, they saw three exceptionally enormous "fish" appearing in front of them, swimming directly towards them, and couldn't help but get excited.

Such a large prey would be enough to satisfy their entire group.

Suddenly, the school of Toothfish Fiends accelerated, charging towards their "prey".

Ji Chen watched as this group of Toothfish Fiends didn't flee but instead rushed towards them. Instead of feeling alarmed, he was rather pleased.

"Tyrant Azure Dragon, take them down."

With a command, the three enraged Azure Dragons also accelerated. When they were only a hundred meters away from the enemy, they opened their huge mouths and spewed out a frosty blue breath.

[Skill]: Icy Breath (Red-tier skill, capable of spraying icy breath that inflicts massive damage to the enemy's physical and spiritual aspects)

The three streams of icy breath spread in the water like spreading paint, rapidly freezing the seawater in a fan-shaped pattern. The approaching Toothfish Fiend group was frozen in ice, forming a conical iceberg that slowly sank into the deep sea.

"Ding- Your army has killed a group of Toothfish Fiends (Third Tier, 3 stars), gaining 4,800 experience points."

"Ding- Your army: Tyrant Azure Dragon has gained 5,800 experience points."

Due to the tier and level suppression, killing so many Toothfish Fiends only yielded a negligible amount of experience.

But Ji Chen was still very happy.

The performance of the Tyrant Azure Dragon exceeded his expectations. With just a breath, it killed tens of thousands of Toothfish Fiends.

The destructive power displayed by these three Tyrant Azure Dragons was even higher than that of all the other troops under the Crown of the Ocean combined.

In high spirits, he continued to search for more sea creatures.

Wherever they went, the sea creatures were either frozen into icebergs or torn apart and devoured by the gaping maws of the dragons.

It wasn't until he had his fill of killing that he planned to return.

When he turned around, he was somewhat astonished.

Unconsciously, they had already moved quite a distance from the Stormy Sea, almost ten nautical miles away.

Ji Chen slapped his head; it seemed he had left Alice and the others waiting at the port.

With a wave of his hand, he began urging the Tyrant Azure Dragons to return.

Perched atop the mighty Azure Dragon's wide back, he was surrounded by a water-repelling shield, which shielded him from the water's pressure and the turbulence caused by their movement through it.

This was something he could achieve only after his spell control had reached a new level.

Watching the bubbles created by the rapid movement outside, he began to consider whether he should build a small house on the back of the Azure Dragon.

This way, he could ride around on it, looking impressive and dignified.

While others built small pavilions on the backs of dragons, he could do the same on the Tyrant Azure Dragon, which still had the word "dragon" in its name.

Perhaps in this fantastical world, the Azure Dragon was indeed a branch of some kind of dragon evolution.

Just as Ji Chen had made up his mind to go back and instruct craftsmen to design a small house, he suddenly sensed a group of lowly sea Murlocs attacking a three-masted warship in the distance.

The number of sea Murlocs reached over a thousand, and they were climbing up one after another, attempting to board the ship.

However, the person commanding the ship was very organized. With a relatively small number of soldiers, they managed to keep the sea Murlocs at bay below the ship's railing, killing and injuring countless of them.

Out of curiosity, Ji Chen floated up to the sea's surface from a distance and looked over.

It seemed to be a ship belonging to a lord?

He felt that this group of sea Murlocs shouldn't be able to breach the ship's defenses. Ji Chen decided to quietly slip away into the sea.

However, at this moment, he suddenly saw a familiar figure on the ship?

He took a closer look.

Wasn't that I_Love_Black_Sockings?

How could she be here!?

Although he was quite surprised, his relationship with I_Love_Black_Sockings was decent, so he couldn't just stand by and do nothing.

Immediately, he sent one of the Tyrant Azure Dragons over to deal with the sea Murlocs, instructing it not to harm I_Love_Black_Sockings' ship.

"Team Three, hold the line and wield your weapons. Stab these stupid sea Murlocs down!"

"Team Six, replace Team Two, and come back to heal!"

"Mage team, conserve your mana and focus your spells in the densely packed areas of the enemy! Try to inflict maximum damage on these ugly creatures!"

I_Love_Black_Sockings directed her crew while occasionally uttering some words with an elegant tone.

Seeing the various teams orderly defending against the Murlocs, she breathed a sigh of relief.

She glanced at the chat window with the Big Boss Islander but saw that there was still no reply, which made her sigh.

Considering the risks she had taken to cross the ocean for this visit, it would be comical if she couldn't even get through the gates of the territory.

Along with her sighs came worries.

The Big Boss Islander had previously invited her, so he should have seen the messages she sent...

But looking at the current situation, with no response for such a long time, could it be that something had gone wrong?

Thinking about it, I_Love_Black_Sockings' heart tightened, and she dared not think any further.

If even a powerhouse of the Big Boss Islander's level had encountered an accident, that would be an extraordinary situation..

Chapter 277: Building Trade Routes, Flexing Muscles

At this moment, I_Love_Black_Sockings suddenly heard a strange sound.

Turning her head, her pupils shrank to their limits.

A Kraken!?

Ah no, a fearsome 'Tyrant Azure Dragon burst out of the sea with a resounding crash, its mouth large enough to swallow a ship whole, and it exhaled an extremely cold breath.

Crap!? Where did this thing come from? Am I about to die?

As she looked at the surging breath coming towards her, I_Love_Black_ Stockings felt a sense of despair and instinctively closed her eyes.

In her mind, memories began to flash before her eyes.

But after a long while, she didn't feel the freezing sensation she expected. She couldn't help but open her eyes in confusion.

She was startled immediately.

The Tyrant Azure Dragon was just a few meters away from her, its blood-red eyes devoid of any emotion, and from its slightly open mouth, a scent of blood and coldness emanated.

Gulp

I_Love_Black_Stockings stared, her expression frozen, swallowing nervously and not daring to move.

Not only her, but the other soldiers also didn't dare to move. They had witnessed this giant freeze the attacking Murlocs with a single breath, turning them into ice lumps, and then devouring them along with the ice.

"Come back, don't scare the guests."

At this moment, a voice suddenly sounded, and the Tyrant Azure Dragon slowly retreated.

I_Love_Black_Stockings couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief, then suddenly realized that the voice from earlier sounded so familiar.

She then looked towards a nearby spot.

The Islander was standing on the head of another Tyrant Azure Dragon, slowly approaching her ship with a smile on his face.

"Big Boss, you're finally here! I almost thought I was done for here... Wait, are these Tyrant Azure Dragons yours!?"

Seeing the shock on I_Love_Black_Stockings' face, Ji Chen smiled and said, "Why, can't these Tyrant Azure Dragons be mine?"

"It's not that, I'm just... a bit surprised."

I_Love_Black_Stockings felt a bit embarrassed and awkwardly scratched her head.

Ji Chen didn't continue on this topic and instead asked the question that concerned him the most.

"How did you end up here? It's quite a few days' journey from King Kong Island."

At these words, I_Love_Black_Stockings' face froze. "Big Boss, didn't I ask you about this before? You said that once I arrived outside the Stormy Sea, I should send you a message, but you didn't respond."

??

Now Ji Chen was stumped. He casually opened the chat channel and saw the chat history with I_Love_Black_Stockings.

The date displayed was five days ago in the evening.

Ji Chen remembered that on that night, I_Love_Black_Sockings had indeed sent him a message, and he had agreed and provided a rough address.

What was he doing five days ago?

Well, playing cards with Alice.

He probably got busy with something and forgot about it.

Now it was a bit awkward.

“Ahem, it might be that I was too busy and didn’t notice the message. No worries, I’m actually heading back now, so I’ll take you inside with me.”

“Uh, inside?”

“That’s right.” Ji Chen pointed to the stormy sea area surrounded by storms in the distance. “My territory is in there.”

I_Love_Black_Sockings looked terrified. With such a terrifying storm, wouldn’t her ship be destroyed in minutes!?

Moreover, she didn’t expect that the Islander’s territory was inside the Forbidden Sea – the stormy sea area with a natural protective barrier. This was really impressive!

He deserved to be a big shot, always standing out from the crowd!

With Ji Chen’s personal guidance, I_Love_Black_Sockings and her group successfully passed through the storm and entered the inner sea area.

Unlike the outer sea area with its howling storms, the inner sea was calm and sunny, with the sea and sky meeting harmoniously. It was teeming with life and looked vibrant.

“Big Boss, your place is truly a paradise. It’s much better than the area around King Kong Island.”

Seeing this peaceful scene, I_Love_Black_Sockings couldn’t help but express her envy.

“Not bad? It’s just so-so, seeing it every day can get a bit boring. There’s nothing special here, it’s just that we have a year-round mild climate, no tsunamis or heavy storms, and slightly more resources,” Ji Chen replied casually, pretending to be nonchalant.

I_Love_Black_Sockings’ face darkened.

Hey, one shouldn’t take advantage and show off like this, even if you’re a big shot!

Soon, when she saw the picturesque New Moon Islands arranged like a half-moon, her admiration grew.

Then, upon seeing the bustling port and various buildings on the island, her mindset shifted once again, from admiration to jealousy.

Why was the gap between people so vast?

Not only did they have a formidable army, but they also had territory development that was on par with it.

“Big Boss, Big Boss, what’s that pyramid-like structure over there? It looks like some ancient relic!”

“Oh, that’s my Tier 5 unit recruitment camp. It does look a bit like that.”

I_Love_Black_Sockings fell silent, her heart aching as she looked at her own highest-tier units, which were only Tier 3.

“And what about that tower-like structure standing on the cliff?”

“That’s the Five-Star Defense Building, Elemental Arrow Tower. Its range can cover the nearby sea surface for protection.”

“Uh... and what about that building under construction?”

“It’s also a Five-Star Defense Building, the Alchemy Death Cannon. It has slightly higher range and damage compared to the Elemental Arrow Tower.”

I_Love_Black_Sockings exclaimed in amazement continuously, just like someone entering a grand garden for the first time.

The harbor, stone square, residential villa area, sea rice paddy fields, rows of unit recruitment camps, various advanced buildings – all of this made her open her eyes wide in astonishment..

Chapter 278: Building Trade Routes, Flexing Muscles (2)

In a setting where various races like humans, lizardmen, kobolds, half-orcs, and sea clans coexist, it left her greatly surprised.

Especially when she laid eyes on over a dozen unbelievably beautiful elves, envy and jealousy gnawed at her, almost breaking her teeth.

Darn it! Even the dreams of otaku boys and girls found fulfillment here, complete with stunning big sister elves! What else could be missing for someone of his stature?

As they progressed further, I_Love_Black_Sockings felt utterly numbed, like being under complete anesthesia.

Big boss, just lay it all out at once; my heart can’t take much more.

At this moment, Ji Chen, who had been acting as her guide, turned around and smiled as he asked, “I heard you’ve become one of the representatives of the King Kong Island Players’ Alliance?”

Just a moment ago, he had checked the forums and learned that not long ago, King Kong Island had formed a player alliance to manage the island’s affairs.

Among them, the ten most powerful players were elected as representatives, and I_Love_Black_Sockings happened to be one of them.

Upon hearing this, I_Love_Black_Sockings' face lit up. "Exactly. Not long after your last visit, we established a player alliance on King Kong Island to manage unnecessary conflicts, decrease internal disputes, and redirect our attention beyond the island.

Thanks to the string of successes we had previously, I utilized the significant gold and resources I had acquired to grow significantly stronger, eventually becoming one of the top players on Kong Island.

And it's also thanks to the trade event you organized that I gained some popularity among the players on King Kong Island, so..."

As she said this, Ji Chen had already understood the situation.

Last time, when he silently allowed I_Love_Black_Sockings to collect ticket fees for the player trade event, it naturally made the players on King Kong Island think he was supporting her. Therefore, everyone gave their respect and elected her as one of the representatives.

Putting together I_Love_Black_Sockings' words, he came to the realization that her visit this time wasn't just a casual one...

Thinking this, Ji Chen remained composed and led her to the Lord's Castle.

In a side hall.

Ji Chen sat at the head of a long table, while I_Love_Black_Sockings sat on the left side.

Their respective heroes stood on both sides.

In the somewhat subdued setting, the long table with its medieval design, the tall-backed chairs, the flickering candles illuminating the table, and the heroes positioned on either side immediately established a solemn ambiance.

Seeing Ji Chen silently looking at her, I_Love_Black_Sockings also couldn't help but become serious.

Without much hesitation, she suddenly stood up.

"Big boss, it's been a while since I used my forum name to address you. It doesn't feel very polite, so let me formally introduce myself."

"My real name is Jiang Xueqing."

As time passed in this world where players mysteriously couldn't log out and were trapped, coupled with a system that was game-like and allowed for disguised names in the chat system, a unique cultural phenomenon evolved among the players.

In general, players usually address each other by their forum usernames rather than their real names. Only players with relatively good relationships and trust will share their real names.

Since I_Love_Black_Sockings willingly shared her real name with Ji Chen, it indicates a relatively high level of trust and approval towards him.

"Jiang Xueqing...", Ji Chen repeated to himself a few times and then looked up, "Alright, I've remembered your name. My real name is Ji Chen."

I_Love_Black_Socks' face brightened up. The fact that Ji Chen also voluntarily shared his real name implied that he might be starting to acknowledge her.

Thinking about it brought her a bit of joy.

“Please have a seat. Don’t just stand there smiling like a fool... You must have something else to discuss on your visit to my territory,” Ji Chen went straight to the point.

I_Love_Black_Socks quickly adjusted her expression and sat down somewhat awkwardly. “Big Boss Ji Chen, you truly have sharp insight. You immediately discerned my intentions! Well, here it is: I’ve come as a representative of the King Kong Island Player Alliance.”

“What’s the request?”

“Players hope to establish a long-term trade route between King Kong Island and your Crown of the Ocean.”

A trade route? That sounds intriguing.

Ji Chen nodded, signaling her to continue.

“Well, you know that King Kong Island was initially quite closed off. In the early days, players fought to the death for limited resources, resulting in more grudges and internal conflicts than actual gains.

However, with the ongoing process of opening up, establishing external trade routes to import the resources required for player development has become a necessary decision.

Therefore, I came here as a representative to ask if Big Boss Ji Chen has any intention of building this route with us.”

“I see...” Ji Chen paused.

This idea was rather interesting. Creating a player alliance to avoid excessive conflict and sustain it by importing resources was a sensible approach.

King Kong Island’s players, despite several “Battle Royales”, still have a considerable population, relatively concentrated distribution, and thus, a sizeable market.

Moreover, King Kong Island was relatively close to the New Moon Islands compared to other places that require weeks of sailing, which reduces the time cost.

If they could export goods and products from the Crown of the Ocean to King Kong Island in large quantities, it would be a profitable long-term business.

Looking at Ji Chen’s unchanged expression, I_Love_Black_Socks began to feel nervous and cautiously asked, “Big Boss Ji Chen, what are your thoughts on this?”

“This sounds promising,” Ji Chen replied, his gaze steady. “But I would like a concrete answer. What exactly does King Kong Island need in terms of goods? What’s the proposed trade method? How will the benefits be distributed between the two parties?”

Throwing out three of the most crucial questions in a single sentence.

I_Love_Black_Sockings took a moment to consider and then said, “Food and weapons, these are the two things King Kong Island needs the most.”

“King Kong Island might seem large, but the arable land is scarce. Moreover, frequent tsunamis, storms in the vicinity, and raids by the native Half-Orcs often destroy the crops we manage to plant.

Also, the fish resources in the surrounding waters aren’t very abundant. So, we’ve been facing a shortage of food.

Besides, we have a significant demand for weapons and equipment. There are practically no mineral resources on the island, so we rely mostly on the weapons and equipment that come with recruiting humanoid troops. Many of them have suffered serious damage.”

Food and weapons?

Ji Chen’s thoughts stirred. The Crown of the Ocean had plenty of these.

Within the underground realm of the Lizardmen, one could find valuable forging materials such as ores, warehouses brimming with weapons and equipment, and the legendary hunger-quelling delicacy known as the Fluorescent Mushroom.

“We can supply these things from the Crown of the Ocean.”

“How much can you supply, and can it be done consistently?” I_Love_Black_Sockings asked with some concern. If they could only provide a small amount for a short period, it wouldn’t significantly help King Kong Island.

Ji Chen didn’t say much but led I_Love_Black_Sockings to a warehouse complex near the underground caves of the Crown of the Ocean.

Hundreds of Lizardmen were continuously transporting goods from underground, loading them into the warehouses.

When he had them open two of the warehouses, revealing shelves filled with Fluorescent Mushrooms and various weapons and equipment, I_Love_Black_Sockings was utterly shocked.

These two warehouses must have stored at least a hundred thousand units of Fluorescent Mushrooms and weapons and equipment, right!?

“Is this enough?” Ji Chen asked indifferently.

“It’s more than enough.”

I_Love_Black_Sockings nodded repeatedly. Not to mention these two warehouses, there were more than a dozen larger and smaller warehouses in this place, most of them packed with supplies.

And the Lizardmen were still tirelessly bringing in cartloads of Fluorescent Mushrooms and weapons and equipment from outside, filling up the vacant warehouses.

This was beyond generous!

I_Love_Black_Sockings understood that Ji Chen was flexing his muscles.

It seemed like she needed to rethink the trade allocation plan she had originally planned..

Chapter 279: The Gap Between People, Setting a Small Goal

The two returned to the Lord's Castle.

I_Love_Black_Sockings' confidence waned, and the words she had planned earlier now felt hard to articulate.

Facing Ji Chen, who had military, financial, and material advantages, the resource-hungry King Kong Island didn't have much negotiating power.

Although she still wondered where so many weapons and food came from, she was wise not to ask. Everyone had their own secrets.

If this offended Ji Chen, it would be a loss.

"Big Boss, I wonder how much supplies you can deliver to King Kong Island in a month. After all, no matter how many supplies you have, it's useless if transportation can't keep up."

"You don't have to worry about that. If you're willing to pay promptly, at least forty fully loaded merchant ships will go to King Kong Island every month, continuously delivering what you need."

I_Love_Black_Sockings was about to ask if the Crown of the Ocean had so many ships available, but seeing Ji Chen's calm demeanor, she wisely kept her mouth shut.

Since the boss had answered like this, it should be true. So far, she hadn't seen Ji Chen make empty promises, so she felt reassured.

Next, Ji Chen and I_Love_Black_Sockings continued to discuss a series of trade matters.

From the pricing of goods to how King Kong Island would receive the goods.

It took half a day in total, and even Ji Chen, who was now a legendary mage, was mentally and physically exhausted by these discussions.

When the conversation finally ended, both sides looked dispirited, almost ready to collapse in their chairs.

"Today's negotiations end here. It's getting late, let's go have dinner."

I_Love_Black_Sockings nodded. She hadn't eaten for half a day, and after intense negotiations, hunger was creeping up on her.

At this moment, the prospect of having a meal brought great joy.

"I'll have to trouble you then, Lord Ji Chen."

Ji Chen looked at I_Love_Black_Sockings, a fellow diner, and smiled knowingly.

Then he called for Wilus.

“Is dinner ready? Don’t disappoint my guests.”

Wilus, dressed as a butler, made a refined bow.

“Lord, dinner is ready and will surely satisfy our guests.”

I_Love_Black_Sockings, looking at the well-groomed Wilus, asked in a low voice, “Boss, is he your exclusive butler?”

“Wilus is the Crown of the Ocean’s Minister of Internal Affairs, responsible for various internal affairs.”

I_Love_Black_Sockings had already checked secretly. This person named Wilus was a hero unit, and he was even a Purple Rare-Tier one.

In the Crown of the Ocean, it was quite intimidating that even an ordinary Minister of Internal Affairs was a Purple Rare-Tier hero.

She had already become somewhat immune to surprises. She felt that even if an epic-level hero appeared in front of her the next moment, she wouldn’t be surprised anymore.

Ji Chen, accompanied by I_Love_Black_Sockings, transitioned from a side hall to a well-lit grand hall. She couldn’t pinpoint when, but the space had transformed into an elegant dining area. Long tables were elegantly dressed with white tablecloths, showcasing a delightful array of dishes that were sure to tantalize the taste buds. Modest vases and candlesticks added a touch of refinement to the tables.

Various meats, fruits, vegetables, seafood, grains, fine wines, and desserts were all available.

In the grand hall, beautiful maids dressed in maid uniforms shuttled around, constantly replenishing the food, looking as if they wouldn’t stop until they had stuffed you full.

The appearance of the entire hall resembled a noble’s banquet, luxurious and elegant.

Despite having said it many times before, I_Love_Black_Sockings couldn’t help but complain.

The gap between people was so great.

Others had delicious food, with maids in stockings serving them, and dozens of warships at their disposal.

In contrast, she had simple meals, rugged and robust men as company, and fishing boats as her companions.

Sigh!

But in the blink of an eye, she put all these thoughts aside, turning her frustration into appetite, and indulged heartily.

She was satisfied both in the physical sense of a full stomach and in the mental sense of contentment.

Eating delicious food while watching beautiful maids in stockings, I_Love_Black_Sockings felt pretty good.

Ji Chen watched her with a bit of sympathy in her eyes. Was the food on King Kong Island really that bad? How could they starve this poor child like that?

After dinner, I_Love_Black_Sockings and her companions returned to the luxurious villas prepared for them.

The next day.

After breakfast.

Ji Chen and I_Love_Black_Sockings continued their negotiations.

When it came to negotiating and discussing the terms and details of the trade, it was the most time-consuming and mentally draining part. Ji Chen and I_Love_Black_Sockings represented different sides, with their own interests to pursue.

One side represented the Crown of the Ocean, while the other stood for the Player Alliance of King Kong Island.

Both had their respective interests to fight for. However, Ji Chen easily took control of the negotiation's pace. He calmly stated that King Kong Island wasn't a necessity for the Crown of the Ocean, but for King Kong Island, the Crown of the Ocean was a lifesaver.

Upon hearing this, I_Love_Black_Sockings fell into silence.

Finding a territory that could quickly provide substantial resources to King Kong Island was no easy task.

So far, the Crown of the Ocean had proven to be the most suitable trading partner, a consensus among the Player Alliance of King Kong Island.

After finalizing the last item in the trade details during the negotiation, I_Love_Black_Sockings finally breathed a sigh of relief, leaning back in her chair with a bitter smile on her face..

Chapter 280: The Gap Between People, Setting a Small Goal (2)

"Big Boss Ji Chen, negotiating with you is quite an exhausting task. I almost depleted all my energy I consumed after breakfast."

"But you did get a decent outcome, didn't you?" Ji Chen relaxed his expression and replied with a question.

"Well, that's true," she smiled and suddenly said, "Big Boss, do you know that when you were negotiating with me, your presence was quite intimidating?" "Intimidating?"

"Yes, I can't quite describe it exactly... It felt like facing a venerable elder in their forties at times, and at other times, it felt like standing in front of a dragon. Your aura and pressure almost left me speechless."

There was something like this?

Ji Chen pondered for a moment and then realized.

It probably had to do with his current appearance. In terms of status, he was the supreme lord of the Crown of the Ocean, commanding thousands of troops, tens of thousands of residents, and even over a hundred thousand Lizardmen.

This had unconsciously cultivated an aura of authority, which was evident in his serious demeanor.

Moreover, in terms of strength, being a Tidal Dominator was a legendary profession with inherent power. Under the influence of all this, he naturally exuded an aura of strength.

So, it wasn't surprising that I_Love_Black_Sockings felt this way.

Ji Chen calmly responded, "That's not a problem. If we are true friends, then this aura definitely comes from me, and not a dragon."

I_Love_Black_Sockings, or rather, Jiang Xueqing, was slightly taken aback, then looked very serious as she said, "Big Boss Ji Chen, I'll always remind myself to remember your words."

She understood that this statement meant she shouldn't forget how Ji Chen had helped and mentored her, even though she had become one of the leaders of the Player Alliance of King Kong Island and had gained some influence.

More importantly, it was a reminder not to become arrogant and not to stand against him.

Otherwise, the consequences would be as if she were facing a dragon, eventually leading to her own destruction.

Ji Chen was quite satisfied with her response and used laughter to ease the tense atmosphere. "Now that we've settled everything, let's relax a bit. I'll take you on a tour around the New Moon Islands. Even that elf said the scenery here is beautiful."

That elf?

Curious in her heart, I_Love_Black_Sockings nodded and said, "Thank you for your kind offer."

After several months of development, the main island of the New Moon Islands, where the Crown of the Ocean was located, was now thriving.

The jungle had been extensively developed, revealing clearings where various buildings were under construction—residential houses, warehouses, and workshops for crafting tools and weapons.

Stone pathways crisscrossed the area, connecting different sections, and the residents moved about energetically, creating a lively atmosphere.

If she hadn't seen it with her own eyes, I_Love_Black_Sockings would never have believed that a player could achieve such a level of development at this stage—creating such a bustling territory.

However, when she considered that this was Ji Chen's territory, it no longer seemed strange.

After all, while others were cautiously exploring near their home territory, Ji Chen had already embarked on adventurous journeys.

His courage and audacity surpassed that of the majority.

If Ji Chen knew what was going on in I_Love_Black_Sockings' mind, he would surely smile knowingly.

In addition to courage and audacity, a bit of luck was also necessary.

Of course, the most important factor was having a kind of “cheat code”.

After spending three days on the New Moon Islands, I_Love_Black_Sockings took her leave. She needed to return to King Kong Island promptly and deliver the news of the successful negotiations.

Moreover, her territory couldn't afford her prolonged absences. If she came back late and some other reckless player looted from her, it would be incredibly vexing.

I_Love_Black_Sockings' departure didn't affect the operation of the Crown of the Ocean.

In the steady pace of development, the dwarven hero Thotmudo finally opened all the gnomish crates.

Upon hearing this news, Ji Chen immediately went to a corner of the dense jungle. He had just arrived through a small path and saw that over a dozen metal crates were already open.

Dwarf Thotmudo was lying in the shade, leisurely drinking wine.

Seeing Ji Chen, he called out in a casual manner, “Human kid, I've opened them all. Where's my fine wine!?”

Ji Chen was in a great mood and replied, “Of course, I'll fulfill my promise. I'll bring the wine to you right away!”

In just over ten minutes, more than ten barrels of fine wine were delivered. Even the sealed oak barrels couldn't contain the scent, which instantly made the dwarf, a wine connoisseur, light up. He exhibited an agility that belied his size, rushed forward, and pulled out one of the barrels' plugs.

He took a deep breath, his face intoxicated, then raised the wine barrel and drank it down, gulp after gulp.

He had drunk nearly half of the quantity before he sighed contentedly.

“Delicious! Human kid, you're not bad at all. This wine is really good! It rivals the quality of half the wine I used to drink.”

Although he didn't know what kind of wine it was, a legendary-tier hero wouldn't be drinking ordinary wine.

“If Your Excellency were to stay here, we can provide this kind of wine in unlimited supply!”

If it were in the past, Thotmudo would have loudly praised Ji Chen's generosity and downed the remaining wine in one go.

But this time, the dwarven hero didn't follow up with that. Instead, he slowly put down the wine barrel, his expression becoming somewhat serious.

“Kid, I might have to leave here for a while in a few days.”

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen's smile slowly disappeared, and he remained silent for a moment before asking, “Are you going to the mainland to see the current state of the dwarves?”

“Exactly. Even though millennia have gone by, perhaps no dwarves remember me anymore, but I’m still curious to witness the current state of the dwarven race, fragmented and dispersed as it is now.

And I also want to know why the dwarves have split up in the current era. Back in my time, although the dwarves weren’t extremely powerful, we were incredibly united. We built our dwarven homeland, the Black Iron Fortress, and with our formidable forging and mechanical skills, no race dared to underestimate us.

Even the elves, who arrogantly looked down on other races, had to admit our unity.

There must have been some major changes that caused the once united dwarves to lose their homeland and be scattered across the continent.”

Thotmudo looked serious. “Our agreed-upon promises between us might have to be postponed.”

After a long pause, Ji Chen sighed. “Facing a dwarf who longs for his homeland, how could I stop you? Master Thotmudo, if you put it that way, I can only comply with your wishes and send my blessings.

In the next few days, I’ll prepare a ship to take you to the Western Continent.”

The Western Continent was a place where dwarves appeared more frequently, and it was currently known to be the location of dwarf settlements.

Hearing this, Thotmudo’s face showed a rare smile. “Human kid, I knew I didn’t misjudge you! But you don’t need to worry too much. As long as I, Thotmudo, am alive, I will definitely return here to fulfill my promise!”

Ji Chen sighed again and said, “You don’t have to sound so confident about it. When you put it that way, it makes me wonder if you’re planning to run off on me.”

“Would I, Thotmudo, ever run away? Oh right, I’ll help you repair the Dragon Slayer Great Sword these few days, so you won’t lose faith in me!”

In the following days, Thotmudo buried himself in the blacksmith’s shop. He used the prepared materials and incorporated them into the broken Dragon Slayer Great Sword. Using a repair technique that no one in the Crown of the Ocean could currently understand or learn, he successfully restored it.

The repaired Dragon Slayer Great Sword was now smooth and flawless, restoring all of its power, and making Anina reluctant to part with it.

On the day of his departure, Thotmudo stood on the ship’s railing, waving goodbye to Ji Chen.

“Kid, I’ll come back to find you after I’ve finished those things. You better not die, or I’ll laugh out loud... Ahem, I’ll be very sad!”

Ji Chen waved his hand without much enthusiasm, watching the ship carrying the dwarf gradually sail away.

He didn’t try to prevent Thotmudo from leaving. Forcing someone doesn’t yield good results, so letting him go was the right decision.

But this parting, who knew when they would meet again? It could be a year, a hundred years, or even a thousand years.

Or perhaps Ji Chen would never see him again, even until his old age. After all, Thotmudo had already lived for thousands of years, and it didn't seem like a big problem for him to live for thousands more.

Alright, starting today, Ji Chen had a simple goal in mind.

He would ensure he lived long enough for Thotmudo to return and assist him in crafting more treasures!