

## **Ocean Lord 311**

### *Chapter 311: Small Twin-Winged Demon Statue, Spirit*

Crystals, Fate with Elves, Travis Relic

This battle ultimately ended in Ji Chen's victory.

However, despite the intense nature of the battle, his own army didn't suffer significant damage.

The Nine Tyrant Azure Dragons, the core and formidable unit, though injured, none perished.

Alice's army of soul servants, around two thousand, saw six to seven hundred casualties, most of which were the relatively weaker Razor fin Seals. The "high-end" forces like the Four-Armed Nagas suffered minimal losses.

In all honesty, soul servants were expendable, and their deaths weren't much of a concern. They could simply spend some time enslaving another batch.

Thinking about this, Ji Chen couldn't help but shake his head.

Who still remembered one of his initial goals upon arriving here – to enslave the creatures? Yet, unexpectedly, he ended up in a fierce battle against the Amos Temple Dark Acolytes and Razorfin Demons, a battle that left the world in chaos.

Now, the Amos Temple Dark Acolytes were dead, leaving behind lifeless bodies.

However, the negative energy field still emanated from the Amos Temple, continuously applying adverse effects.

With these thoughts in mind, Ji Chen spoke.

"Alice, have the soul servants disperse and thoroughly inspect the surroundings for any remaining threats outside the temple."

Alice nodded and released the remaining soul servants, commencing a thorough, carpet-style search of the ruins.

After about half an hour, the last group of soul servants returned.

"We have not found any dangers or other enemies."

Ji Chen nodded and turned his gaze to the center of the ruins, the Amos Temple.

His heart swelled with anticipation.

Such a grand temple, guarded by such a powerful presence of Amos Temple Dark Acolytes, should surely hold something valuable, shouldn't it?

If it didn't, that would be rather impolite.

Ji Chen and his group bypassed the frozen pillar containing the Amos Temple Dark Acolytes and arrived at the door, stopping in their tracks to look up.

This temple was undoubtedly majestic. If it were on land, it would undoubtedly be a marvel of architecture, even more imposing than Krieg Theredell's laboratory.

Standing in front of the massive green stone gate, which was more than ten meters tall, they felt like ants.

Ji Chen commanded dozens of soul servants to approach the stone door and begin pushing.

The enormous stone door slowly opened inward.

After waiting for a while and seeing no issues, Ji Chen allowed some of the soul servants to enter as the vanguard, exploring the temple's interior to ensure there were no dangers.

Once they confirmed that there were no hidden, sinister creatures inside, they entered with peace of mind.

The moment they passed through the door, their footsteps felt steady, and the oppressive feeling around their bodies disappeared.

However, at the same time, the pressure from the Tidal Domain reached its peak, leaving only a space of less than fifty meters.

It seemed that the deeper they ventured into the temple, the stronger the negative energy field became.

Ji Chen adjusted his breathing.

Turning back to look, a thin film stood above the door, completely sealing off the seawater, and the air returned.

Inside the temple, it was as if they were on solid land.

Wow, what kind of magical technology was this?

If they could obtain this kind of film technology, wouldn't it be possible to build cities underwater?

Ji Chen suppressed his astonishment and instructed the Tyrant Azure Dragons outside not to enter. Otherwise, they might become stranded as soon as they entered.

Then he looked inside the temple.

The interior was even more spacious than it appeared from the outside, with a dome that reached dozens of meters in height and a width spanning hundreds of meters from west to east.

But in this vast space, the first thing that caught the eye was a gigantic demon statue standing on the altar, almost as tall as the dome itself.

With razor-sharp fangs and a fierce demonic visage.

This appearance seemed almost identical to the previous demon statues, like the ones on the small island.

For some reason, one could always feel an extreme chill and coldness emanating from it, causing a cold sweat to trickle down their back involuntarily.

But when looked at more closely, it seemed like just an ordinary statue.

Looking up into the eyes of the demon statue, Ji Chen wondered if it was due to the carving, but its gaze was fixated on the entrance, as if it were staring at them.

“Well, it’s a bit creepy...”

Ji Chen muttered to himself but didn’t pay it much mind. After all, it was clear at a glance that this demon statue was just an inanimate object. Perhaps the cultists deliberately designed it this way to make outsiders feel the greatness of their faith.

Many deity statues were designed like this, so there was nothing to be alarmed about.

He put that thought aside.

“Search this place thoroughly for me, and don’t leave anything valuable behind.”

With the command given, the soul servants scattered in all directions within the temple, searching diligently.

Meanwhile, Ji Chen walked toward the altar beneath the demon statue and began to observe it closely.

The altar was about ten meters high, and the altar walls were adorned with stone carvings.

These carvings seemed to tell a long-forgotten story.

As Ji Chen focused his gaze, his expression changed.

This story... was about the Divine War.

Ji Chen didn’t know much about the Divine War, only having learned a little from the pre-released game information.

He knew that this Divine War had ended the era of rampant deities, much like the meteor that had devastated the Tyrannosaur race, leading to countless creatures inhabiting this world and flourishing.

In other words, without this war among the gods, races like humans, elves, and others would have had no space for independent existence and development, only surviving at the mercy of the gods..

*Chapter 312: Small Twin-Winged Demon Statue, Spirit*

Crystals, Fate with Elves, Travis Relic (2)

The stone carving told the story of this Razorfin Demon with double wings, valiantly battling against enemy deities. Due to being surrounded and injured by other deities in a despicable manner, it had to strategically retreat during the early stages of the divine war, taking refuge within its divine realm.

Within the stone carving, the malevolent deity was depicted sitting on the throne of its divine realm, gazing into the distance as if seeking the opportune moment for another battle.

However, Ji Chen couldn’t help but almost burst into laughter when he saw this.

He had figured it out; this malevolent deity was actually quite inexperienced. It didn't take long for it to be thoroughly defeated by enemy deities. While it appeared to be a strategic retreat, it was essentially fleeing back to its divine realm for shelter.

The followers who constructed this altar had a skill in portraying this pitiful story so nobly, depicting the retreating malevolent deity as making a tactical withdrawal. It was a kind of art in its own right.

However, this malevolent deity seemed to have killed one of the enemy deities through a surprise attack, allowing its followers to seize its divine realm and obtain numerous treasures.

The stone carving ended here, leaving him somewhat disappointed as it didn't describe what happened after the divine war.

After circling the altar, Ji Chen ascended the steps at the front and reached the top of the altar.

Beneath the colossal malevolent deity statue's feet, there was a much smaller statue of a Razorfin Demon emitting substantial gray matter that spread eerily around it, exuding an aura of malevolence.

At this moment, the Tidal Domain seemed to encounter an insulator and could only exist outside the altar, unable to extend onto the altar itself.

It seemed that this small demon statue was the generator of the negative force field.

Just as Ji Chen was contemplating how to destroy it, an information panel appeared before him.

[Small Twin-Winged Demon Statue]

[Level]: Special

[Effects]: 0 Can generate a negative force field with a maximum radius of ten kilometers. Enemies within the negative force field will enter a negative state, suffering a 5-35% reduction in all attributes.

(2) Can grant spell immunity shields to friendly units within the negative force field, making them immune to all spell damage for 3 hours, with a cooldown of 1 day (if the unit belongs to the Razorfin Demon or other demon categories, it becomes permanent).

[A statue made by a certain malevolent deity to guard various divine temples]

[Can be bound and occupied with spiritual power]

!!!

This was a jackpot!

The value of this Small Twin-Winged Demon Statue was beyond question.

It could provide an enormous negative force field, enough to cover most of the New Moon Islands. Just like their previous assault here, once they entered it, they would be subjected to powerful negative effects.

They hadn't even started fighting yet, and they were already at a disadvantage.

Ji Chen had a deep appreciation for this. Without the assistance of the Tidal Domain, they might have faced defeat as early as the battle with the Dark Acolytes in the temple.

This was undoubtedly a massive advantage.

And how many people possessed domain-type skills?

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say it was as rare as phoenix feathers and unicorn horns.

Therefore, if the enemy wanted to attack the New Moon Islands or the Crown of the Ocean, they would need to weigh their options carefully.

With just this advantage alone, the defensive capability of the Crown of the Ocean was increased several times, even greater than the effect of a massive army.

In addition, it could provide a shield that granted immunity to spells for troops. This was probably why the Dark Acolytes from the Corrupted Temple were immune to the Tyrant Azure Dragon's icy breath.

However, only demon-type units could enjoy this permanent treatment, while other units had a duration of only three hours. Nevertheless, Ji Chen was quite satisfied.

Being immune to spells was already a significant advantage.

Ji Chen didn't rush to bind it; instead, he stowed the small figurine in his backpack.

In front of someone else's deity figurine, directly snatching the binding felt a bit unscrupulous, and the taste of NTR (netorare) was too strong.

He descended from the altar.

The soul servants had also completed their search of the surroundings and piled up their findings in an open area.

Perhaps due to the temple's long-standing existence, there weren't many things that could be preserved.

The majority of the valuable items were various rare resources that didn't easily decay.

In addition to crystals, mithril, and adamantium, which were the most widely used rare resources, with quantities ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 units, there was even an extremely rare resource from the outside world – Spirit Crystals.

[Spirit Crystal]

[Level]: 5

Its appearance was similar to a white diamond, but it had a color more akin to stalactites, resembling something of utmost purity.

At a glance, one could easily sense the pure energy contained within, dense yet gentle.

Ji Chen had seen in the chat channel that a lucky player once explored a forest, stumbled upon a Level 5 resource point where Tier 5 wild creatures were battling Tier 5 guardian creatures, resulting in a mutual destruction of all of them.

Seizing this opportunity, the player entered the resource point and discovered that it was actually a Level 5 Spirit Crystal mine. Although it only had a reserve of 50 units, with these 50 units of Spirit Crystals, they obtained resources equivalent to an entire town's value.

This incredibly fortunate player, thanks to this substantial resource, managed to dominate other players within a hundred-mile radius and became a local overlord.

And now, before Ji Chen lay a total of 300 Spirit Crystals!

With just these Spirit Crystals, even if all the soul servants and Tyrant Azure Dragon fell, it would be enough to compensate for his losses.

To this Temple Dark Acolyte, or whatever his name was, I thank you sincerely for leaving me such a generous gift.

If you could provide me with another 300 Spirit Crystals, I could help you break free from the ice and present you before your dark deity, so you won't have to spend your nights in the cold, without peace.

Feeling quite content, Ji Chen stored the Spirit Crystals and other rare resources one by one.

Then, he turned his attention to the various odds and ends.

Some were weapons and equipment that had rusted over time, while others were wooden carvings of dark gods that were completely useless to him.

Suddenly, he noticed something mixed in among them, and his eyes lit up as he pulled it out.

What he held in his hand was a piece of golden paper that had endured countless ages but still remained exceptionally pristine.

Although it was made of gold, its thickness was as fine as a strand of hair, delicate to the touch yet surprisingly resilient, preventing it from tearing.

Taking a closer look, intricate runes and patterns were engraved on the golden surface, appearing mysterious and noble, as if they contained boundless secrets.

On the back, there was some kind of script that Ji Chen didn't recognize, filled with colorful flowing characters, resembling a beautifully crafted work of art, leaving people in awe.

[Travis Relic]

[Level]: Special

[Effect]: Unknown

[An ancient elf relic known only to the elf race. If it is handed over to the elves, perhaps it can earn their friendship.]

Wow, this guy seems to have a special connection with the elves, doesn't he?

Everywhere he goes, he encounters elves and obtains items related to them.

Elin, the Elf Squad, the elves of the Northern Continent, the Gloria map, Elf Treasury Key Fragments, and now this Travis Relic. He's really entangled with the elves.

Although he didn't know the specific function of this item yet, judging from the description, it was undoubtedly something extraordinary. When released, it might even cause quite a stir.

Moreover, it appeared in a Corrupted Temple, so it could have been plundered by the followers of the dark deity from the elves. By defeating that temple's Dark Acolyte, he could consider it a form of revenge for the elves.

When the time comes, the elves might be extremely grateful to him and offer their gratitude.

Coincidentally, he had plans to head to the Northern Continent and establish formal contact with the Elven race. When the time came, he would return this item to them and take advantage of the opportunity to request some favors. It didn't seem unreasonable, did it?

He wasn't greedy. He could casually request dozens of lovely elf maidens as servants or ask for an elf squad to serve as his guards. It would certainly boost his reputation when he ventured out.

After stashing away the Travis Relic, Ji Chen rubbed his hands in anticipation. Like a scavenger, he rummaged through the pile of odds and ends, hoping to find some other hidden treasures..

*Chapter 313 - 313: Abundant Harvest, Underwater Forest,*

Monica and Elin

But after searching for half an hour, Ji Chen didn't find anything valuable. It seemed that apart from the rare resources and the Travis Relic, there was nothing else worthwhile.

There was only trash and more trash.

He felt a slight sense of regret.

However, this haul was quite impressive. He obtained a small two-winged demon statue that emitted a negative force field, approximately 6000 units of rare resources, 300 units of invaluable top-tier resources called spirit crystals, and an elf artifact shrouded in mystery.

Against all odds, Ji Chen's victory over the corrupted temple dark acolyte not only secured valuable rewards but also propelled him through the ranks. He soared from level 35 to level 37, and reaching level 38 appeared well within reach.

Although the battle had been challenging, his side had suffered very few losses.

After realizing this, Ji Chen's mood improved considerably. Since there was nothing left here, he left with his army.

What he didn't notice was that, as he stepped out of the portal, the eyes of the deity statue on the altar briefly lit up and shifted, but quickly returned to silence.

The people with their backs to the statue didn't notice this scene and exited the temple under its gaze.

Back in the water, the familiar oppressive feeling returned.

The ice pillars that had frozen the corrupted temple dark acolyte were still standing.

Ignoring it, Ji Chen controlled the seawater, carrying himself and Alice, and headed straight for the Tyrant Azure Dragon's head, leading his army away.

He had no intention of returning to King Kong Island. After informing I\_Love\_Black\_Sockings, he directly returned to the Crown of the Ocean.

On the way, he looked for monsters, and after replenishing Alice's soul servants to around two thousand, he smoothly returned to the New Moon Islands.

Considering the time spent traveling back and forth and addressing a few monster lairs, the entire endeavor took no more than three or four days.

Back in his territory, after all the traveling, Ji Chen decided to rest for a good night. The next morning, he woke up refreshed.

As soon as he got up, he went outside the Lord's Castle to enjoy the warm morning sun and the sea breeze with a hint of fishy scent. Just as he was about to take a deep breath, he saw Benbo hurrying in from outside the territory, his face showing a hint of concern. It was clear that something had happened. "What happened?"

Approaching him, Benbo, who had saluted, replied, "My Lord, while conducting our routine morning patrol, we stumbled upon a gathering of wild creatures. The exact number is unknown, but there are at least four thousand of them, and they pose a significant threat, potentially endangering passing ships."

"Due to their considerable numbers, I refrained from launching an immediate attack. Instead, I returned to report to you and request instructions."

At least four thousand wild creatures?

Ji Chen's interest was piqued, and he nodded. "You did the right thing; a hasty attack would only alert them. Are there any Fourth-tier creatures among them?"

"There are a good number of them, with a preliminary estimate of fewer than a thousand Fourth-tier creatures. The rest are Second and Third-tier."

Less than a thousand Fourth-tier creatures were more than enough to fill the remaining slots for Alice's soul servants. This was good news.

"Where exactly are they located?"

"The last sighting was on the south side of the New Moon Islands, near the deep sea close to the edge of the storm. We suspect they may have been hiding in the deep waters before, which is why we didn't detect them earlier."

The Stormy Sea, while not large in terms of ocean expanses, presented a significant challenge. Despite continuous patrols by the Crown of the Ocean, they were still exploring the shallower waters. The deeper regions and the labyrinthine underwater terrain were uncharted territory, making it a potential hiding place for creatures or even monster lairs.

Ji Chen was determined not to waste any more time.

"Gather the Dragonblood Murlocs, Lobster Riders, and Tyrant Azure Dragons.

We're going to eliminate this threat to the Crown of the Ocean!

Take Alice and her soul servants with you."

"Yes, my Lord!"



Ten minutes later.

The army was assembled and swiftly entered the water, moving at full speed.

When Ji Chen and his troops reached the spot Benbo had mentioned, the wild creatures he had spotted earlier were nowhere in sight. Nonetheless, given the significant number of creatures observed in a brief period, it's quite likely they hadn't ventured too far and were likely nearby.

Seeing this, Ji Chen waved his hand and announced loudly, "Lobster Riders and Dragonblood Murlocs, form teams of ten each, with each team responsible for searching in a different direction.

Be cautious, and do not attack recklessly if you spot the enemy. Report back immediately upon discovering any traces!"

Dozens of teams of Lobster Riders and Dragonblood Murlocs received their orders, with each group responsible for a different angle and direction, creating a radial search pattern.

Under this efficient and saturated search method, they quickly discovered traces left behind by the wild creatures from their hunting and activity.

Following these traces, they arrived in a section of the sea to the southeast of the New Moon Islands.

This was where the wild creature group had vanished.

Without hesitation, Ji Chen once again dispatched his forces, initiating another saturated search.

Today, he was determined to find this group of wild creatures, even if it meant digging three feet into the ground or, in this case, diving deeper into the sea. One heroic Lobster Rider, leading a small team, descended into the depths of the ocean. As the depth increased, its eyes widened slightly, adapting to the growing darkness, and it took in the surrounding scenery.

As they continued their descent and progress, they entered a secluded underwater basin, and the brightness around them suddenly increased, causing their eyes to narrow..

*Chapter 314 - 314: Abundant Harvest, Underwater Forest, Monica and Elin (2)*

After adapting to the changing light, the Lobster Rider hero paused as he looked at the scene before him.

Before him lay a vast underwater forest, standing tall in the flat basin, extending as far as the eye could see. Giant trees, large enough to accommodate ten people hugging them, stood like towering buildings. The flowers blossoming on their branches emitted a faint, ethereal blue glow, illuminating the underwater world with a mesmerizing beauty.

Amongst the giant trees, faint figures could be seen moving about.

Ji Chen stood confidently on the back of the Tyrant Azure Dragon, with Alice by his side. Eight other Tyrant Azure Dragons surrounded them, along with over two thousand enslaved souls guarding every direction.

Suddenly, he slowly opened his narrowed eyes, gazing towards a spot in the nearby sea. Within seconds, ten water ripples emerged, revealing a Lobster Rider hero with nine Lobster Riders.

“Lord, I’ve detected the tracks of those monsters!”

At his words, a glint of excitement flickered in Ji Chen’s eyes.

“Everyone, gather!”

Guided by this squad of Lobster Riders, they crossed an inconspicuous sea trench and arrived at this underwater basin.

Upon seeing this forest growing on the seabed, even Ji Chen couldn’t help but be stunned.

Such a landscape existed?

An underwater forest flourishing beneath the sea, it did seem rather unscientific!

But Ji Chen quickly rationalized; in this fantastical world, an underwater forest was far from unusual.

“Those monsters are hiding within this underwater forest; it appears to be their nest!”

The Lobster Rider hero stood respectfully beside Ji Chen and made a report.

Ji Chen nodded slightly, waved his hand, and declared in a commanding tone, “Lobster Riders, guard the entrance to this underwater basin, don’t let any of the monsters escape.”

“Yes!” Several Lobster Rider heroes clenched their fists against their chests, bowing their heads in acknowledgment.

“Both the Tyrant Azure Dragons and the Dragon Blood Murlocs will serve as our main force this time. Eliminate all non-fourth-tier monsters.”

The Murloc hero, Benbo, raised his trident high, while the Tyrant Azure Dragon silently opened its blood-red mouth, exuding an extreme cold.

Having said that, Ji Chen turned to the Siren hero at his side. “Alice, lead the enslaved souls to enslave the fourth-tier monsters as much as possible.”

“I understand.”

“Good, let’s move out!”

Each army began to act in unison, under the leadership of their respective heroes, executing their assigned tasks efficiently.

Amidst the bustling activity of the armies, Ji Chen appeared incredibly relaxed.

He leisurely stood atop one of the remaining Tyrant Azure Dragons, leaving the entire battle in the capable hands of Alice and the others.

He seemed completely unconcerned, and for good reason— two heroes of

purple-rare-tier, dozens of heroes of blue, green, and white tiers fully equipped with gear, and a strong force of fourth-tier units, along with the backing of eight powerful fifth-tier Tyrant Azure Dragons.

If they couldn't handle this meager group of less than a thousand fourth-tier monsters among the four thousand, they might as well crash into the trees and die.

Seeing the excitement in the underwater forest, Ji Chen also opened the chat channel to pass the time.

As always, there were numerous goofy players chatting and acting silly.

For players, the one thing they never lacked was excitement.

Through the goofy players scattered all over, Ji Chen also learned about various events happening in different regions.

Among them, there was news about the daughter of a certain Grand Duke publicly denouncing a neighboring country's despicable annexation plan and vowing to thwart their sinister plots.

Ji Chen took a look and thought, "Isn't this Monica from the Lienhardt Grand Duchy?"

The girl with a beautiful appearance, graceful manners, and a sense of propriety had left a deep impression on him.

It seemed that she had successfully returned to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy and relayed the information.

Monica, you should give it your all. You must thwart the enemy's conspiracy; otherwise, if the Lienhardt Grand Duchy falls, everything he did before would be in vain.

Apart from this, Ji Chen also noticed a message from another player.

"I'll tell you guys something. Just a few days ago, I was buying supplies in the indigenous city, and while I was walking on the street, I accidentally bumped into someone wearing a hood and a cloak. Do you want to know who's under the hood?"

"Don't want to know, scram."

"Hello, it's me."

"Wait a minute, let me deduce this. Trapped in the game + in a town + wearing a hood, I understand now. It's Asuna!" (T/N: Asuna is a character from the anime, Sword Art Online)

"Well, it's a bit similar, but not entirely. Although she only showed half of her face, I'm pretty sure she's an elf. And let me tell you guys, her looks are out of this world. If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I would have thought it was photoshopped!"

"But as soon as I saw her, I felt like I was love-struck."

"Is that even love at first sight? I feel embarrassed to expose you, you're just lusting after her, you pervert!"

"She's an elf who can live for generations; the elf you saw might be a few hundred years old already. This is like holding a gold brick."

Watching the intense discussion about the female elf on the channel, Ji Chen suddenly remembered Elin, who had been gone for quite some time. If everything went smoothly on her journey, she probably had already arrived on the Northern Continent and was on her way home, right?

“Ah, damn it!”

Currently wandering in a vast grassland, enjoying the beautiful scenery, Elin looked around with a puzzled expression.

She hastily used a spell to detect if she had been cursed or affected by something, and only after confirming that she was fine did she breathe a sigh of relief, muttering to herself, “I’ve been gone for so long, those guys probably think I’m dead. No one should have put a curse on me...”

“Besides, I’ve been hiding my identity since leaving that territory, even altering my appearance and hair. Although it’s not as effective as the Illusory Mask, the chances of being recognized should be very, very low...”

Well, I probably don’t need to worry about this issue...” She furrowed her brows suddenly. “Wait a minute, did I forget something?”

After a brief moment of contemplation, she decisively gave up on thinking about it, waving her hand nonchalantly. “Well, if it’s something I can’t remember, it must not be important. And if it’s not important, there’s no need to dwell on it.

After all, I’ve finally escaped. Why should I trouble myself with unimportant matters?”

So, she continued to enjoy her newfound freedom, reveling in the gentle breeze, cool water, and the beauty of nature.

At that time, Ji Chen was unaware that Elin, whom he had placed so much hope in, had completely forgotten her earlier promises and obligations, discarding them without a second thought.

If he knew, he would undoubtedly curse the wily old witch.

After observing the antics of the goofy players for quite some time, he closed the chat channel and redirected his attention to the real world.

He looked into the distance.

It seemed that the battle was nearing its end.

He drove the Tyrant Azure Dragons towards the underwater forest.

The gaps between the giant trees were quite large, allowing the Tyrant Azure Dragons to enter easily.

Between these giant trees, there were traces of battles everywhere, and numerous monster corpses were scattered about. Some were shattered, others frozen into ice sculptures, and some were impaled on trees. There were various ways these monsters had met their demise.

Among these dead bodies, the Ocean Crown’s forces were relatively small, consisting of only a few dozen, with the majority being the souls of servants.

This clearly showed the overwhelming advantage of the Ocean Crown’s army and the disparity in strength compared to the monster horde.

The deeper they ventured into the forest, the more monster corpses they encountered.

Additionally, Ji Chen observed that these monster bodies were grouped together, suggesting they had been organized for battle but were ultimately defeated.

As they continued deeper with the Tyrant Azure Dragons, they soon reached a clearing at the center of the forest, where the Ocean Crown's army was facing off against the few remaining monsters.

Among the remaining monsters, there was a figure with black hair and a humanoid body, similar to a human, standing in front of them..

*Chapter 315 - 315: White-Scaled Merfolk, Merfabric*

When Ji Chen got a clear look at this figure, he couldn't help but pause.

From the contours on her chest, it was likely a female.

Her upper body was adorned with delicate scales, including a few large ones on her chest. However, her lower half was a fishtail, similar to Alice's.

Alice's tail had that flowing, iridescent blue color, but hers was a pearly milky white, quite pronounced in the slightly dim environment.

Scales also grew on her tail's sides, where her arms connected, and her ears sported fins of various sizes.

Especially the two large fins on her ears, they looked just like fans.

He shifted his gaze.

Underneath slightly disheveled black hair, her cheeks and forehead were covered in diamond-shaped white scales, and her slightly elongated eyes had a hint of sharpness.

After sizing her up, Ji Chen's initial impression was that she resembled a distant relative of Alice.

Her appearance couldn't be called ugly, but it was full of the style of the sea.

Guarding behind this "distant relative" were about thirty other females of the same race, all looking quite alert.

Alice hadn't attacked them, only surrounding them with her army.

"Alice."

Upon hearing his voice, Alice turned to look at him, then turned back to face him. "My Lord, other than them and the enslaved soul servants, all the other enemies have been completely slain."

Ji Chen nodded and asked, "If that's the case, why not deal with the remaining monsters as well?"

Alice hesitated for a moment, then pointed to those 'distant relatives' and said, "They are not ordinary monsters; they are a group of White-scaled Merfolk."

Merfolk?

Ji Chen's heart stirred; this name seemed to trigger a memory in his mind.

He remembered that Merfolk on Earth were mythical creatures similar to beautiful mermaids. Could it be that this world also had them?

With a thought, he checked the leader of the Merfolk's status panel.

[Jovana]

[Race]: White-scaled Murfolk

[Level]: 15

[Skills]: Merfolk Body, Agility

[Unit Trait]: Merfabric (Can produce specialty: Merfabric [7-star specialty])

[The Chieftain of the Merfolk, possessing advanced weaving skills]

He read the information line by line.

Merfolk, yes, that was indeed the race Alice mentioned.

Looking at her skills, it indicated that she wasn't proficient in combat, probably just a subordinate of other monsters, surviving by hiding here.

When Ji Chen saw the Unit Trait section, his heart suddenly skipped a beat, and he could hardly believe what he was seeing.

Merfabric, a 7-star specialty?

What exactly did 7-star mean?

In his territory, there were only three types of specialty, namely Golden Bass, Precious Jungle Wood, and Premium Coffee Beans.

The highest-rated Precious Jungle Wood and Premium Coffee Beans were only 4-star specialty. But this specialty called Merfabric had an astonishing rating of 7-star. Even though he didn't know what it was, its value was unquestionable.

And these Merfolks before him could actually produce such a specialty?

Seeing the change in Ji Chen's expression, Alice immediately explained beside him.

"My Lord, Merfolks are a very rare race in the ocean.

Their combat abilities are not strong; they can only barely defend themselves. However, they are extremely skilled in weaving. The Merfabric they produce is a highly valuable ocean treasure, with a value comparable to materials from giant dragons.

If we can accept them into the Crown of the Ocean and let them produce Merfabric, there will be tremendous profits.

Therefore, as soon as I discovered their presence here, I didn't rush to kill them but instead trapped them and waited for you..."

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen nodded in understanding. Killing them outright would be an enormous loss, considering their unique ability to produce 7-star specialties.

Having this particular skill would be like having a powerful bargaining chip in their favor.

Even 4-star specialty like Premium Coffee beans were highly valuable and had no trouble selling. Once a 7-star specialty hit the market, it would undoubtedly deal a significant blow.

As long as he could bring these White-scaled Merfolk under his control, it would be like having a flock of golden-egg-laying geese.

With this in mind, Ji Chen confidently stepped forward and used his magic to project his voice.

“Stranger Merfolks, why have you appeared here? Do you know that this is my territory? You are invaders!”

Without further ado, he took the moral high ground and pointed fingers.

The White-scaled Merfolks looked at each other in confusion.

Finally, the foremost White-scaled Merfolks, Jovana, stepped forward and nodded humbly, saluting, “Respected Lord, we did not intend to offend you, but we have been living here for several years, and at that time, there didn’t seem to be any territory here...”

“What do you mean? Are you suggesting that I deceived you?”

Ji Chen furrowed his brows and asked with a slightly unfriendly look in his eyes.

At the same time, the Tyrant Azure Dragons surrounding them slightly opened their mouths, releasing a cold aura much colder than the deep sea water, forming strands of ice crystals.

The message in their eyes was clear: do dare to argue again?

Jovana kept quiet.

She quickly realized that this was someone looking for trouble.

When dealing with someone deliberately causing trouble, it was fine if individuals possessed the strength to retaliate. Nevertheless, the White-scaled Merfolk clan had virtually no combat prowess and had managed to survive by depending on more powerful tribes and individuals for an extended period..

*Chapter 316 - 316: White-Scaled Merfolk, Merfabric (2)*

Years of relying on others had made them highly flexible in their mindset.

Jovana promptly responded, “You’re right, we must have been mistaken. Please forgive our rash intrusion. We, the White-scaled Merfolk clan, will leave immediately.”

“Wait a moment. Since you’ve intruded into my territory without permission, that’s a mistake. And when you make a mistake, you should make amends, don’t you think?”

Do you really think you can just leave?

If these White-scaled Merfolk, capable of creating immense value, were allowed to leave, it would be sheer madness.

Entering my domain and thinking of escaping? No way!

Looking at the powerful armies surrounding them and the formidable human expert before them, Jovana felt somewhat helpless.

Facing this human who could easily wipe out the tribe they had previously depended on, they had no room for negotiation.

There wasn't even a trace of anger in their hearts.

Because in the brutal sea, weakness was the original sin.

Even if their White-scaled Merfolk could weave the most beautiful fabrics, they could only stay at the bottom of the ocean.

The only thing they could hope for was to find a protector.

Jovana replied, "We are willing to compensate for our mistake. As a token of our apology, this is the fabric woven by our White-scaled Merfolk clan. We hope you'll find it satisfactory."

As she spoke, a White-scaled Merfolk behind her presented five pieces of white fabric, which looked like silk and fabric combined.

Ji Chen's heart stirred, and he gestured for a soul servant to bring it over.

As soon as he laid his fingers on the material, it was as if his hands had slipped into a cloud – it felt soft, cool, and incredibly pleasant, as weightless as a feather.

[Merfabric]

[Level]: 7-Star Specialty

[Additional Effect]: Does not get wet when in contact with water

[The specialty of the White-Scaled Merfolk clan holds tremendous value.]

Was this a 7-Star Specialty?

It was terrifying!

The moment Ji Chen touched it, he instantly sensed its enormous commercial potential.

From ancient times to the present, clothing has been an enduring commodity. People of all social classes need clothing.

Wealthy individuals wore clothing made of high-quality fabrics such as silk, while the poor wore garments made from coarse materials like hemp.

And Merfabric was undoubtedly a fabric capable of conquering any fabric.

Garments made from it, even if they only served the purpose of clothing, would be highly sought after by countless elites. This was determined by its inherent quality.

Ji Chen had no doubt about this.

Moreover, this fabric had the additional effect of being waterproof, a prestigious feature in itself.

Perhaps even the elves, who lived in extravagant luxury and had a keen artistic sense, would go crazy for it?



Ji Chen's expression remained natural as Alice received the Merfabric and said casually, "Hmm, this fabric is excellent. I'm satisfied. However, it's not enough to offset your trespass."

When Jovana heard the first half of the sentence, her face showed a hint of joy, but as soon as she heard the second half, her expression immediately fell.

Even though they could weave Merfabric, the craftsmanship was intricate and complex, and the required materials were not readily available, with several core materials being quite rare.

After migrating here for so long, they had only gathered enough materials to weave five pieces.

Just as Jovana was worried about how to satisfy this human expert and allow her and her people to leave...

"However, I can give you a chance. As long as you submit to me, weave this fabric, and make clothing, I will forgive your previous offense and promise to protect your White-scaled Merfolk clan."

Upon hearing Ji Chen's words, Jovana hesitated slightly.

She quickly understood that this human expert was intentionally provoking them to make them submit and weave Merfabric for him.

For them, it wasn't something they couldn't accept.

To put it bluntly, their previous benefactor had already fallen, so they had to consider finding the next entity to depend on.

With such a formidable army and the ability to annihilate the tribe they had previously relied on like slaughtering chickens, it was clear that this individual possessed great strength.

Therefore, submission became one of their choices.

After a brief hesitation, she agreed and bowed with her people.

"We are willing to submit to you."

"Ding- The White-scaled Merfolk clan chooses to pledge allegiance to you."

Glancing at the system prompts, Ji Chen extended his right hand and gently lifted the bowing White-scaled Merfolk with currents of seawater.

"Since that's the case, let's get ready to return."

Seeing this scene, Jovana's eyes filled with reverence. Not only could he freely dive into the sea like a marine, but he also possessed such power. It seemed that this human expert they had newly pledged allegiance to was no ordinary person.

After some minor preparations, Ji Chen led his army and the White-scaled Merfolk clan back to the Crown of the Ocean.

Since the White-scaled Merfolk couldn't transform their legs like Alice and couldn't walk on land, they were temporarily settled near the port. They would be provided with an underwater residence later on.

The next day, Ji Chen arrived at the port and called Jovana over for a discussion.

“What materials are needed to make Merfabric? How long does it take for a White-scaled Merfolk to weave one piece?”

“Lord, Merfabric requires a total of forty-two types of materials. If there is sufficient manpower and materials, it would take at least two weeks for one White-scaled Merfolk to weave one piece. If you want to cut and sew it into clothing, it would take even longer.”

Ji Chen was amazed. Indeed, it was a 7-star specialty, requiring a whopping forty-two types of materials, and even then, it took quite a bit of time to weave just one piece.

This was much more complex than obtaining valuable wood, as wood could be harvested and processed relatively quickly once cut.

“Please list or directly inform me of all the materials you need.”

“Yes, the required materials include...”

Jovana listed various materials, most of which Ji Chen knew and could be collected from nearby sea areas or imported from the outside. However, there were a few materials among them that were completely unfamiliar to him.

After inquiring on the chat channel, he managed to figure out where to obtain all these materials.

But there were still two core materials that even knowledgeable players didn’t know about: Deep Sea Blood Pearls and Silverlight Sea Grass.

“Most of the places where Deep Sea Blood Pearls appear are in areas where energy gathers deep in the sea, and those places often attract powerful sea beasts.

As for Silverlight Sea Grass, it’s usually transparent and dull, only emitting a silver light on moonlit nights. It can only be harvested effectively during that time, and its appearance is irregular, relying solely on luck...”

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen couldn’t help but sigh in frustration.

Deep Sea Blood Pearls had some hope of being tracked down, but this elusive Silverlight Sea Grass had no regular appearance pattern at all. It only showed up on moonlit nights, relying entirely on luck to find it.

If luck wasn’t on their side, would they never find it?

“Are there any similar materials that can be used as substitutes?”

Jovana hesitated for a moment and nodded. “There are substitutes available, but if we use other materials, the quality will decrease by a notch. Is that acceptable?”

Why was it unacceptable?

Ji Chen was confident that even if the quality dropped slightly, it would still be enough to create a market frenzy.

Moreover, once he found these two materials, he could release a new version to the market, raise the price, and label it as a special edition.

Then, he could sell the slightly lower-quality version as one tier and the higher-quality version as another, earning money from both. What a delightful plan!

“No problem, use other materials to replace these two.”

“My only requirement is that as soon as the materials are available, start the production of Merfabric as quickly as possible. The Crown of the Ocean needs this specialty to establish its reputation thoroughly!”

Feeling Ji Chen’s determination, Jovana also nodded earnestly.

She felt a sense of relief in her heart.

As long as there was a place that needed them, the White-scaled Merfolk clan would have value, and they would receive protection..

*Chapter 317: Attack on the Ocean Crown, Explanation and Departure, Materials*

Ji Chen had just started to leave when, as if remembering something, he called out to Jovana.

“Do you know where your fellow Merfolk are?”

Since the craftsmanship of White-scaled Merfolk was complex and time-consuming, wouldn’t increasing the number of them also increase production?

Upon hearing this, Jovana shook her head with a hint of sadness in her eyes. “Reporting, my lord, my tribe originally had over a hundred members, but we lost most of them in an accident a few years ago. Now, there are only around thirty of us.

As for other White-scaled Merfolk tribes, I encountered one by chance decades ago, but since then, I haven’t seen or heard anything about them.”

Ji Chen nodded slightly with a touch of regret. It seemed that the idea of increasing Merfabric production through numbers would have to be put on hold.

At present, the strength of the Crown of the Ocean did not allow him to spend a lot of time and resources searching for White-scaled Merfolk in the vast ocean.

After sending Jovana away, Ji Chen arrived in front of the Lord’s Manor and took out the small statue of the double-winged Razorfin Demon from his backpack.

As long as he placed it down, the Crown of the Ocean would instantly gain a powerful negative energy field, increasing its safety by several times.

Thinking about this, he extended his spiritual power into the statue and began to imprint it with his own consciousness, binding it.

Within the statue, Ji Chen’s vibrant blue spiritual energy flowed ceaselessly, infiltrating every nook and cranny. Then, it got triggered by some unseen force. Deep within, a hidden and malevolent force surged, manifesting as a menacing black creature with fiery red eyes, seemingly intent on consuming the serene blue energy.

If the blue spiritual power were to be devoured, the black spiritual power could invade the owner through the spiritual connection, completely enslaving them on a soul level.

As the black creature, infused with traces of pure malevolent energy, came into contact with the blue energy, its malevolent and sinister countenance swiftly transformed into one of sheer dread.

The blue spiritual power, initially thought to be a delectable morsel, suddenly emanated a terrifying force from its depths. A shimmering, multicolored radiance burst forth, illuminating the black beast. This radiance resembled the sun meeting ice, and it rapidly dissipated. Within the span of a blink, the black beast vanished completely, leaving no trace behind.

After its destruction, the rainbow light paused briefly and then quickly disappeared, once again converging deep within, leaving the interior of the statue completely free from any trace of evil. The blue spiritual power covered it completely.

The entire process happened in the blink of an eye.

And Ji Chen was completely unaware of everything that had just occurred. In his perception, his mental power had only entered the small double-winged demon statue, leaving his mark and binding it.

“Ding- You have bound the Small Double-Winged Demon Statue. Do you wish to activate the negative energy field?”

“Yes.”

The Small Double-Winged Demon Statue trembled slightly, floated out of Ji Chen’s hands, and slowly sank into the earth. It didn’t stop until it had descended several meters deep.

Ji Chen was quite satisfied with this arrangement. Burying it underground would greatly improve its concealment.

He immediately filled the dug-up soil back in and even stomped on it a few times to make it less conspicuous. In a few days, the lush weeds would completely cover any traces here, and no one but Ji Chen would know that a statue was buried there.

In the invisible sky, a negative energy field with a radius of ten kilometers, centered on the buried point of the statue, had already enveloped more than half of the New Moon Islands.

From hundreds of meters high in the air to the depths of the sea, any wild creatures within this range were suppressed by an invisible force, greatly reducing their threat level.

As long as he thought about it, Ji Chen could communicate with the Small Double-Winged Demon Statue using his mental power, deciding whether to activate the negative energy field or even use another skill of the statue. It was very convenient.

Ji Chen clapped his hands, feeling satisfied, and returned to the Lord’s castle, sitting down on the Lord’s throne and opening the territory panel.

[Crown of the Ocean]

[Lord]: Ji Chen

[Level]: Level 1 Territory

[Prosperity]: 373,970

[People's Hearts]: 84 (High, loyal, stable)

[Population]: Humans (2,992), Human Slaves (1,550), Cave Miners (18), Kobolds (640), Lizardmen (1,543,940), Half-Orcs (502 [excluding Half-Orc Warriors]), White-Scaled Merfolk (31)

[Territorial Buildings]: Level 3 Lord's Manor, Resurrection Altar, Harbor, Large Water Fort...

[Oceanic Ships]: Two-masted Merchant Ships (10), Three-masted Warships (42), Five-masted Grand Flagship (1), Gnome Armed Merchant Ship (1)

[City Defenses]: Alchemy Death Cannon (1), Elemental Arrow Tower (1), Ordinary Watchtowers (58), Ordinary Arrow Towers (38), Ancient Civilization Fortress (1), Small Double-Winged Demon Statue (1)

[Unit Recruitment Camps]: Azure Dragon Pyramid (1), Murloc Statue (10), Naga Altar (10)...

[Units]: Tyrant Azure Dragons (9), Dragon Blood Murlocs (700), Naga Berserkers (680)...

[Heroes]: Siren: Alice (Red), Ancient Dragon Whale: Anina (Red), Wilus, Irona, Benbo (Purple)...

[Territorial Resources]:

Wood (213,505 units), Stone (278,220 units), Fiber (111,800 units), Clay (58,000 units), Crude Iron (302,250 units)

Spirit Crystals (300 units), Crystals (11,000 units), Mithril (6,000 units), Adamantite (9,000 units), Star Iron (40 units)

*Chapter 318: Attack on the Ocean Crown, Explanation and Departure, Materials (2)*

[Food Storage]: Fluorescent Mushrooms (584,000 units), Seafood (209,000 units), Sea Rice (426,000 units), Miscellaneous Fruits and Vegetables (over 150,000 units).

[Territory Specialties]: Rare Jungle Wood (4-star specialty), Premium Coffee Beans (4-star specialty), Golden Sea Bass (2-star specialty), Merfabric (7-star specialty).

[Territory Unique Buildings]: Jungle Plantation (12).

[Territory Blessing]: Ocean's Blessing (residents and troops can capture more fish in the ocean, and their water skills and sense of direction are greatly improved in the ocean).

After several months of development, the Crown of the Ocean was no longer the impoverished and backward place it used to be; it had already undergone a transformation.

Compared to the beginning, it was now unimaginably powerful.

One of the most important factors in determining the prosperity of a territory, the population, has grown from just over 40 people at the beginning to over a hundred thousand.

In addition, the number of troops was in the thousands, and the military strength of the territory has increased hundreds of times.

When it came to heroes, there were dozens of heroes in the white, green, and blue tiers, and there were even two heroes in the purple and red tiers, which made their top-tier combat strength quite impressive.

Having so many heroes means that the Crown of the Ocean's army is highly autonomous. Even if they did not have Ji Chen's command, they could still independently unleash strong combat power.

In the food storage category, thanks to Ji Chen's numerous explorations and battles, they had gained considerable harvests and dividends.

At this point, the territory's resource and food reserves were both in the tens of thousands. The food was so abundant that it not only met their own needs but could also be exported to the outside world.

The previously almost blank city defense works now include two powerful five-star defense buildings, as well as varying numbers of watchtowers and arrow towers, turning the territory into a hedgehog covered in thorns, causing harm to those who touch it.

The four distinct territory specialties had also made the Crown of the Ocean famous abroad.

It could be said that the Crown of the Ocean had gradually begun to live up to its name, becoming more and more prosperous and powerful, advancing toward the goals Ji Chen set at the beginning.

He was proud in his heart but not the least bit arrogant.

Getting closer to the initial goal didn't mean they'd arrived there. To truly become what he envisions, there was still a long way to go.

Looking through the castle's bay window, Ji Chen's gaze turned toward the distant sea, murmuring to himself.

"After so long of development, the Crown of the Ocean currently has no obvious weaknesses, but the development dividends from the previous adventures will gradually disappear over time.

Therefore, the pace of external adventures cannot stop. Continuously bringing back and importing resources will keep this dividend going and allow the territory to develop more rapidly.

However, it seems that there are no immediate conquests or explorations to undertake. If we want to venture out, we must set our sights on more distant places.

It looks like putting the journey to the Northern Continent on the agenda is necessary."

After thinking for a while, Ji Chen made a firm decision. His gaze sharpened as he summoned Wikis, Raymond, Irona, and other heroes with expertise in governance and daily life.

After receiving the summons, they quickly arrived, bowing respectfully and greeting, "Lord, good day."

"No need for formalities; I've called you here because there's something I need to discuss with you."

Seeing the seriousness on Ji Chen's face, they grew tense, their expressions becoming solemn.

“I plan to personally lead the fleet to the Northern Continent in a few days to initiate formal contact with the Elven race.

The Stormy Sea is quite a distance from the Northern Continent, so I won’t be in the Crown of the Ocean for a considerable period.

Therefore, during this time, the four of you must manage the territory diligently, and make sure no issues arise.”

As Ji Chen spoke, Wikis and the others immediately replied, “Lord, you can rest assured that we will do our utmost to manage the territory and wait for your return.”

Ji Chen nodded, knowing that these heroes were all of the Purple Rare Tier, and with them in charge, the territory should operate smoothly as usual.

“I trust in all of you. Wiius!”

“At your service.”

“During my absence, you will be the nominal highest commander in matters of governance. Even when I’m not here, you must ensure the orderly operation of the territory, including goods production, agriculture, personnel management, and so on.

Pay special attention to the White-scaled Merfolk in producing Merfabric and Leysha in brewing wine. Do your best to assist them.

These two things will be the next breakthrough opportunities for the Crown of the Ocean.”

“I will spare no effort,” Wiius replied once more. At the same time, he felt the increasing pressure on his shoulders as the population of the Crown of the Ocean continued to grow, and affairs in various aspects multiplied exponentially.

Although often feeling tired, his heart was filled with immense fulfillment and joy.

This was a kind of fulfillment and joy born from being needed by others.

Upon hearing the Lord’s instructions, his heart immediately resolved, swearing not to disappoint the Lord’s expectations.

“Irona, prepare a batch of potions; they might come in handy on this journey.”

Irona’s white ears perked up, and her tail wagged happily as she promptly agreed.

In fact, since coming to the Crown of the Ocean, she hadn’t stood out much among the several Purple Rare Tier heroes.

Her expertise in potion-making didn’t seem all that important to the Crown of the Ocean, which had always had a military advantage.

Most of the time, the Crown of the Ocean’s army charged forward like a horde of brutes, breaking the enemy’s ranks without the need for potions. So, her role was even smaller than that of the Blue Rare Tier hero, Daro.

Therefore, being able to be of use made her quite happy.

Ji Chen didn't notice Irona's thoughts as he turned to the next hero.

"Raymond, you will accompany me on this journey. Coordinate with Wiius and make preparations for sea voyages and trade."

"Don't worry, Lord, I'm experienced in this matter. I guarantee that I will handle it perfectly for you!"

With his round belly resembling that of a seven-month pregnant woman, Raymond promised confidently.

This sort of thing was as familiar to him as going home.

Seeing this, Ji Chen nodded with reassurance. He couldn't help but tease Raymond when he noticed his increasingly rotund figure.

"You need to pay attention to your body. Don't eat like a pig, or you won't even be able to fit on the ship."

"Lord, that's so unfair! I haven't eaten anything at all, and this belly just swelled up on its own. I didn't want this," Raymond exclaimed, looking wronged.

His pitiful appearance, combined with his somewhat comical figure, made the others burst into laughter.

This was just a small interlude.

Ji Chen continued to instruct the others until the sun began to set.

After dinner with everyone, he allowed them to disperse.

Before parting, Ji Chen asked Irona to stay behind.

He took out a bottle of potion from his backpack: Holy Healing Elixir, and handed it to her.

Irona looked at the golden liquid potion in her hand, her expression filled with surprise.

"Lord, where did you get this potion?"

"It's called the Holy Healing Elixir. It doesn't matter where I got it. What's important is, can you reproduce this kind of potion?"

"Well..." Irona's face showed some hesitation. "The life energy in this Holy Healing Elixir is exceptionally potent, almost on par with a 5-star potion. It's already considered an advanced potion. The odds of reverse-engineering a potion of this caliber are extremely slim..."

She said it was extremely low, but in reality, it was nearly impossible.

If not, people could easily figure out how to make advanced potions, and they'd become common, right?

Although Ji Chen felt some regret, he didn't feel disappointed. It was just a casual question.



“If that’s the case, then there’s nothing else. You should go back and rest early. If you lack materials for brewing potions, you can talk to Wuius.”

Irona nodded, and it seemed like she had thought of something. Her face flushed slightly, “Actually, I’m missing a special material, and only you, Lord, can provide it.”

Ji Chen was puzzled. Only he could provide it?

Then, he noticed Irona’s seductive expression and immediately grasped the situation, his expression turning serious.

“As a lord, I should do my best to fulfill my subordinates’ requests. If that’s the case, I will try my best to provide you with that material.”

“Thank you, Lord, for your generosity-”

The next morning, Irona left with a bag full of materials, feeling weak in the knees. Ji Chen, on the other hand, was pleased to have helped his subordinate and went about his business with a refreshed spirit..

*Chapter 319 - 319: Fleet Departure: Ironclad Battleships and Airships, Maple Harbor*

Before setting off, Ji Chen opened the forum and posted information about the five low-level Skeleton Nests and one intermediate-level Skeleton Nest he obtained from the Skeleton Secret Realm. It took some time to find potential buyers for these.

After careful selection and negotiations, he finally confirmed five buyers. The trade location was also set on the Northern Continent, the shortest distance from the New Moon Islands and the port he would be heading to in a few days – Maple Harbor.

Before departure, Ji Chen recruited all the military units for the week, further expanding his army.

The number of Tyrant Azure Dragons increased to 12, Giant Octopuses increased to 35, Deep Sea Roamers increased to 70, and Tidal Sea Spirits increased to 8.

These units, recruited using rare resources, cost a total of 8400 units of crystal, mithril, fine gold, and iron, with 2400 units of each.

After this recruitment wave, he was left with only 2600 units of crystal, 3600 units of mithril, and 6600 units of fine gold.

This amount wouldn’t be sufficient for the next recruitment.

Ji Chen checked the resource points of the various rare resources currently under the territory.

The several mithril mines discovered earlier had already been depleted and were slowly recovering in dormancy. It could be said that they couldn’t be relied upon now.

“This trip to the Northern Continent seems like I’ll need to search for resources carefully.”

This journey would be Ji Chen’s first time setting foot on the continent, so he brought the highest specification of military force.

This included all the Tyrant Azure Dragons, Naga Berserkers, Dragon Blood Murlocs, Elemental Sea Pixies, and other four main military units. He also brought Alice, Benbo, and a group of white, green, and blue-tiered mid-level heroes.

Anina, Daro, and others would be stationed at the Crown of the Ocean with the remaining troops.

On a sunny morning, a fleet consisting of thirty-five ocean-going ships set sail with an unstoppable momentum, heading towards the open sea.

Among them, in the central position of the fleet supported by all the ships, was a gigantic five-masted warship.

With mastheads that seemed to pierce the sky, densely packed cannons on both sides and a ferocious ram at the bow, its larger hull compared to ordinary ships demonstrated its power.

This time, the fleet carried a vast cargo, including weapons, equipment, and precious jungle wood produced from the underground Lizardman world, premium coffee beans, and other territory specialties. It also included rare ore resources from the northeastern peak of the main island and the underground Lizardman world. Moreover, there were five rolls of exquisite Merfabric, which were considered rare treasures.

The quantity and richness of this trade far exceeded any previous ones, and Ji Chen believed that this time, it would make the world reconsider the Crown of the Ocean.

At the same time, Ji Chen also had some hidden expectations for this journey to the Northern Continent.

Although he had visited the Silver Islands before, it was, after all, a relatively prosperous gathering place for indigenous people in the Western Mid-Ocean.

The true core of this world was still on the mainland, where elves, dwarves, humans, trolls, gnomes... a multitude of races thrived and established civilizations that had been passed down for hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of years, along with massive cities.

Not to mention the level of prosperity, there was a huge difference in population between islands and mainland.

The islands had limited space and could only support a limited population. In the Western Mid-Ocean, an island that could accommodate three hundred thousand people was already considered a large island.

But on the mainland, three hundred thousand people was merely the average population of a normal large town.

Cities of strong races commonly had populations ranging from six to seven hundred thousand, and many core cities had populations in the millions.

As for the most central capital cities, they were inhabited by millions of people, covering vast areas, and possessed formidable military power.

From the discussions in the chat channels and forums, Ji Chen had outlined the outlines of these cities.

Towering buildings stretched for dozens of miles, housing countless residents. Massive city walls hundreds of meters high surrounded the cities, and beyond the walls lay numerous farmlands, with caravans arriving from distant lands.

Ji Chen, who had been active on the islands and in the ocean since his arrival, naturally had a sense of curiosity and anticipation for the mainland.

In this state of anticipation, even the monotony of sailing on the sea seemed to fade away.

There were no adverse weather conditions along the way, not even significant waves. The wind was favorable, so the fleet's speed increased considerably.

Seeing this, Raymond gazed at Ji Chen with a deep and thoughtful look in his eyes.

In his heart, he was already a hundred percent sure that the Lord had received the favor of the gods. Otherwise, how could the journey have been so calm all the way, with even the sea breeze blowing in their favor?

Magic! This must be magic!

After several days of sailing, the fleet gradually approached its destination, and the number of ships around them increased.

When they saw this massive fleet, each of them was greatly surprised, especially the enormous flagship positioned in the center, which was truly awe-inspiring.

However, some of them recognized the symbol of the Crown of the Ocean on the sails and pieced it together.

During this time, they had heard about a fleet that claimed to be from a territory called the Crown of the Ocean. Not only did they bring a large quantity of high-quality weapons, equipment, and military supplies, but they also transported a precious batch of wood that had caught the attention of those pointed-eared folks.

They were curious about this territory that had gradually gained fame and were thinking about when they might have the opportunity to visit and purchase some goods for trading..

*Chapter 320 - 320: Fleet Departure: Ironclad Battleships and*

*Airships, Maple Harbor (2)*

In a wave of admiration and astonishment, the Crown of the Ocean fleet gradually approached, revealing the distant port and city on the land.

At the bow of the ship.

“Lord, that’s the port where we’re going to dock this time—Maple Harbor.

Maple Harbor is one of the largest ports in the Northern Continent. It is under the jurisdiction of a completely neutral principality—the Maple Principality. Due to its absolute neutrality, it’s highly stable here.

Not only have several human kingdoms and principalities set up embassies here, but also many races, such as elves, dwarves, and gnomes, have established offices here.

It has a highly advantageous geographical location and a deepwater harbor, so it sees a lot of traders coming and going, making commerce highly prosperous. Whether it's buying or selling goods, all the necessary steps can be completed here.

This is truly a holy land for merchants.”

Raymond exclaimed with a sense of wonder.

Hearing such an introduction, Ji Chen's interest grew stronger.

Just as he was thinking about speeding up the fleet's approach, he saw three warships made entirely of metal rapidly approaching from a distance, moving only slightly slower than the Tyrant Azure Dragon.

As they drew closer, they could finally see what these metal warships looked like.

They weren't particularly large, roughly the same size as a three-masted warship. At a glance, it was easy to distinguish them from the Gnome Armored Merchant Ships.

The gnome ships had a very pronounced industrial and punk style, and they were big and clunky. But these warships looked rather sleek, with a streamlined beauty.

Similar to the gnome-armed merchant ships, they were equipped with numerous alchemical cannons.

Five triple turrets towered on the decks, and although the gun barrels were not as thick as the gnome cannons, they bore a striking resemblance to the naval cannons on Earth. The ship's sides were also covered with various sizes of secondary guns.

The firepower on each of these warships, equipped with dozens of cannons, was, to put it simply, sufficient to single-handedly take down over half of the Crown of the Ocean's fleet due to their impressive firepower and speed.

This was no longer a matter of quantity, but a huge technological gap.

Ji Chen looked at them, his heart pounding.

This was the power of a kingdom, a principality-level force. He couldn't help but wonder if the Crown of the Ocean would have such powerful warships in the future.

Wait a minute, the Crown of the Ocean did seem to have a gnome-armed merchant ship that looked similar. However, it was currently powerless and could only sit idle in the harbor. Even if it were repaired, it dared not sail out in a high-profile manner, for fear that the gnome would find out and seek revenge?

Raymond pointed at them and said.

“Lord, don't worry. These ships should be the naval patrol fleet of the Maple Principality. They register and undergo inspections every time they enter the port to ensure the safety of the harbor and the city.”

Ji Chen nodded and ordered the fleet to slow down.

The three Maple Principality's armored warships split up, with two of them heading to either side of the fleet, while one sailed straight toward the New Moon.

As they approached not far from the ship's side, a flying airship lifted off from the armored warship, slightly adjusting its direction, and quickly landed gracefully on the deck of the New Moon.

Ji Chen squinted and looked curiously.

What kind of alchemical technology was this?

The airship was about ten meters long and had the appearance of a ship without masts. However, it had rotor devices at the front and rear corners, and four smaller propellers extended outward from the ship's sides to provide auxiliary propulsion.

Underneath the hull, there was a pair of landing gear that slowly extended from the interior during the descent.

Of particular significance were the two repeating crossbow devices, about the size of a baby's arm, positioned at the front and back of the ship, and their stainless steel bolts shone with an eerie brilliance.

Seeing this, Ji Chen breathed a sigh of relief.

It seemed that the technological level of the Maple Principality hadn't reached the point where they could miniaturize alchemical cannons. Otherwise, wouldn't this be a full-fledged fighter jet?

The rotors gradually slowed down, and a gap opened in the middle section of the airship, revealing a metal staircase that descended.

A fully armed squad of soldiers marched down in formation.

Ji Chen glanced at them briefly, and his heart skipped a beat.

Even the soldiers who came for inspection were all fourth-tier high-star unit types, with a level of 40.

Was this the strength of a principality?

As the squad of soldiers approached, the leader of the squad, a captain, only observed briefly and then walked towards Ji Chen, who was standing at the front of the group.

Not only did he exude the aura of a formidable individual, but he also had a remarkable demeanor, like the heir of some great noble family, clearly a natural leader.

Naturally, his speech was much more polite.

"Guests from afar, welcome to Maple Harbor. I am the captain of this squad, here to inspect your fleet. Please cooperate with us.

According to the regulations of Maple Harbor, ships carrying offensive weapons such as cannons are not allowed to enter the harbor. They can only anchor in designated sea areas.

Furthermore, you cannot bring too many troops, guards, and heroes into the harbor and city. The maximum number allowed is twenty, while the rest must remain on the ships waiting at sea.

Please don't worry; the Maple Principality will ensure your safety."

Ji Chen nodded in agreement, finding no issue with these regulations.

If outsiders wanted to enter the Crown of the Ocean, he would impose similar rules.

After some consideration, he decided to bring two heroes, Alice and Benbo, with him. As for the rest of the troops, the most potent Tyrant Azure Dragon wouldn't be able to set foot on land, so he had to settle for bringing eighteen Naga Berserkers.

Following that, more transport airships took off from the three armored warships and flew towards various ships to begin inspections.

Once it was confirmed that the fleet of the Crown of the Ocean was not carrying any dangerous goods and only had cargo meant for trade, the soldiers returned to their airships and headed back to the armored warships.

The three armored warships split up, with one guiding the New Moon and other ships carrying cannons to a designated sea area.

The remaining two ships sailed towards the harbor.

Ji Chen and his group transferred from the New Moon to a merchant ship.

The closer they got, the clearer Maple Harbor and the city of Maplewood behind it became.

A vast harbor area stretching over ten miles appeared before their eyes.

At the outermost part of the harbor were several ports, each capable of accommodating hundreds of ships. Many merchant ships were coming and going, giving the area a bustling atmosphere.

In the inner part of the harbor was a thriving urban area, with tall buildings and towers reaching thirty to forty meters high. Crowds of people, like ants, flowed through the streets.

Looking further ahead, a massive, hundred-meter-high city wall blocked their view, with strict arrow towers on top and some alchemical devices he had never seen before.

The armored warships left them at the harbor's entrance and were quickly replaced by smaller ships that guided them to the docks.

Raymond, who had experience in this kind of travel, quickly arranged for two luxurious carriages upon disembarking. Ji Chen, Alice, and Raymond rode in one carriage, while Benbo and the Naga Berserkers occupied the other.

The merchant ship and its cargo were temporarily left at the port, to be transported later once they had contacted the buyers.

The group left the harbor and entered the urban area.

Sitting in the slowly moving carriage, Ji Chen looked out through the window.

The appearance of Maple Harbor's urban area was quite similar to Silver Harbor on the Silver Islands, but the level of prosperity was worlds apart.

A quick glance revealed crowded streets, tall buildings lining the roads, and numerous street-side shops with vendors loudly hawking their wares, creating a lively and bustling scene.

In addition to the shops, classic establishments such as taverns and mercenary guilds were also present, with many bare-armed mercenaries and sailors coming and going.

There was also a group of people on the streets who stood out prominently the casual players, each wearing various types of equipment. They paid no heed to the curious glances of pedestrians and strolled casually down the streets. Many players even set up makeshift stalls on street corners, selling all sorts of odds and ends.

Occasionally, a few lines of traditional music drifted by, giving one the feeling of being in an online game.

Seeing the appearance of these casual players in person, Ji Chen felt his mood improve.

No matter what, he could always find a strange sense of familiarity among players..