

Ocean Lord 351

Chapter 351: Silver Mask Deceiver, Troll Queto,

Backstabbing Blow (2)

Queto took a look at the cramped tunnel entrance, which was less than fifty meters wide and easily defensible. Although it had confined them, it also made launching an attack much more challenging.

“I don’t want to waste our warriors’ lives in this meaningless battle.”

The silver-masked deceiver heard the underlying message and chuckled hoarsely. “As long as you continue to put in effort, I promise to provide you with a batch of high-quality weapons. I believe your warriors could use an upgrade.”

Upon hearing this, Queto’s eyes lit up. “I hope you’ll fulfill this promise.”

“Of course, we are allies. We would never deceive you.”

“You only need to provide the resources; leave the rest to us,”

The silver-masked deceiver performed an elegant bow, gesturing an invitation.

Queto nodded slightly.

Raising the mottled battle axe in his hand, he shouted angrily, “Everyone, attack!”

“Roa!!!!!!”

Hundreds of mountain trolls charged forward, their eyes bloodshot, and their lust for blood rising.

It seemed they had reached some kind of consensus, as the troll leader commanded many mountain trolls to attack.

Ji Chen remained composed and waved his hand. The Crown of the Ocean army erupted with a powerful aura. Facing a significantly larger enemy force, their gaze remained fearless, and their morale remained high.

As an early-stage unit among the Crown of the Ocean, Naga Berserkers and Dragon Blood Murlocs had evolved and grown significantly in strength after countless advancements. They had reached an average level of 37, giving them a considerable advantage against these mountain trolls.

In the narrow tunnel entrance, the numerical disadvantage was negated. Only a few dozen mountain trolls could attack at a time, while the rest could only watch from behind.

From above, the lines formed by the troll’s charge looked like a tide crashing against a dam, splashing blood everywhere but unable to make an inch of progress.

The Ocean Crown’s army did suffer casualties, with many Naga Berserkers wounded and some killed in the frenzy of the mountain trolls’ attacks. However, they were quickly replaced by others, and the defense remained unyielding, as solid as a rock.

Ji Chen didn’t feel too concerned about the casualties. The presence of the Resurrection Altar allowed most fallen soldiers to be revived, so he didn’t worry too much about losses.

At this moment, he mentally prepared himself for the possibility of the entire army being wiped out. After all, these deceivers had chosen to trap them here, and they were undoubtedly well-prepared.

The swamp, once dominated by Marshland Dragons, was now filled with the sounds of battle.

Naga Berserkers, with their blood-red snake eyes, wielded bone blades that dripped hot blood, splattering the ground as if scalding the mud.

The Alvin Mountain Trolls lived up to their reputation as a major threat to the Maple Principality. Their attacks were ferocious, almost akin to higher-tier Half-Orcs.

They attacked recklessly, and each time they caused casualties to the Crown of the Ocean's army, it boosted their morale, making them even more formidable and causing further casualties.

Seeing this scene, Ji Chen frowned slightly and decided to join the battle personally.

"Alice."

Alice understood immediately after fighting side by side for a long time. She nodded and took a few steps forward.

The familiar but no less wonderful singing voice gradually filled the air.

Upon hearing the singing, the mountain trolls, while powerful but only at the fourth tier, were instantly controlled. Over a hundred of them turned their weapons on their own kind.

The other mountain trolls were initially puzzled by the singing but suddenly saw their comrades waving weapons at them, catching them off guard.

Ah!

In an instant, dozens of trolls were killed, and the formation descended into chaos.

The other mountain trolls were bewildered, but they quickly realized the situation.

"They've gone mad! Kill them!"

As it turned out, mountain trolls were not only skilled in fighting enemies but also quite adept at killing their own kind when driven to madness.

Soon, these hundred or so "mutinous" mountain trolls were swiftly dealt with. Just as they breathed a sigh of relief, they saw their nearby comrades suddenly stiffen, slowly turn around, and raise their weapons.

Their faces wore an expression of utter blankness.

Ah! More screams rang out.

Not to mention going on an all-out attack; at this point, every mountain troll felt paranoid, looking at their fellow comrades with suspicion, afraid they might suddenly turn against them.

Death wasn't scary, but what was terrifying was being inexplicably killed by one's own kind.

Queto watched this scene, finding it hard to believe his eyes. What the hell had happened? Why were the trolls suddenly lifting their weapons against their own kind?

Next to him, the silver-masked deceiver was also stunned, quickly realizing that this was the effect of the singing, his face turned extremely dark.

It seemed that the female companion of that filthy god-follower had done this. He had not expected her to possess such an ability, which was beyond his expectations.

-Of course, it was so. From the moment Ji Chen set foot on the land, he had tried his best to conceal his and his subordinates' abilities. Except for the time at the dock when he had to deal with Yaseen's sudden attack, he had hardly demonstrated his true power.

However, even though outsiders might know that Ji Chen had formidable magical abilities, they remained clueless about the types and number of his skills, as well as how he executed them. The same applied to Alice and the others.

Most people probably thought of Alice as just a decorative figure, unaware of her formidable power.

Now, it was clear that they had concealed their abilities very well, achieving an unexpected and excellent effect.

As they watched the battlefield, where mountain trolls were constantly being controlled, switching sides or not attacking at all, it became increasingly awkward.

Some trolls even began to retreat, distancing themselves from their comrades.

Even the slow-witted Queto realized that something was wrong and angrily shouted, "Damn it! Why didn't you tell me that this Lord of Glory had such abilities!?"

"My subordinates can't afford to die in this worthless manner!"

At this rate, let alone dealing with this Lord of Glory, most of his subordinates would suffer heavy losses, and he would end up as a commander without an army.

The silver-masked deceiver, who concealed all emotions behind his mask, spoke in a calm and measured tone.

"No, they died quite valuably; their value lies in revealing that this kind of song can manipulate people.

Rest assured, the great deceiver has means to counter it."

With that, he retrieved a scroll from his loose robe. "This is a rare Mana Suppression Scroll. When used, it creates a large-area weak magic suppression field. Both spells and mental powers will be significantly suppressed within it.

During its duration, Your Excellency Queto, it would be best for you to join us and quickly kill this filthy god-follower and bury him in this swamp."

Hearing this, Queto's anger surged rapidly. Why the hell didn't they use this sooner? So many of his subordinates had died in vain.

In the end, he managed to suppress his anger temporarily and directed it towards the Lord of Glory.

Damn it! He must turn him into minced meat, or he wouldn't find solace for his anger.

Seeing this, the silver-masked deceiver smirked and nodded, saying to a fellow masked deceiver at his side, "Bring up the preparations we made in advance. That despicable god-follower will undoubtedly make a forced move later, and then seize the opportunity to kill him."

“Yes!”

After that, he slowly tore open the scroll.

The scroll suddenly erupted with a burst of golden light, shooting up into the sky.

When it reached the sky, it exploded like fireworks, and a strange energy poured down, forming an invisible magic array with a radius of one kilometer, enveloping the underground hall.

“Ding- You have been covered by the Weak Magic Array, your magical power is suppressed, and your magical strength is reduced by 80%, lasting for one hour.”

Upon hearing the system’s prompt, Ji Chen’s expression finally turned serious..

Chapter 352: The Wonders of the Tide Domain, Runic Arrows

Initially, in this swamp, his strength had already been reduced to less than half. But now, with the added weakening effect of this weak magic array, it was further diminished by 80%, leaving him with only about one-tenth of his original power.

The magical energy that used to surge within him in the past now appeared to be sluggish and feeble, no matter how hard he tried to harness it.

Similarly, Alice discovered that her singing was greatly suppressed. She could no longer easily control the mountain trolls. Her body felt as if it was weighed down by sacks of sand, making her mana murky and hard to move.

Affected by this, the mountain trolls quickly regained their senses and, under Queto’s command, charged again.

Simultaneously, hundreds of Deceivers with iron masks also joined the battle, pushing forward twenty peculiarly designed crossbow carts from the back.

These crossbow carts had a unique design; the head part was a box-shaped device divided into twenty compartments. Each compartment was loaded with dozens of arrows, and their triangular arrowheads refracted a chilling gleam under the sunlight.

With the sound of vibrating bowstrings, arrows were launched all at once, raining down on the Crown of the Ocean’s army like a shower.

Whoosh—

The piercing sound of metal arrowheads cutting through the air was all around.

The arrow rain covered the entire cave entrance. The mechanical force and kinetic energy of the arrows allowed many to pierce through the scales of the Naga Berserkers, deeply embedding into their flesh, hitting vital spots, making them look like porcupines.

Just from one volley, the defense line showed multiple breaches. Over fifty Naga Berserkers were injured, with nearly twenty dying on the spot.

Ji Chen’s expression turned grave.

These rain crossbow carts, which contained a significant amount of technology, were typically only armed by the armies of kingdoms and principalities. They are basically controlled items outside, and even the Lizardmen couldn't craft them.

Where did these so-called Deceivers get so many?

Seeing more and more of his troops getting injured or killed, Ji Chen could no longer hold back.

He ordered Benbo to lead the Dragon Blood Murlocs to attack these crossbow carts and destroy them.

Commanding the troops, Benbo slowly raised his head.

He raised his trident, tilting its tip towards the sky.

Behind him, hundreds of Dragon Blood Murlocs did the same.

With a low shout, the Murlocs took a few steps forward, and hundreds of tridents were thrown. Drawing sharp parabolas in the air, they were thrown accurately towards the rain crossbow carts.

The range of the tridents far exceeded anyone's expectations.

The steel trident tips struck directly on the box-type launch devices, and the heavy kinetic energy caused cracks, shattering them on the spot.

Twenty crossbow carts were immediately destroyed in this volley, and the remaining ones also suffered damage, reducing their effectiveness.

However, the targets of this volley weren't just the rain crossbow carts but also the Deceivers controlling them.

Under the attack, the metal-made crossbow carts were shattered, not to mention the flesh and blood Deceivers.

On the spot, over thirty iron-masked Deceivers were pinned to the ground, letting out a brief wail before succumbing.

Seeing this, the other Deceivers were startled. They hadn't expected the Murlocs' tridents to have such a range. They quickly retreated several tens of meters, only feeling safe once they were at a considerable distance.

In the rear, Queto observed this scene, mocking the silent Silver Masked Deceiver in his heart, feeling much relieved.

It would be unfair if only my side were to suffer casualties; it would be much fairer if everyone faced the same.

The battle between the two sides was extremely intense.

At this narrow entrance, countless bodies had been left behind, forming a small mountain of corpses.

The power gap between the Naga Berserkers and the Mountain Trolls wasn't too significant, but under the powerful long-range attacks of the Dragon Blood Murlocs, the Mountain Trolls suffered far more casualties than the Naga Berserkers.

Almost every time a Naga Berserker died, three Mountain Trolls would also fall.

The one-to-three casualty ratio made Queto furious once again.

This damn Lord of Glory, their resistance is so tough and resilient. Even with three times the number of trolls attacking, they still can't break through their defenses; instead, they've suffered so many losses.

Even the soldiers of the Maple Principality wouldn't be able to achieve this level of success.

As he watched, the weak magic barrier had already been active for half an hour, and if they were influenced by that song again, there was no way they could break through.

"The time has come."

At this moment, Queto suddenly heard the Silver Masked Deceiver say.

He couldn't help but be stunned, what time?

But he saw a faint red light appear in the cloudy eyes beneath the mask.

Meanwhile, in the expansive underground chamber, the ten nearly lifeless Marshland Dragons resting in the corner had their souls withered to the brink, and their life essence had utterly faded away.

Ji Chen, who noticed this, just glanced at them and didn't pay any more attention.

However, he didn't notice that these ten or so Marshland Dragons, like zombies, slowly stood up, and their white eyes displayed a strange red light, exactly the same as the Silver Masked Deceiver at this moment.

After standing up, they slowly moved their limbs, gradually picking up speed.

Their goal was very clear, heading towards the defenses of the Crown of the Ocean.

At this moment, Ji Chen also noticed the commotion from behind and turned to look.

His pupils suddenly contracted.

Resurrection?

Without much thought, he shouted loudly, "Stop these Marshland Dragons!"

Upon hearing this, hundreds of Naga Berserkers immediately turned around to block them with their bodies.

However, the Marshland Dragons, whose speed had already picked up, couldn't be easily stopped. Naga Berserkers were knocked aside, and the Dragon Blood Murlocs couldn't stop them either. They could only watch as the Marshland Dragons charged towards the entrance defenses..

Chapter 353: The Wonders of the Tide Domain, Runic

Arrows (2)

One after another, they broke through the entrance completely.

Queto watched as the defense line was breached from the inside, his expression filled with joy.

Without hesitation, he shouted for the mountain trolls to charge.

The defense line crumbled as countless trolls, armed with bone blades and tridents, forcefully entered, occupying the narrow entrance and trapping the Crown of the Ocean's forces inside.

The situation took a drastic turn.

They found themselves in a significant disadvantage.

Seeing the trolls about to seize the last inch of the entrance, Ji Chen felt a slight unease.

Once the trolls forced him into the underground hall, it would be nearly impossible to push them back out, resulting in even greater losses.

However, they still had half an hour left until the weakening spell formation ended, and it seemed impossible to hold out until then given the current situation.

Ji Chen narrowed his eyes and decided to try something that had crossed his mind.

He closed his eyes.

Communicating with the mana inside his body, due to the suppression of the spell formation, the mana that flowed through his limbs and bones resembled small trickles. No matter how he drove it, the damage caused by using spells at this intensity was minimal.

However, he didn't focus on the small trickles of mana. Instead, he directed his attention to the core.

The Tide Domain.

The domain manifested, and a ring of interlocking energy emerged around him. They repelled each other, but the Tide Domain clearly had the upper hand.

Perhaps it was more accurate to say that the Tide Domain operated on a higher level, capable of perfectly suppressing the weakening spell formation.

The Tide Domain didn't swiftly push the formation away, but it did so steadily and with remarkable stability. It efficiently moved the formation to a maximum distance of 200 meters, and his own presence stayed strong and unwavering.

As he unleashed the Tide Domain, he felt his body ease up. The mana within him flowed like a mighty river and even created a swirling vortex of magic energy around him.

Having accomplished all this, Ji Chen slowly opened his eyes and felt the restored power.

A faint smile curved his lips.

Indeed, the Tide Domain could resist the weakening spell formation, just like it could counter negative force fields.

Domain skills were superior to both.

Their essence was almost the same, with the only difference being that the former was long-lasting while the latter was short-term.

Observing the intense battle before him, Ji Chen raised his right hand and lifted his fingers.

As he made these gestures, the muddy water gathered from above condensed into thin water blades as delicate as cicada wings.

With a thought.

Whoosh!

The water blades, like arrows drawn taut on a bowstring, shot out with unstoppable sharpness, piercing through the bodies of the trolls.

The trolls charging in fell like harvested wheat.

Feeling the majesty of their lord, the morale of the Crown of the Ocean's forces soared. They pressed on, not only completely driving the trolls out of the entrance but also launching a counterattack, pushing them back.

The battlefield situation once again took a dramatic turn.

The battle shifted from the entrance to the open ground in front. With the edge of Ji Chen's magic, the smaller Crown of the Ocean force pursued and slaughtered the much larger troll army.

Queto hadn't had much time to celebrate when he saw the trolls who had just entered falling one after another in front of the water blades, some even pushed back.

Looking at Ji Chen's formidable display of power, Queto's face turned ironclad, and he angrily turned his head once more.

"You said you had used a Scroll of Weak Magic, didn't you? Then why can he still cast such a powerful spell?"

The silver-masked Deceiver was also quite shocked.

This divine heir actually possessed a domain skill. This was a power that only a very small number of strong individuals could have, and not even all epic-tier individuals necessarily possessed it.

It was a power comprehensible only to a very few geniuses.

Under the mask of the silver Deceiver, his face twisted with jealousy, hatred, and disgust.

These emotions converged into a strong desire to kill Ji Chen.

This mixed-blood divine heir had to be eliminated!

"Bring up that Godslaying Crossbow."

Hearing this, the iron-masked Deceiver hesitated for a moment. "But the Godslaying Crossbow is prepared for the future mission..."

The silver-masked Deceiver, on the other hand, remained calm at this moment and said slowly, "This divine heir's threat has increased significantly, and possessing a domain skill means that he will only become more powerful in the future.

We planned to let him enter the encirclement this time. If we don't take this opportunity to kill him today, it will be ten times harder to find an opportunity to kill him in the future."

"Shouldn't we report this to our superiors first? After all, the Godslaying Crossbow is extremely rare..."

“Hmph, by the time the report reaches them and we wait for orders, this divine heir might have broken through the encirclement and returned to the control zone of the Maple Principality.

Thus it is decided, and I alone will bear the consequences!” declared the silver-masked Deceiver, defying all objections, and immediately ordered the attack.

Ji Chen followed behind the Crown of the Ocean’s forces, unleashing full firepower, constantly condensing water blades, and causing widespread casualties.

The once formidable army of several thousand mountain trolls had now become sparse, with at least two thousand dead or injured. Those remaining were demoralized, lacking the fighting spirit they had before.

If it weren’t for the troll leader watching from behind, they would have likely already been defeated.

Seeing this, Ji Chen decided to add fuel to the fire.

“Alice!”

Siren Alice, who had been following closely at his side and was within the Tide Domain’s range, had already fully recovered her strength.

She began to sing again, a beautiful but bloodthirsty melody.

The mountain trolls had no resistance to this music, and a batch of them immediately switched sides, making the already retreating trolls even more chaotic.

Meanwhile, when Ji Chen’s troops heard the song, they became invigorated and enthusiastic, filled with a desire to defeat their foes decisively, as if they could take down two enemies with a single blow.

It seemed that the situation was already set.

Ji Chen looked at the masked Deceivers, turned his head left and right, and finally locked eyes on the Deceiver with the silver mask.

You’re the little bastard who blocked me here with the trolls, aren’t you?

Watch me knock your head crooked and smash your mask.

He was about to condense a few water blades and charge straight at him.

But at this moment, the Deceiver with the silver mask suddenly pushed out a strange-looking contraption from his side. From the middle of it extended a runic arrow as thick as a baby’s arm, indicating it was some kind of war machinery.

When Ji Chen’s gaze shifted to the crossbow bolt that was slowly aiming at him, he suddenly felt an extreme chill emanating from the depths of his soul, as if he were being targeted by something terrifying, causing even his breath to stagnate.

There was only one thought in his mind.

Dodge, or else he would die!

In the blink of an eye.

This runic arrow had already aligned itself with him. The runes and patterns on the jet-black bolt body suddenly lit up, flickering with a bloody hue, and a scent of blood filled the air.

The black-red patterns appeared particularly eerie.

In the next moment, the runic arrow was released with a sudden snap of the drawn bowstring. Wherever it passed, space trembled, leaving behind shattered black lines.

This arrow could tear through space!

In a daze, it felt like several red threads were connecting the arrow to him, giving him the feeling that it would hit him no matter what.

Seeing this scene, Ji Chen gave up on the idea of evading by moving his body.

This kind of ability, capable of tearing through space and even binding the attacks of the target, was simply something his physique, fundamentally that of a mage, couldn't dodge.

It was just half a breath.

In that brief moment, the runic arrow covered more than a hundred meters, hurtling toward him with a wake of shattered black threads.

Four or five Naga Berserkers tried to block it when they saw this scene, but they were pierced through like paper, leaving behind terrifying blood holes.

Even their attempts to stop it couldn't slow down the runic arrow's speed by the slightest bit.

Alice and Benbo, who were fighting desperately, saw this scene and their pupils widened in shock. They shouted desperately, "Lord, be careful!!!"

Watching the arrow flying straight towards him, with a distance of less than twenty or thirty meters now, Ji Chen smiled faintly.

In the next moment, he disappeared from sight.

Losing its target, the runic arrow shook for a moment and then flew straight through, shattering a mountain behind..

Chapter 354: Teleportation, Godslayer Crossbow, Traitor

In the blink of an eye, he felt a sensation in his feet.

Ji Chen looked around, finding himself amidst a lush forest, and there were no trolls or other creatures in sight.

He waited quietly and noticed that the runic arrow hadn't followed him. He let out a sigh of relief.

He glanced at the void ring on his finger,

Moments ago, realizing the runic arrow had locked onto him and was hard to evade conventionally, he decisively activated the void ring's ability.

[?Teleportation (Immediately teleport to any location within ten kilometers, cooldown time: 30 minutes)]

For safety, he teleported to a spot ten kilometers away, evading the attack.

Now, it appeared that the tracking range of that runic arrow was smaller than the teleportation range of the void ring.

Recalling the terrifying moments just now, Ji Chen still felt a lingering fear.

Who were these masked deceivers?

They not only possessed a significant arsenal of war weaponry under control but also had such terrifying runic arrows.

However, it seemed that there was only one runic arrow like that; otherwise, they wouldn't have waited until the end to use it.

But he needed to be more cautious with these people; otherwise, being shot unexpectedly would lead to a disaster.

He temporarily suppressed these thoughts.

Right now, Alice and Benbo should still be fighting the trolls, and he needed to return quickly to oversee the situation.

Ji Chen glanced at his surroundings and walked swiftly in the direction of the swamp.

He moved swiftly through the forest.

Soon, he returned to the swamp.

The battle here seemed to be nearing its end.

The Crown of the Ocean's army was chasing down the remaining mountain trolls.

What surprised him was that among the pursuing group, there were hundreds of elves.

These fully armed elves moved with great agility, exuding an imposing aura.

Even in the muddy swamp, they moved as if on solid ground, using their bows and arrows to take down enemies, targeting vital areas.

Most of the fleeing trolls were felled by them.

Among them, the burly male elves with broadswords were particularly conspicuous. They wielded their massive swords like windmills, making the towering trolls cry out in despair.

Upon closer inspection, wasn't that lead elf Kris?

At the same time, Alice and the others quickly spotted Ji Chen's figure. Joy lit up their faces as they hurried over, and Benbo and the other heroes did the same.

Alice walked up, looked around, and asked with concern, "Lord, are you okay?"

Ji Chen waved his hand with a smile, "What's the situation now? Where did those masked individuals go?"

“After you disappeared, Lady Kris and the others arrived just in time to provide support. Those masked enemies promptly left with their companions’ bodies.

The troll leader did the same, abandoning his subordinates and fleeing with a few personal guards.

Due to other trolls blocking us, we couldn’t keep them here. I hope you won’t punish us for this.”

“It’s not your fault.” Ji Chen shook his head. “If we had pursued recklessly, we might have fallen into their trap again. What you did was already commendable.”

He was now quite wary of this group of mysterious individuals.

Revenge is a dish best served cold.

Rushing into battle without understanding the enemy would be foolish.

Moreover, the Crown of the Ocean’s forces had suffered significant casualties, making pursuit difficult.

At this moment, it seemed that the elves had cleared the remaining mountain trolls and, led by Kris, approached.

Seeing that Ji Chen was safe, Kris showed a relieved smile.

“Lord Ji Chen, it’s a relief that you’re unharmed.

I almost thought you were taken out by their Godslayer Crossbow, and we elves would lose a potential partner.”

Ji Chen smiled confidently and then asked with some curiosity, “How did you end up here?”

“Just three days ago, our hidden scouts noticed that the mountain trolls, who had been silent for a long time, suddenly became active, moving in groups towards this area.

Considering that you had entered this region not long ago, I guessed that your presence might be the reason for the mountain trolls’ resurgence. So I consulted Lord Brett and brought soldiers here to assist you.”

Kris looked at the battlefield strewn with corpses and sighed, “Although I feel that even if we hadn’t come, you would have dealt with these deceivers.”

“Do you know who those masked individuals, the deceivers, are?”

“Of course.” Kris nodded, “They are a group of fanatics who hate all divine races and those with divine blood.”

“Hate all divine races and those with divine blood?”

There were such extremist elements?

This world had seen many gods walking among mortals, such as the Naga God, Dwarven God, God of Wealth, and Gnome God. The races they once ruled were also known as divine races.

It can be said that various races in the world have some connection to divine beings to varying degrees.

Take the elves themselves, for instance; they worship the Elven Mother Goddess. Doesn't that mean they have an affinity with most races, including elves?

Who are these Deceivers, and why are they so audacious?

"That's right," Kris said with some apprehension. "But this isn't the place to discuss these matters. Let's save it for when we return to Maple City.."

Chapter 355: Teleportation, Godslayer Crossbow, Traitor(2)

Ji Chen nodded slightly.

Leaving Kris to wait for a moment, he went to a pile of broken stones and called over more than ten Naga Berserkers to dig inside.

Soon, they excavated a completely black metal crossbow bolt engraved with mysterious runes.

This was the runic arrow that the Silver Masked Deceiver had used to shoot him back then. At this moment, it seemed to have exhausted all its power, with the runes and patterns now dim and faded. Nevertheless, it still couldn't conceal its sharp edge.

[Godslayer Bolt]

[Tier]: 5 stars

[Effects]:

- 1. Capable of locking onto and tracking enemies (within effective range until energy is depleted).
- 2. Increases armor penetration by 50%.
- 3. After hitting the target, reduces recovery ability by 80% and inflicts a powerful curse, weakening and damaging the soul (lasts for 6 hours).

[A runic crossbow bolt crafted through intricate processes, possessing formidable lethality, but now out of energy]

[Full power can be unleashed when used with the Godslayer Crossbow Bed]

Well, even a single crossbow bolt is a five-star treasure, and it seems to be a disposable item.

He also found the firing device that the Deceiver hadn't had time to retrieve, which was also a five-star treasure, just like the crossbow bolt.

[Godslayer Crossbow Apparatus]

[Tier]: 5 stars

[Range]: 30 to 800 meters (additional 800 meters when equipped with the Godslayer Crossbow)

Combining these two five-star treasures created such terrifying killing power.

Apart from these two items, the Deceiver, who knew there was no hope of victory, also left behind the Rainstorm Crossbow Carriages that had caused them a lot of trouble.

Twenty Rainstorm Crossbow Carriages, fifteen of them were completely destroyed, leaving only five that were barely intact, with some damage preventing them from firing.

These were also a fortune. If their structure and manufacturing process could be cracked, the Crown of the Ocean would have another powerful city defense weapon.

The Godslayer Crossbow Apparatus and the Godslayer Bolt followed the same logic.

One day, if he could mass-produce both of them, Ji Chen vowed to have the Naga Berserkers carry one and catch those stupid Deceivers to shoot them down.

Although he appeared calm and composed, he had already quietly written them into his mental “to-do” list.

Kris also noticed Ji Chen’s actions of collecting the Godslayer Crossbow Apparatus and the Rainstorm Crossbow Carriages, but she remained indifferent. This battle was dominated by Ji Chen and the Crown of the Ocean, and when they arrived here, the battle was already in its final stages. They were just here to wrap things up.

Following that, Ji Chen had the army divide the bodies of the dozen or so Marshland Dragons that had died, resurrected, and then suddenly died again after breaking through the defense line.

It had been some time since they died, so they only collected about a thousand dragon blood crystals from these dozen or so Marshland Dragons. Added to the previous collection, they had a total of around 2500 crystals, barely meeting the earlier set goal.

Ji Chen cleaned up the spoils of war and began to assess the losses suffered by his army.

This time, he had brought a total of over 1600 units of troops, with Naga Berserkers and Dragon Blood Murlocs each accounting for half of that number.

Under the attacks of the Mountain Troll and the Deceivers, the Naga Berserkers were essentially wiped out, with only a little over a hundred units left.

The Dragon Blood Murlocs fared slightly better but still suffered a loss of more than half, with nearly 500 units perishing.

Learning about this, Ji Chen couldn’t help but feel astonished. If it weren’t for the ability to resurrect fallen troops using the Resurrection Altar, these losses would have been enough to trouble him for a while.

After clearing the battlefield, Ji Chen led his troops, along with Kris and her group, back to Maple Harbor.

The journey was relatively calm.

Last time, the Mountain Trolls had hidden because they wanted him to relax his guard and fall into their trap.

But this time, it was genuinely peaceful.

In that recent battle, thousands of Mountain Trolls in this area were killed or injured, with only the Troll chieftain escaping with a few lackeys. It could almost be said that their entire army had been wiped out.

So, there was no real threat along the way.

Moreover, there was a whole squad of elves skilled in jungle warfare guarding them, which reduced their concerns, and they could travel faster.

Three days later, after either sleeping or rushing on the road day and night, Ji Chen and his group arrived outside Maple Harbor, near the ocean. Ji Chen, who had been pushing himself to the limit, felt his strength returning and breathed a sigh of relief.

If the Mountain Trolls and Deceivers from before had appeared here, he could handle them on his own.

Sighing inwardly, he realized that the ocean was truly his home turf!

Gradually calming his emotions, Ji Chen narrowed his eyes.

Now, it was time to do something.

He turned to Kris and asked, "Kris, in what way and on what grounds can we capture Lord of Glory players in Maple City?"

Kris had gathered some information during their journey and had a rough idea of what had led to Ji Chen being successfully besieged by Mountain Trolls and Deceivers. Seeing his stern and resolute expression, she guessed what he had in mind.

With that in mind, she replied, "We have close ties with the elves and the Maple Principality. We can ask them to send soldiers to assist with the capture.

This matter, we can assist you with."

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen nodded slightly.

If the Maple Principality personally handled the capture, it would save him a lot of trouble.

His expression softened a bit.

"Thank you."

Kris smiled and shook her head. "Compared to the help you've given me before, this is just a small matter."

After asking for their names, Kris hurriedly left with the squad of elves.

Ji Chen returned to the estate in Maple Harbor, waiting in silence.

On that afternoon, three players were escorted to the manor by a fully armed squad of soldiers.

To their surprise, it was Monkey Gift, Monkey Gift Hair, and Luo Yang.

All three of them were bound tightly, but their expressions varied.

The first two wore perplexed expressions, while the latter had a pallid face.

As soon as they were brought in, Monkey Gift Hair saw Ji Chen, who was playing the role of Mr. Zhao, and his face was filled with bewilderment. He had no idea when he had offended this extravagant spendthrift.

They had always diligently completed tasks and commissions. Their greatest indulgence was splurging in the Sixth District, and the most notorious act they had committed was stealing a few cows from someone else's territory.

Such crimes were far from warranting the capture of an entire squad of Maple Principality soldiers.

Soon, Monkey Gift Hair began to suspect that it might have something to do with the incident at the Cat Tail Tavern a few days ago.

He cried and explained, "Mr. Zhao, we absolutely haven't done anything to wrong you! There must be some misunderstanding!"

Monkey Gift Hair, with a terrified expression, added, feeling the intense murderous intent emanating from the powerful individuals on both sides, "That's right, even if you want to eliminate us, at least let us die with a clear conscience!"

Ji Chen sneered. "Are you sure you haven't done anything to wrong me? If it weren't for you guys, I might have lost my life out there."

"Did you leak the information you sold me to others?"

The two Monkey Gift brothers were stunned, and they hurriedly replied, "Absolutely not! Even though we may lack strength and have rather unattractive appearances, our integrity is beyond reproach. The information we sold won't be sold to anyone else."

"When you're in this line of work, trust is crucial, and we won't tarnish our reputation!"

Watching them tearfully explain, it didn't seem like they were lying. Ji Chen hesitated. Could it really not be these two clowns?

At this moment, Monkey Gift suddenly thought of something and nodded towards Luo Yang, who was standing nearby. "Uncle Luo also knows that we value our integrity and wouldn't do anything so outrageous. Uncle Luo, please vouch for us!"

Luo Yang kept his head low and remained silent.

After a long while, his hoarse voice slowly rang out, "Since you were able to come back alive, you should know about their existence. So, I won't hide it anymore.

The information and messages were given by me. It's all my responsibility, and these two kids don't know anything about it. Don't make it hard on them."

As this statement came out, both Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair were dumbfounded, saying in a dry manner, "Uncle Luo... Are you joking?"

Ji Chen looked at Luo Yang, who had a desolate expression, and narrowed his eyes.

It seems that there is a connection with Luo Yang..

Chapter 356: Memories of Luo Yang, Monkey Gifts, Master-Servant Covenant

For Luo Yang to admit so readily, Ji Chen was somewhat surprised. Fie had thought there would be some resistance first.

But this also saved him some effort.

“What is your relationship with those deceivers? Are you of the same kind, or is it a matter of mutual interest?”

“Neither.” Luo Yang shook his head. “I was just being controlled by them.”

“Do you still remember when I mentioned before that after losing my territory, I came to Maple City and earned a considerable amount of gold by doing business, eventually buying the Cat Tail Tavern?”

Ji Chen nodded slightly.

Luo Yang had brought up these points previously. Ji Chen thought it was quite impressive how a player without wealth or influence managed to establish himself in Maple City within just a few months.

But now, upon reconsideration, it seemed a bit too smooth.

Even though the Cat Tail Tavern was located in a relatively remote area, it was still within the capital of a nation, not to mention being in the prosperous commercial hub of Maple City.

Such a large tavern, with just the land alone worth millions of gold coins. Plus, players were naturally not well-received by the indigenous population, so how could it have been so easy to reach this point?

Now, it appeared that there were many loopholes in this story.

All of this, most likely, had a lot to do with the deceivers.

Sure enough, Luo Yang continued, “Shortly after arriving in the city, I found myself in a tough spot because I lacked combat skills or any special talents for exploration. Even other players who depended on local quests for their livelihood were struggling to make ends meet. I had no choice but to take on odd jobs in the streets just to get by.

I once thought about using my business talents from Earth to do business here, but the difficulty far exceeded my imagination. Besides the issue of capital, the indigenous people also despised me. There were many tangible and intangible commercial barriers, and there was hardly any room for development.

If it weren’t for other players helping me, I might have starved to death on the streets!” Luo Yang’s face showed a mixture of anger and resentment. “All of this was bestowed upon me by those deities. If it weren’t for them trapping me in this broken game world, I would still be the CEO of a multi-billion-dollar conglomerate on Earth!

I would be living a wonderful life, with a happy and fulfilling family, nothing like what I am now! Treated like a dog by the indigenous people!

Only those damned gods would play such a malicious prank! I hate them!”

Luo Yang's current appearance is completely that of a psychologically twisted person. Previously, he was a billionaire CEO, living a prosperous and happy life, but after entering this world, he became ordinary, marginalized, and almost starved on the streets.

The immense difference, like a waterfall plunging ten thousand meters, would be too much for anyone to bear.

And about the reason for their entry into this world, Ji Chen had thought about it before and wondered if it was the mischief of those gods who had disappeared for countless years.

But in the end, he dismissed these meaningless thoughts because daydreaming wouldn't help.

Since he's here, just make the best of it.

To find the reason, one must first become powerful enough to qualify to uncover the truth. Without sufficient strength, even if the truth is behind the door, you won't be able to push it open to explore.

Strength is the foundation for everything.

Next, Ji Chen also guessed what happened to Luo Yang afterward.

Luo Yang lowered his eyelids.

"It was at this time that they found me, told me about their ideology, and invited me to join them. At that time, because of my hatred for the gods, I didn't think too much and agreed.

The following events, you probably have already guessed. With their support, I was able to quickly establish myself in Maple City and become what I am now.

But as a price, I need to provide them with any help using everything I have now.

That night after you left, they came to me shortly after to ask for information about you. I just relayed what those two guys had said, and I know nothing else."

Ji Chen fell into silence for a moment.

How should he put it? This all made sense.

However, what caught him off guard was that the player who had always seen himself as the "Fourth Cataclysm" had, in an unexpected turn of events, forged an alliance with the indigenous forces.

(T/N: The Fourth Cataclysm is a playful term in the Chinese gaming community that refers to players having the ability to control and manipulate a game world, often summoning other in-game characters or players to assist them in various tasks or battles.)

This was different from what he had imagined.

In Luo Yang's experience, it did open up another side of player life.

But he also noticed that when Luo Yang spoke, he consistently used "they" to refer to the Deceivers and there was a sense of unfamiliarity between the lines.

In theory, if he had really joined them, he shouldn't be so unfamiliar.

Ji Chen thought of something but didn't directly point it out; instead, he made an indirect comment with a touch of disdain and mockery.

"It seems that you haven't been valued by the Deceivers either. You've been back for so long, and they know you're most likely exposed, yet they haven't come to pick you up. It looks like they've already abandoned you."

Luo Yang's eyebrows furrowed, and he looked slightly disheartened but remained clear-headed.

"I know they're just using me, just like a business relationship. The only thing that maintains our connection is mutual benefit. They need me to act as a player, and I need their support to live a better life.

I'm fundamentally still a player, and for that reason alone, it's difficult for them to truly accept me. I'm very clear about this.

Moreover, they are a group of people with somewhat abnormal minds. While I do hate the gods, I'm not like them, trying to destroy all god-descended races and even attempting deicide...."

Chapter 357: Memories of Luo Yang, Monkey Gifts, Master-Servant Covenant (2)

"They may not be cultists, but their actions and behavior are even more radical and fanatical than cultists!"

At that moment, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair appeared to have a realization, but their expressions remained puzzled. They asked, "What are you talking about? What deceiver, gods, manipulation? Why do we have trouble understanding some of it?"

"And there's talk of god-killing or something, which makes me a little scared..."

Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair were really confused. Wasn't it just said that Uncle Luo only revealed the information?

How did it suddenly turn to gods? And what is this deceiver thing?

They had a thousand questions in their minds.

Ji Chen glanced at the two Monkey Gifts. It seemed that they really didn't know about these things. They were just diligent in making money through commissions and selling information, and they liked to hang out in the Sixth Street.

He wasn't particularly interested in bothering them.

He waved to let the Naga Berserker untie the two of them.

"This matter has nothing to do with you anymore. You can go now."

The two of them were even more confused. Although they hadn't completely figured out what had happened, seeing Luo Yang, who was still tied up, they looked at each other and begged for mercy.

"Mr. Zhao, there must be some misunderstanding between you and Uncle Luo. Please spare him!"

“Yes, if there’s anything Uncle Luo needs to compensate, we’re willing to compensate together!”

Seeing their appearance, Ji Chen’s impression of them improved slightly. He didn’t expect these two monkeys to have some backbone.

“Willing to compensate together?”

“Yes, anything.”

“Then you can both compensate with your lives.”

Upon hearing this, the two of them were stunned, their legs went weak, and they fell to the ground, crying out, “Isn’t that too much...”

Luo Yang also couldn’t help it and said, “You two stupid kids, go away, don’t worry about me.”

“No, Uncle Luo, if it weren’t for you taking us in when we arrived in this world, we would have starved to death on the streets. Now that you’re in trouble, how can we stand by and do nothing?” Although Monkey Gift was scared, he gritted his teeth and said, with tears shimmering in his eyes.

“Yes, since we came to this world, only you have been so good to us, like a father, how can we bear to leave you!” Monkey Gift Hair wiped away the tears, whether it was fear or reluctance, and said.

Luo Yang, who had always been calm, also felt a little moist in the corners of his eyes when he heard this.

He couldn’t help but sigh that these two silly kids were really good to him.

But then, he heard Monkey Gift say, “Uncle Luo, what the hell is this deceiver thing? It feels like some kind of pyramid scheme or cult. How can you have such poor judgment to join this kind of ghost organization?”

Luo Yang was speechless.

Okay, it turns out you guys didn’t understand anything just now.

Luo Yang wanted to say something, but Ji Chen, with an impatient expression, interrupted.

“That’s enough, now I’ll give you two choices.

First, Luo Yang has to pay the price. For the crime of leaking information, he will be sent to be executed by the Maple Principality for collaborating with the deceiver and passing information to the trolls.

And as for Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair, if you are willing to share the responsibility, you will forever be expelled from Maple City and Maple Harbor.” “We choose the second option!”

Upon hearing Ji Chen’s words, the two Monkey Gifts immediately raised their hands and said.

They didn’t want Luo Yang to die, nor did they want to be expelled. Aside from the wild monsters in the wilderness, being exiled to the wilderness meant cutting off all tasks and commission sources

in the city, which was a nightmare for them. More importantly, they would be unable to find their big sisters in the Sixth District.

Thinking of this, their resistance grew stronger, and they resolutely chose the second option.

Ji Chen looked at them, glanced at the silent Luo Yang, and then continued, "The second option is for Luo Yang to sign a master-servant contract with me, to be under my command, while the two of you act as if nothing happened."

The two Monkey Gifts looked at each other, their faces showing some hesitation.

The master-servant contract was a special contract in this world.

It was rumored that the God of Contracts used a strand of world rules to establish the contract laws, and the master-servant contract was one of them. Judging by its name, it was clear that this was an extremely unequal contract, where the life of the servant would be controlled by the master.

Both parties who formed the contract would fulfill the terms of the contract in the presence of world rules and gods, or else they would face a terrible consequence – rejection by the world rules and exile to the void.

But what surprised Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair was that due to the involvement of world rules, this contract was on a whole different level. It could only be initiated by individuals with legendary professions or higher.

With this revelation, wasn't Mr. Zhao, who appeared to be a profligate, actually a legendary expert or possibly even more powerful?

Looks could be deceiving!

Even Luo Yang was stunned.

Zhao Liangchen, played by Ji Chen, had an expressionless face. Suddenly, a terrifying aura swept over them, pressing down on them.

In a trance, it seemed as if a cataclysmic wave comparable to a natural disaster was rushing towards them.

Although Ji Chen withdrew his aura in three seconds, the terrifying breath still made them tremble, their gazes filled with horror.

For quite some time, they couldn't speak.

"I'll ask one last time, which one do you choose?"

Ji Chen's indifferent words woke them up.

Luo Yang's face kept changing as he struggled within. He looked at Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair, and finally gritted his teeth, saying, "I choose the second option!"

Ji Chen nodded slowly.

He was well aware.

Killing Luo Yang didn't bring him any benefits.

Luo Yang was just one of the pawns scattered by the Deceiver, and there were countless pawns like him.

Since the Deceiver could use him as a pawn, why couldn't he?

Coincidentally, Luo Yang was an excellent opportunity for him to infiltrate the player community in Maple City.

As the largest gathering place for players in Maple City, the Cat Tail Tavern, where players' intelligence was gathered, held an important position.

With Luo Yang, he would find it easier to monitor the actions of the players and manipulate them into doing other things.

He could even use Luo Yang to gather all the players in Maple City and build a player organization similar to the Player Alliance on King Kong Island. Behind the scenes, he would be the biggest beneficiary.

Pros without cons.

As his thoughts raced, Ji Chen stood up and, in front of everyone's eyes, extended his right index finger to sketch in the air.

As he moved his index finger, a thick surge of mana poured out, and golden characters appeared in the air, exuding a mysterious and profound aura that left Luo Yang and the others wide-eyed.

Their eyes were filled with astonishment.

Was this the kind of contract that only legendary and higher-level experts could construct?

Several minutes later, dozens of characters floated in the air. When the last character was completed, a force that seemed to come from the void descended from the sky and merged into the characters.

"Ding- The world rules have recognized the master-servant contract you have established."

Ji Chen slowly lowered his hand and looked at Luo Yang.

The latter snapped back to reality, and after being untied, he gritted his teeth and also extended his finger to write his name on it.

The signature was completed.

The characters suspended in the air suddenly emitted a dazzling golden light and slowly dissipated.

But Ji Chen could feel that there seemed to be a new connection between him and Luo Yang, a feeling that he could control his life and death, and dominate him. As long as he wished, he could make him wish he were dead.

Luo Yang also felt this strange sensation. He had just signed the master-servant contract and had become a servant-like existence. At first, he felt a bit disheartened and defeated, but he quickly adjusted his mindset.

If he could stay alive, then living in this way was not unacceptable.

He looked up at Ji Chen, who had a carefree appearance in his memory but now exuded an aura of authority.

He recalled the series of resolute words and actions Ji Chen had just taken, and he couldn't help but feel a sense of strangeness.

Was this really the profligate he had seen before?

While he had suspected certain things, he couldn't help but be amazed by the striking difference..

Chapter 358: Industry Situation, Monkey Gifts' Choice, and Information

At that time, Luo Yang was only asked by the Deceiver to provide information about Ji Chen. In his eyes, it was merely providing information about Zhao Liangchen, with no knowledge of the fact that Zhao Liangchen was, in fact, Ji Chen.

So, the shock at the significant difference in Ji Chen before and after was understandable.

As they watched Ji Chen and Luo Yang sign the master-servant contract right before their eyes, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair felt a complex mix of emotions.

How should I put it?

As fellow players, how did Zhao Liangchen manage to accumulate both immense wealth and legendary power in just a few short months?

If there was only envy and a bit of jealousy before, now it was becoming a sense of unease.

But looking at Zhao Liangchen, who sat there exuding an imposing aura like a mountain, no matter how uneasy they felt, they could only endure it.

Ji Chen looked at Luo Yang, who had already signed the contract, with a stern expression.

“Address me as Mr. Zhao in public, and do not reveal what happened today.

In addition, all your businesses in Maple City and Maple Harbor will be transferred into my name, but you will still manage them. However, when necessary, you will need to do things for me.

Do you understand?”

Luo Yang's face showed some bitterness, but he nodded quickly.

He had no bargaining power at all.

“By the way, how many properties do you have under your control, and do they have any connections with the Deceiver?”

After organizing his thoughts, Luo Yang explained in detail, “Aside from the Cat Tail Tavern, there are four other shops in Black Gold District, covering various industries.

Outside of the Black Gold District, there's also a sizable three-story shop in a prime location in the bustling area south of the city, currently temporarily unused.

In Maple Harbor, not long ago, I obtained a two-year lease for an independent dock with three berths, and there's no berthing fee.

As for my connections with the Deceiver, since the Maple Principality has been closely monitoring them, for the safety and secrecy of these properties, they've transferred them to my name through various covert means. It can be said that, legally and on the surface, they all belong to us."

Listening to these words, Ji Chen's eyes sparkled increasingly.

He hadn't expected that Luo Yang still had so many properties under his control. Not to mention the few in the Black Gold District, just the shop in the bustling area south of the city was worth a fortune, the kind of wealth that couldn't be acquired even with money.

It seemed that Luo Yang also had quite exceptional business acumen. Otherwise, despite the Deceiver's wealth, they wouldn't have entrusted such properties to a player who had only joined a few months ago.

In this way, Luo Yang seemed to benefit from the circumstances without putting in much effort, catching several valuable targets.

After thinking for a moment, Ji Chen added, "In that case, there's no need to transfer these properties under your name. Let's not attract attention from outsiders."

"Bear in mind that I am the wealthy Mr. Zhao in public, and you are still the owner of the Cat Tail Tavern. Our relationship is that of business partners."

Luo Yang, being a former CEO, quickly grasped the intention behind this.

This was a strategy to avoid personal exposure, to manipulate things from behind the scenes, and to act under two or even multiple identities.

It was a trick commonly used by the magnates on earth, and he was very familiar with it.

He promptly responded, "As you wish."

Watching Ji Chen and Luo Yang discussing various matters on the side, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair were initially curious and eavesdropping with their ears perked up. However, as they continued to listen, they began to feel something was amiss.

Their faces gradually revealed unease and discomfort.

Wait a minute, you're discussing such secretive matters as if you're plotting some conspiracy, and we, unrelated bystanders, are present.

Can't you wait until we leave?

Gradually, their unease turned into fear, and their legs felt like they were about to give way.

This open and legitimate appearance of conspiring, does it mean they're going to silence us afterward?

Thinking back to what happened earlier...

Sure enough, Ji Chen soon shifted his gaze onto them.

A glint of coldness flashed in his eyes.

The two Monkey Gifts exchanged glances and immediately knelt down, shouting loudly, "Mr. Zhao, we want to work for you! Please accept us!!!"

Ji Chen's eye twitched slightly.

Alright, he must have misunderstood them earlier. Monkeys would always end up acting like one.

But, they were showing some decency now.

After a moment of thought, he said slowly, "From now on, you'll work with Luo Yang. Don't disappoint me."

"Today, what you've seen and heard, I shouldn't need to say much about what you should do. Remember to keep your mouths shut, or there won't be a place for you here."

"Understood, we understand!"

They quickly responded.

Ji Chen nodded and waved his hand to dismiss them.

After being escorted to the gate by several burly and fierce Naga Berserkers, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair stood in the wind feeling somewhat disoriented.

Suddenly, Monkey Gift Hair said somewhat dejectedly, "Big brother, have we become someone else's lackeys? This seems quite different from the ambitious goals we set before."

Monkey Gift wore a frustrated expression. "Does being a lackey mean we can't achieve great things? I may not like the idea of being a lackey, but it also depends on whose lackey you're becoming."

Didn't you see how Mr. Zhao could send soldiers from the Maple Principality to capture us and Uncle Luo? With this much wealth, power, and influence, how many people would kill for the chance to be under his protection?"

Chapter 359: Industry Situation, Monkey Gifts' Choice, and Information

Having heard that, Monkey Gift Hair also thought so. With the generous help of Mr. Zhao, they would surely make more money than those heartless natives' commissions.

With this thought, he felt his future life was filled with brightness and instantly became cheerful.

Monkey Gift emphasized, "Since we've agreed to Mr. Zhao, we must watch our mouths and not reveal anything we saw today. Let's work well for Mr. Zhao. Sooner or later, we'll be in a position to give those who look down on us a good slap!"

"I understand. Let them know what it means not to underestimate the young and the poor!!"

The two walked away with their arms around each other.

In a hidden corner, Alice slowly withdrew her gaze and returned to the mansion.

Inside the mansion, Ji Chen looked at Luo Yang and asked, "Is there still a Deceiver lurking in Maple City?"

“Yes, whenever they require my assistance, there’s always a representative who contacts me,” Luo Yang explained. “However, whenever they approach me, they take great precautions, wearing masks that completely conceal their identity. It’s impossible to determine their gender or even if they’re human.

However, although I’ve done things for them before, I’ve also kept an eye on them secretly.

Their meeting place seems to be in Maple City...”

Ji Chen’s eyes narrowed. “Do you know this location?”

Luo Yang nodded. “I know the approximate location, but not specifically. I dare not get too involved, afraid they’ll notice if I send someone to track them.”

He didn’t beat around the bush and said directly, “Draw it.”

Upon hearing this, Luo Yang didn’t hold back either. He took the map of Maple City and a pen, drawing a circle on it.

Upon closer examination, it was somewhat surprising.

Goodness, it’s actually near the center of the prosperous area in the city. There’s frequent patrol activity and a large number of guards and soldiers stationed there. In terms of security, it’s definitely one of the safest places in Maple City.

Is this what they mean by hiding in plain sight?

Time was of the essence, so they had someone invite Kris.

Ji Chen’s mansion was not far from the elf fleet’s base, and the straight-line distance was only a few hundred meters. Kris coming here could be considered a casual visit.

Soon, the heroic figure of Kris appeared at the door. “Lord Ji Chen, is there something you need me for?”

“I have a map here that’s suspected to be the gathering place of the Deceivers in Maple City.”

Upon hearing this, Kris’s face showed a hint of surprise and seriousness. She looked at Luo Yang, who stood aside like a subordinate, seeming to know something.

She quickly took the map.

After looking at the markings on the map, she was also somewhat surprised. “The Deceivers have the audacity to set their meeting place in such a location?”

“The most dangerous place is often the safest place. I guess the Maple Principality didn’t think of that.”

Ji Chen clapped his hands. “Kris, you’d better go inform the Maple Principality now. Otherwise, because of the events earlier, they might become paranoid and withdraw prematurely.”

“You’re right, I’ll go inform them right away.” Kris nodded, “If we can find this group of rats hiding in the sewers this time, Lord Ji Chen, you will be the greatest hero.”

Deceivers had always harbored hostility toward the divine races, including the elves. Over thousands of years, Deceivers had caused constant trouble for the elves in secret, assassinations, stirring racial disputes, inciting wars, and more.

Both sides have long-standing and irreconcilable blood feuds.

The elves would love to exterminate these scoundrels, but the Deceivers always operate in secrecy, preferring subterfuge to direct confrontation. If they could wipe out the entire Deceiver presence in Maple City or even most of the Deceivers in the Maple Principality, it would be a cause for great celebration.

After seeing Kris off, Ji Chen pondered for a moment.

“For the next few days, stay in this mansion temporarily for safety. Wait until the Maple Principality and the elves have thoroughly searched that area and ensured there is no danger before returning.”

Luo Yang nodded respectfully.

“I’ll follow your instructions.”

Ji Chen was quite satisfied with his attitude. Abilities were secondary; the most important thing was obedience.

Now it seemed that Luo Yang was very wise.

He immediately had the mansion’s steward escort Luo Yang to a secluded residence.

Located in the heart of Maple Harbor, even if the Deceivers were present, they wouldn’t dare to act openly here. Moreover, there were quite a few soldiers patrolling in this mansion area, so there was some assurance of safety.

After handling these matters, Ji Chen felt the exhaustion from days of travel rush over him.

He stretched and instructed Raymond to call him if there was anything, then went upstairs to sleep with Alice.

This sleep lasted until early the next morning.

In the early morning.

Kris brought some good news.

The Maple Principality, in collaboration with the elves stationed in Maple City, successfully wiped out the gathering point of the Deceivers.

With the information provided by Ji Chen, the Maple Principality and the elves conducted a secret investigation in that area. In the past, when they were looking for Deceivers, they always focused on areas outside the city or remote civilian areas.

After all, these places had lax security and were subjectively more conducive to covert activities.

The results were evident. They had always come up empty-handed when focusing on those areas.

However, this time, when they shifted their focus to the prosperous central district of the city, they quickly discovered the faint traces of the Deceivers and pinpointed the exact meeting location without their awareness.

The outcome was clear. Under the sudden joint assault by both parties, not a single Deceiver managed to escape from that location.

Over a hundred Deceivers were killed on the spot, and there were no captives. This was because, aside from those who resisted to the end and were directly killed, the rest chose to commit suicide when they saw there was no hope of escape.

Before their suicides, they attempted to set fires, intending to destroy any incriminating information and suspicious items inside.

However, this intent was thwarted by the experienced elves who had dealt with them for a long time. They used magic to extinguish the fires in advance, securing a significant amount of highly valuable information and items.

According to Kris, this was the largest haul in recent years.

Unfortunately, not all of the Deceivers operating near Maple City were present at the secret gathering place.

Based on the information that remained, it appeared that half of the Deceivers were located in a secret coastal base on the outskirts of the city, seemingly preparing for an attack plan.

Upon learning the exact location of the secret base, the Maple Kingdom and the elves promptly continued their assault. They gathered a large army and marched through the night to reach the base, even mobilizing a fleet to surround it from the sea.

“Your Excellency, we have already surrounded the Deceivers’ secret coastal base. If all goes well, the Deceivers in Maple City will suffer a devastating blow and be completely annihilated!” Kris exclaimed excitedly.

Ji Chen was also in high spirits. He had just provided intelligence, and now he discovered that half of their enemies had already been wiped out, while the other half was on the countdown to extinction.

Such an efficient rate of elimination made anyone happy.

It was even more exhilarating than receiving a next-day parcel delivery!

However, Ji Chen had a thought and inquired, “Can I go to the Deceivers’ secret coastal base? After all, they plotted against me once, and I feel like I should bid them farewell.”

“I don’t see a problem with that. Without the information you provided, we wouldn’t have achieved such great results,” Kris replied readily. “I’ll go ask General Brett for permission right away.”

Kris hurriedly left and soon returned with good news.

General Brett welcomed Ji Chen’s participation in the operation to eliminate the Deceivers at their secret coastal base.

Upon receiving the news, Ji Chen immediately led the remaining troops and joined Kris, along with the final group of elves. They rushed to the destination.

They reached their destination quickly.

A coastal cliff.

At this moment, over ten thousand soldiers from the Maple Kingdom and two thousand elven warriors were stationed here, surrounding the Deceivers' secret base built into the cliff.

According to the information, this secret base not only stored a significant amount of strategic supplies and war machinery but also housed a substantial force of Deceivers—war puppets.

To eliminate them, a battle would be necessary..

Chapter 360 - 360: Attack, Landslide, Caught a Big Fish

Under the guidance of Kris, they entered the elven army camp.

To be honest, Ji Chen had never seen so many elves before, walking around in groups.

Among them, he could sense the presence of many heroic units, showcasing the depth of the elves' power.

These two thousand elven warriors had the strength to rival several times their number of Maple Principality soldiers.

As Ji Chen observed the elves, they also secretly watched him. It wasn't until Kris led Ji Chen into a tent that they began to whisper.

"Who is this human? And why is he with Lady Kris?"

"Wow, he looks quite handsome, didn't expect to see such a handsome human."

"Wait, did he enter Commander Yasen's tent!? I sense a conspiracy!"

"Discussing guests is not what elves should do; everyone, return to your posts!"

The reprimand from the elven officer silenced the elves.

Ji Chen followed Kris into the largest tent at the center of the camp and saw the commander of this operation, Yasen.

When Yasen saw him arrive, he greeted him with a smile.

"Lord Ji Chen, it's been a few days, and you still look so spirited."

Ji Chen smiled slightly. "I heard that you were able to apprehend all the deceivers of Maple City so quickly. I can't afford not to be spirited."

Yasen smiled with a hint of gratitude in his expression. "Thanks to your information, we were able to locate these sewer rats and eliminate the deceivers of Maple City and even the Maple Principality.

Taking advantage of the opportunity you brought, I also hope to earn some merit. I hope you don't mind!"

“Without your assistance, we might not have been able to defeat these deceivers.”

After the pleasantries, Ji Chen inquired about the secret base of the deceivers.

“This base is located within the cliffs by the sea. The deceivers have almost hollowed it out, not only creating living facilities but also constructing a large number of defensive fortifications with formidable firepower.

Furthermore, it is defended by over five squads of war puppets, with an average tier of 4-star Tier Four and an average level of 40. It’s not to be underestimated.”

Although he said this, Yasen didn’t appear too concerned. It was clear that he had great confidence in the abilities of his elven forces.

Ji Chen remembered Yasen’s identity as a fleet commander and the fleet that blocked the sea. He couldn’t help but ask, “Why not directly have the fleet bombard the cliffs to collapse the base?”

Yasen shook his head. “Since the deceivers have built their base here, they probably used the Eternal Fortification Spell to reinforce the cliffs and the base’s structure. Trying to bring it down with the firepower of a fleet would be too challenging.

Moreover, deploying firepower of this scale would require a substantial amount of resources and gold coins. The lords in the council won’t approve...”

Yasen suddenly stopped and a hint of gloom crossed his face. “So we can only resort to a forced attack.”

Ji Chen fell silent. Was it preferable to sacrifice lives instead of spending vast resources on firepower projection?

Well, it seemed like the image of the elves was gradually deteriorating.

After a moment, Yasen’s expression brightened. “It’s almost time; the attack is about to begin.”

“Lord Ji Chen, if you wish to join the assault, please take care of your safety.”

“Of course,” Ji Chen replied with a slight smile. By the seaside, he might not be back to his peak condition, but he had regained at least ninety percent of his strength, enough to deal with them.

Outside, the sound of a longhorn echoed, and the drums of war followed suit.

The entire camp came alive as elven squads formed orderly formations and marched toward the attack point.

Ji Chen and his companions followed, arriving at the battlefield.

Standing on a high ground, not far away was the seaside cliff where the deceivers’ base was located. Rather than calling it a cliff, it was more like a colossal hill standing at the edge of the sea cliff.

At first glance, it seemed unremarkable, but upon closer inspection, one could see that the surface of this rugged hill was covered in caves and tunnels, interconnected and extensive. Perhaps the deceivers felt it was time for a direct confrontation and had removed the camouflage spell that had previously covered the surface, exposing it.

In the dimness, humanoid metal puppets moved about within, operating cannons and ballistae, ready to defend the city.

It appeared they were prepared to resist to the end.

The Maple Principality and the elves had lost all patience and quickly decided to launch their attack.

Between this hill and the camp, there was a muddy, narrow tidal flat that had to be crossed before reaching the hill.

Before crossing, the elven fleet anchored on the sea surface, under the guidance of signals, slowly turned and elevated their firing devices, aiming at the hill.

There were no earth-shattering explosions, only brilliant and dazzling beams of light, even in broad daylight.

Streams of fiery red beams shot up into the sky, leaving trails of light in their wake as they leaped through the air, forming sharp arcs before one by one, crashing onto the hill.

Boom!

The intense explosions finally echoed, and mushroom clouds billowed into the sky. Shattered rocks flew in all directions, and the already sparse vegetation on the hillside was now completely obliterated by the bombardment.

The elven fleet conducted three rounds of bombardment. When the dust settled, the hill appeared to be a scene of devastation, but in reality, it was like peeling off a layer of dead skin; the hill remained almost undamaged..