

Ocean Lord 371

Chapter 371: Verena and the Contract (2)

“Understood.”

The icy cold that had almost taken up the entire underground space was rapidly retracting, revealing the metallic cage that had been concealed beneath the ice.

Verena’s figure emerged from within the frost.

Seeing that she, like him, was a human, Ji Chen nodded slightly.

At least she was human. Among the followers of the gods, it wasn’t always the case that they worshipped gods who resembled their own races.

People from various races believed in gods of different races, and there were also humans who believed in gods from other races.

However, upon closer inspection, he couldn’t help but inhale sharply.

More than ten chains with runic gleams were connected to her body and the cage.

Rather than calling it a restraint, it was more like these chains pierced her body like spears, holding her firmly in place, unable to move.

At the points where the chains connected to her body, a blackness like a curse was eroding her flesh, leaving grim scars on her fair skin.

Beneath slightly disheveled long black hair was a face even paler than the ice.

Verena managed to force a smile, “I apologize, Your Excellency, for letting you see me in such a wretched state.”

Ji Chen shook his head gently; he understood that she was enduring immense pain right now. Her body was trembling continuously, and the frost that had previously leaked out was probably her way of alleviating the pain.

There was no time to waste.

He immediately summoned the Aqua Drill Head and began to destroy the cage in the same way.

The high-speed rotating Aqua Drill, upon contact with the cage, suddenly burst with intense energy fluctuations. The runes inscribed on it were in direct conflict with Ji Chen’s mana, causing the entire cage to tremble violently.

Affected by this, Verena, who had her body pierced, couldn’t help but emit a painful groan, clenching her teeth so hard it seemed like she might shatter them.

She was visibly weakened.

Ji Chen furrowed his brow slightly and slowly stopped. In his senses, Verena’s aura had become extremely unstable, as if she might lose contact at any moment.

“Sir, I can hold on, please continue.”

Verena gasped for breath, sweat dripping from her forehead and neck, falling onto the undulating smooth chest.

Seeing the determination in her eyes, Ji Chen didn't say anything; he simply controlled the Aqua Drill Head to continue breaking the cage.

He kept a constant watch on her condition, ready to stop at any moment.

But Verena was, after all, a fearless warrior who had fought her way out of countless battles. Despite enduring tremendous pain, she clenched her teeth and endured it.

Ji Chen couldn't help but admire her as each chain was broken.

As the chains that had pierced her body fell to the ground one by one, the chains oozed with unclean black blood, a testament to how much damage and suffering she had endured over hundreds of years.

With the removal of each chain, her expression lightened, and her strength gradually returned.

Soon, the last chain fell to the ground.

Verena opened her eyes, a glint of determination flashing in them, and her fists struck the cage heavily.

The cage that had restrained her so completely in the past now shattered like paper, breaking into pieces.

With a low shout, a powerful force surged like a Category 12 typhoon, and clusters of frost suddenly bloomed, filling the entire space and spreading outward along the passage.

[Verena Lana (Human Hero)]

[Race]: Human

[Status]: Weak

[Level]: 20 (Peak at level 60)

[Current Tier]: Orange (Legendary)

[Potential]: Orange (Legendary)

[Skills]:

- War Combat Technique (Red Skill, increases close combat ability by 100%, additional 100% damage)
- Frosty Battle Qi (Red Skill, attacks come with Frosty Battle Qi, slowing down enemy movement)
- Body of a Thousand Hammers (Red Skill, a body toughened through long-term self-inflicted training, 300% increased recovery ability)
- Fearlessness (Red Skill, enters a state of slaughter, significantly reduces pain and emotional fluctuations)

– Flash Strike (Red Skill, performs a short-range teleportation to get close to enemies)

[Unit Traits]: Unmatched Slaughter (The more she kills, the stronger her combat power becomes, up to an additional 100% overall combat power)

[Follower of the Goddess of War, possessing formidable combat abilities and Frosty Battle Qi, her weapon is an indestructible pair of fists]

An impressive array of skills.

Without exception, they are all combat-oriented skills, either offensive or self-enhancing, emphasizing the word “battle” in every aspect.

Verena felt an unprecedented sense of ease at this moment. Looking at her own hands, she was overwhelmed with excitement. Was this the taste of freedom!?

The soul pain that had persisted for hundreds of years had disappeared in this moment.

With a feeling of power that could be controlled, even though it was far less than one in ten thousand of her prime strength, it still filled her with great excitement.

Before Verena could fully comprehend what had just happened, she slightly released her emotions and then withdrew her aura, coming in front of Ji Chen.

Looking at the handsome and extraordinary young man in front of her, her thoughts were somewhat complicated.

She never expected that a follower of the Goddess of War would become someone else’s subordinate and sign a contract for thirty years, during which she had to fight unconditionally until the contract ended.

For a believer, this was an absurd thing.

But Verena quickly adjusted her mindset.

The contract had been signed and was protected by the rules of the world, even an epic-level powerhouse couldn’t violate it.

In the end, she lowered her head.

“Lord, Verena is at your service.”

Ji Chen nodded slightly.

He certainly noticed the hint of reluctance in Verena’s eyes. According to the panel, she was a legendary powerhouse at level 60 in her prime. While she might not compare to top-tier individuals like Elin, she still ranked among the strongest in this world.

On the other hand, he was a legendary class as well but hadn’t reached level 40 yet, making him significantly weaker.

The gap in strength between level 20 and almost level 40 was like a chasm.

However, he wasn’t discouraged by this because he believed that in the future, he would inevitably reach this level and even surpass it.

The reason strong individuals were called strong was due to their formidable strength and their corresponding mentality.

He had now developed the mindset of a future powerhouse. As long as he kept moving forward with determination, being a formidable figure was just the starting point.

With this in mind, Ji Chen spoke seriously, "I believe that in the future, you will be glad about the wise choice you made today."

Hearing this, Verena was momentarily stunned. When she saw the deep and profound eyes in Ji Chen's gaze, which seemed to contain endless stars and his radiant expression, she began to believe it to some extent.

She then smiled slightly.

"I look forward to that day, Lord."

Ji Chen nodded slightly and tossed a set of clothes and a bottle of Holy Healing Elixir to her before turning away.

"Put on the clothes, and make sure to drink the potion. It will help you recover quickly."

Verena obediently nodded.

She put on the oversized clothes to cover her well-marked yet scarred body and wasted no time in downing the elixir. She felt a massive yet gentle energy flow down her throat, and her eyes lit up.

The elixir began repairing the various injuries, large and small, that had accumulated over hundreds of years. Simultaneously, her strength slowly began to recover.

"Lord, what kind of elixir is this? Its effects are incredible! If I had two or three dozen more bottles, I could fully regain my peak strength!"

Ji Chen nearly choked on his own saliva.

"Two or three dozen? I only obtained a total of two bottles! I gave one to you, and I'm using the other one for research!"

Just as they were conversing, Verena suddenly sensed an immensely powerful aura rapidly approaching them.

Verena's expression changed dramatically.

She quickly stepped in front of Ji Chen.

"Lord, a powerful presence is approaching. Be careful!"

Before she could finish her sentence, a figure appeared in the direction of the corridor.

Ji Chen stared closely and, looking as if he had seen a ghost, exclaimed with great surprise, "Sir Thotmudo!? Why are you here?"

Chapter 372: Thotmudo and the Riddler, the Godslayer Crossbow and the Solar Furnace

The one who arrived was none other than Thotmudo. Just a moment ago, taking advantage of Yasen's momentary distraction, he had stealthily run ahead to this place.

He gave Ji Chen a quick look, confirming that he was unhurt. Then his gaze shifted to Verena, who was wearing poorly-fitting clothes. With surprise, he remarked, "Well, well, it hasn't been long, and you've already found another sex partner? She seems pretty capable too."

At first, Ji Chen was happy to see Thotmudo, but he was nearly taken aback when he heard this. "Verena is my new subordinate, not some sex partner."

"They're all the same. I remember that Siren named Alice and that female half-orc named Irona. Aren't they both your subordinates, and didn't you have a thing with them?"

Ji Chen felt that Verena's gaze towards him was somewhat strange and had to reluctantly respond, "Sir Thotmudo, how did you end up here? Weren't you on a mission to uncover why the dwarven clan fell apart?"

Thotmudo sighed and had a somewhat gloomy expression.

"Kid, have you heard of any strange folks since you arrived on the Northern Continent? Like a bunch of lunatics called 'Deceivers'?"

"I have, but what about them?"

"Those Deceivers are the culprits who caused the downfall of the dwarven clan thousands of years ago!"

Ji Chen was taken aback. Could it really be true?

Deceivers were indeed treacherous, but could they bring the once-mighty dwarven clan to such a state?

"If you happen to encounter them, be extremely cautious. They hold a deep grudge against your kind," Thotmudo cautioned gravely.

"But, Sir, I've already encountered them and taken down quite a few."

Ji Chen pursed his lips and pointed to the ground beneath him, saying, "Right here is their secret base in Maple City. We wiped them out completely over the past two days. I even captured their leader, except for the one with the silver mask. Everyone else was killed by me."

Thotmudo's eyes widened in astonishment. It was at this moment that he recalled the rumors he'd heard along the way; it seemed that the elves were involved in some operation against an evil organization. So, they were hunting down Deceivers?

"I see. So, kid, tell me about your encounters with them."

Ji Chen had nothing to hide. He briefly recounted the events, from capturing the Marshland Dragon to being deceived by the Deceivers and finally breaking into their base to capture the Deceiver leader with the silver mask.

Of course, he left out the details of his dealings with the elves, his transformation into Zhao Liangchen, and the involvement of Luo Yang.

After hearing the story, Thotmudo praised him, “From what I’ve heard, not only did those lunatics fail to take you down, but they suffered a significant loss. You even wipe out the Deceivers in Maple City? You’re quite the remarkable lad!”

Ji Chen smiled slightly and asked with curiosity, “I’ve heard before that the Deceivers hold a grudge against Divine Patrons.

Since you mentioned that I’m this so-called Chosen One, does that mean I’m the Divine Patron?”

This question had been lingering in his mind for a long time.

He had initially noticed hints during his time in the Black Skull Pirate’s lair.

At that moment, when the evil god Alexei tried to kill him forcibly, a mysterious force intervened, pushing him back into the statue and shattering it.

Then, there was the incident in the Skeleton Realm’s Kris Laboratory, where his consciousness was trying to enter the control center, but the cunning Kris was planning to take over his body. Once again, Kris was mysteriously killed by some presence.

And now, in the heart of the Northern Continent, the Deceivers considered him a Divine Patron, and Thotmudo had accidentally revealed that he was a Chosen One.

These pieces of information seemed to connect and hinted at a result.

Was he being favored or protected by some divine being?

During critical moments of danger, a presence always seemed to appear to help him escape.

Apart from that, he also thought about his “cheat” – the Military talent tree. Could it be related to this mysterious presence?

Facing his question, Thotmudo shook his head and gave a cryptic smile. “You’ll need to explore all of this on your own. The truth will reveal itself to you sooner or later.”

Ji Chen’s eyelid twitched.

Riddler, just get out of here!

In reality, Thotmudo didn’t know much about Ji Chen, and it was a bit challenging to say anything meaningful about him.

His statements were more to avoid appearing ignorant.

However, he did recognize that this young human, whether deemed a Chosen One or judged by his deeds and accomplishments, had boundless potential.

Perhaps, one day, when he climbed to the pinnacle of the world, he would unveil the truth behind all of this.

Without giving the two of them more time to converse, there was another commotion in the corridor. Yasen, accompanied by a large group of elves, appeared.

Upon seeing that Ji Chen was unharmed, Yassen heaved a sigh of relief and then glared at Thotmudo with anger in his eyes.

“Despicable dwarf! Not only did you intrude into our camp without permission, but you also attempted to harm Lord Ji Chen. This is unforgivable!

Today, you won’t leave this place!”

He was about to make a move, but Ji Chen reached out and stopped him.

“Your Excellency Yassen, Thotmudo is my friend.”

Yassen couldn’t help but be taken aback. A friend? Wasn’t he an enemy seeking revenge?

Thotmudo glanced at Yassen and a hint of disdain flickered in his eyes. “When did I ever say I wanted to harm this kid? Elves seem to have become more reckless, freely attacking without understanding the situation. Eilin’s teachings don’t seem to be effective..”

Chapter 373: Thotmudo and the Riddler, the Godslayer

Crossbow and the Solar Furnace (2)

Watching the two of them in this manner, Ji Chen knew that there had probably been some misunderstanding between them, so he took the initiative to explain to Yassen.

“Sir Thotmudo is a powerful dwarf I met by chance. He came all this way to find me only because he was afraid I would be ambushed by the Deceivers, there is no ill intent.”

Then he turned to Thotmudo and said, “This is Sir Yassen, the commander of the Fifth Fleet of the Elven Navy, and the leader of this operation to besiege and attack the Deceiver base.”

“Oh— I see,” Thotmudo said with a strange tone, “So you’re a fleet commander, no wonder you carry such authority.”

“You!” Yassen almost burst into anger again but managed to restrain himself, glaring fiercely at Thotmudo.

If it weren’t for Lord Ji Chen here, I would definitely teach you a lesson in the elven ways that you won’t forget.

Thotmudo, on the other hand, remained calm with his Warhammer on his shoulder.

Observing this situation, Ji Chen also felt a bit relieved. If a conflict erupted between the two of them, it would put him in an awkward position, stuck in the middle.

Moreover, the two were not on the same level. Yassen was only level 50, while Thotmudo was a level 78 epic-tier powerhouse. If they really fought, the latter could easily defeat the former with one hand.

If Yassen accidentally got killed, it would be a big problem.

At this moment, Yassen noticed a stranger standing beside Ji Chen, a human woman.

“Lord Ji Chen, who is this?”

Ji Chen replied, “This is Verena, she’s the one who was imprisoned by the Deceivers here, and she has become my subordinate.”

Yasen looked at the silent Verena, his eyes filled with some wariness.

Although she looked somewhat weak, he could sense a strong power within this human woman. Her strength was gradually recovering. If she were in her prime, she would undoubtedly be a formidable powerhouse.

While feeling wary, he was also surprised by Ji Chen. How had he managed to recruit such a powerful subordinate in such a short time?

It seemed almost too quick.

However, Yasen didn’t express any displeasure about Ji Chen opening the cage by himself or inquire about Verena’s identity.

The relationship between them and Ji Chen was good enough to overlook these matters.

“Well, in that case, we should head back out now.”

Ji Chen nodded and led Thotmudo and Verena back to the camp.

Many elven warriors had a sudden change in their expressions when they saw Thotmudo, looking somewhat angered. Seeing this, Ji Chen couldn’t help but ask.

“Sir Thotmudo, what did you do to make the elves dislike you so much?”

Thotmudo replied indifferently, “I just beat up over a hundred elves and cursed at them a bit, nothing too serious.”

Ji Chen could not utter a reply.

He felt that he couldn’t leave Thotmudo here; trouble would inevitably arise sooner or later.

After some thought, he immediately said to Yasen, “Your Excellency Yasen, I’ll return to Maple Harbor to handle some matters first, and then come back to collect the spoils.”

Transporting the supplies would take some time, and he didn’t want to waste time waiting here.

It had been some time since he left the Crown of the Ocean, and Ji Chen planned to finish everything quickly and return as soon as possible.

Yasen nodded in agreement. He also didn’t want to see the annoying dwarf anymore, so he bid farewell. “I will quickly transport the goods out and deliver the agreed-upon share of the spoils directly to your manor, Your Lordship. You don’t need to trouble yourself with going back and forth.”

Ji Chen didn’t reject his goodwill and replied, “Then, thank you, Your Excellency Yasen.”

They boarded the carriage prepared by Yasen, and the group returned to the estate in Maple Harbor.

The butler and maids welcomed them at the entrance, looking somewhat surprised when they saw the addition of a dwarf and a woman to the group.

Setting aside Verena, who was dressed in ill-fitting clothing, Thotmudo looked disheveled, and his clothes were ragged, making him look like a beggar.

However, following behind Ji Chen, they dared not show any disrespect or negligence and greeted both newcomers politely.

Ji Chen casually said, "Butler, prepare rooms for Thotmudo and Verena, suitable clothing, and food."

The butler immediately nodded and replied, "Yes, I will do it right away."

Soon, Verena and Thotmudo changed into fresh clothes and joined the group in the dining hall. The table was already filled with a variety of food.

Thotmudo, in his usual laid-back manner, helped himself to the dishes, picking up a few pastries and stuffing them into his mouth. It was clear he hadn't had a proper meal on the road.

However, Verena seemed a bit unsure.

Centuries of imprisonment had seemingly worn away her social skills, leaving her feeling unfamiliar and lost in the outside world.

During the journey, she had often remained silent.

Ji Chen didn't pressure her and allowed her to return to her room to continue recuperating after eating.

Only when her strength reached above level 30 would there be a use for her.

After finishing their meal, Ji Chen and Thotmudo headed to a tea room within the estate.

"Sir Thotmudo, I'm deeply grateful and relieved that you rushed all the way from the Western Continent to warn me about the Deceivers.

But have you forgotten something important?"

Not long after taking their seats, he spoke in a somewhat sly manner.

Thotmudo's expression tensed, and he replied somewhat nervously, "Of course, I will fulfill the promise I made to you."

He definitely wouldn't admit that had he not discovered the cause of the Black Iron Fortress' downfall and the necessity of Ji Chen's assistance, he might not have come back to the Crown of the Ocean.

"Knight, besides coming to remind you, there's actually something else I'd like to ask for your assistance with."

"Oh?" Seeing Thotmudo's serious demeanor, Ji Chen sipped his tea nonchalantly.

"What could be so important that it made you cross the ocean to find me?"

Upon hearing the sarcasm in Ji Chen's words, Thotmudo could only smile awkwardly. After all, he was in the wrong, and he felt quite guilty at this point.

With a much humbler attitude, he proceeded to share all the information he had learned at Black Iron Fortress.

As Ji Chen listened to this long-forgotten history, his expression gradually turned more serious.

Dwarves, Black Iron Fortress, Deceivers, Inferno Fiends, Solar Furnace...

“So, are you saying that the Deceivers managed to summon an Inferno Fiend, which had even greater power than epic-level beings, by using a sacrificial ritual? They used this powerful creature to kill two epic-level dwarf warriors and breach the Black Iron Fortress?”

Thotmudo nodded repeatedly.

“That’s right. According to the information left behind, this appears to be the case. They also took the dwarves’ prized possession, the ‘Solar Furnace’.”

The Solar Furnace.

“No wonder the Deceivers’ equipment is nearly on par with the armies of the Kingdoms and the Empire, approaching an Imperial-level standard.”

“In that case, the Godslayer Crossbow should also have been created using the ‘Solar Furnace’, right?”

Thotmudo was taken aback. “Godslayer Crossbow? Can you show it to me?”

Ji Chen nodded and took out the Godslayer Crossbow and its bolts.

Thotmudo jumped out of his chair and began to examine it closely, muttering angrily as he did so.

“The Godslayer Crossbow was developed by our dwarves over generations as a weapon of destruction. However, the Deceivers took away the data and samples during that battle.

But those bastards’ version of the Godslayer Crossbow is not even half as powerful as the original design. The complete Godslayer Crossbow is a 7-star treasure, and what they’ve made is a pale imitation! They’re just copying it blindly, ruining a masterpiece!”

Ji Chen’s expression changed.

Not even half the power?

With only half the power, it already possessed such incredible destructive capability. What would the complete version be like, then?

Having powerful killing potential and long-range tracking capabilities, it was enough to tempt anyone.

With a hint of anticipation, Ji Chen asked, “Do you know how to create the complete version of the Godslayer Crossbow?”

Thotmudo immediately stood tall and proudly declared, “Of course! I participated in its design, research, and the entire process of creating the samples. It’s as if all the details are etched into my mind.”

“Can you make it?”

Thotmudo deflated instantly, “The Godslayer Crossbow requires the ‘Solar Furnace’ to be crafted.”

Well, now you’re talking shit!

Where am I supposed to find the ‘Solar Furnace’, which the Deceivers have stolen and kept hidden for thousands of years?

Chapter 374: Thotmudo’s Promise, Harvest, and Auction

“But that’s not the main point here. The dwarves are in chaos, and even the Black Iron Fortress has fallen. The Deceivers bear a responsibility that cannot be escaped!

This time, I’ve come to ask for your help in seeking revenge against the Deceivers,” Thotmudo said earnestly.

Over the thousands of years of his captivity, most of his friends had already died, and the dwarves had no close relations with other races. Although he was an epic-level being, facing the Deceivers, a power on par with kingdom-level forces, he alone would only be a reckless brute, incapable of dealing with these schemers.

— Even finding them was a challenge, how could he seek revenge?

The only individual he was acquainted with and trusted, and who had the required strength, was Ji Chen, the person who had saved him.

Looking into Thotmudo’s hopeful eyes, Ji Chen slowly spoke, “Why should I help you?”

Thotmudo immediately grew anxious, “Haven’t the Deceivers plotted against you before? They are your enemies, so you shouldn’t...”

“So we should fight them together and seek revenge?”

Ji Chen continued the sentence, gently sighing, “Sir Thotmudo, you must understand that seeking revenge and retribution are not the same.”

“I’m not like you, with an irreconcilable hatred for the Deceivers. They previously plotted against me, and I nearly wiped out all their personnel and operations in the Maple Principality. That can be considered revenge. If they don’t provoke me again in the future, we can part ways without any grudges.

At present, the Crown of the Ocean is unable to confront such a force head-on, and it’s not possible to divert our energies to battle them.”

Indeed, the Deceivers had lured him into a trap before, but he had retaliated fiercely. Not only had he helped the elves breach their secret base, but he had also captured the Silver Masked Deceiver. In terms of losses, the Deceivers had suffered more.

Currently, the Crown of the Ocean’s main sphere of influence was in the open sea, far from the mainland. He was not a wealthy elf; spending too much effort searching for this elusive group of rats would undoubtedly slow down the development of the Crown of the Ocean, which was not worth it.

In any event, the Crown of the Ocean was located in a far-off sea, isolated overseas. There was no reason to be overly worried about the Deceivers launching a major invasion; at most, they might carry out some minor actions.

After listening to these words, Thotmudo fell silent. He understood the reasoning behind them, realizing that Ji Chen had no need to confront the Deceivers head-on.

However, he soon raised his head, his eyes shining with determination.

“Kid, what if I promise to teach all of the dwarves’ alchemical technology and forging techniques to the Crown of the Ocean?

Furthermore, if you can assist me in uniting the divided dwarf clans, I can convince them to become part of your domain.

I’ve already inquired, and it’s known that despite the current plight of the dwarves, their forging techniques remain top-notch. If you can gain the allegiance of a group of dwarves, it will undoubtedly accelerate the development of the Crown of the Ocean.

How about it? Are these two conditions enough for you to assist me?”

Ji Chen sneered at him and said disdainfully, “Sounds nice, but didn’t you make solemn promises before, claiming you’d teach the dwarves basic forging techniques and craft a few six-star treasures for me?

But what was the result? You left halfway through. Do you think I’ll believe you again this time?”

Thotmudo’s confident expression instantly turned into embarrassment. He opened his mouth but couldn’t explain anything.

“Before, I was dishonest, but this time I absolutely mean it. I swear in the name of Thotmudo, the legendary dwarven blacksmith!”

This declaration was met with Ji Chen’s scornful gaze.

But he had to admit that Thotmudo’s promise this time was indeed quite tempting. Even though the dwarves had declined to their current state, their forging techniques were still renowned throughout the world. While their mass production capabilities might not be on par with the elves or human kingdoms, the quality of the weapons and equipment they crafted in small batches was unmatched. Moreover, some aspects of their alchemical technology were truly unique.

If they could truly obtain a group of dwarves’ allegiance, the Crown of the Ocean would reap unprecedented benefits.

However, it had to be genuine; giving Thotmudo a second chance to deceive them was not an option.

Ji Chen spoke calmly, “Alright, but let me make it clear in advance. You have to teach your technology and craftsmanship to the Crown of the Ocean first, and then I’ll start taking action against the Deceivers. You do as much as you promise, and I’ll do the same.

Once you break your promise, I’ll immediately cease my actions.”

Thotmudo widened his eyes, wearing an expression that said, “You’re not being fair.”

Ji Chen, on the other hand, remained confident. He now held the upper hand and was not afraid of Thotmudo.

In the end, the legendary dwarven blacksmith agreed. In reality, it was a fair deal for both sides. They both had responsibilities and obligations.

For Ji Chen, he had already crossed paths with the Deceivers, and sooner or later, they would meet again. Just because the Crown of the Ocean couldn't confront them head-on right now didn't mean they couldn't make calculated moves.

Moreover, Ji Chen was quite intrigued by Thotmudo's mention of the dwarven treasure, the "Solar Furnace". It was capable of crafting artifacts that could reach the level of demigod-grade items, which was enough to make his heart race.

That evening, Ji Chen summoned Raymond.

Raymond, who had been handling the affairs of the Crown of the Ocean, was more or less aware of what Ji Chen had been doing these past few days.

In his heart, he couldn't help but admire Ji Chen.

In just a few days since arriving here, not only had Ji Chen emerged unscathed from the traps and conspiracies of the sinister organization, but he also worked together with the elves and the Maple Principality to break into their secret base, resulting in countless enemy casualties..

Chapter 375: Thotmudo's Promise, Harvest, and Auction (2)

The lord to whom he pledged his allegiance was the most astonishing and magnificent presence he had ever encountered in his life. Such power and dignity crowned him as the Lord of Glory.

In his heart, he felt even more fortunate about his resolute decision to pledge loyalty.

He displayed deep respect and asked, "My Lord, what brings you to summon me?"

"Raymond, when you were with the Hanseatic Chamber of Commerce in the past, you frequently traveled between the Western Continent and other lands. Do you know where most of the dwarves in the Western Continent reside?" "Dwarves?"

Raymond recalled the disheveled dwarf the Lord had brought back today and pondered. "Most dwarves now live within the Kels Mountain Range in the Western Continent."

"Do you have means of contacting them?"

"Dwarves are highly reclusive, except for essential supplies and trade; they are self-sufficient. They hardly leave the Kels Mountain Range."

Raymond inquired, "My Lord, are you looking for them?"

Ji Chen nodded without denial.

"The dwarven race, though in decline, still possesses some depth. Once, a kingdom dispatched an army to the Kels Mountains to conquer the dwarven tribes and have

them forge dwarf weapons. However, once they entered, they never came out, until later when adventurers found the remnants of this army in a valley on the outskirts of the mountains.

If you intend to seek them out, you should exercise caution. Dwarves are notorious for their poor temper.”

Ji Chen nodded slightly.

“All right, I understand. When you travel to the Northern Continent in the future, remember not to go alone, stay in Maple City and Maple Harbor as much as possible. Even if you go out, bring enough guards with you, and if necessary, seek help from the elves.”

Raymond’s spirits lifted, and he cautiously asked, “Is it because of that evil organization called the Deceiver?”

“Exactly. We have already had a falling out with them in the Maple Principality. Although their organization there has been dismantled, there is no guarantee that they won’t send people from elsewhere to target us.”

Despite the efforts of the elves to keep things under wraps, recent events would still spread to some extent. The Deceiver would soon discover what had transpired here.

As a key figure in these events, Ji Chen, along with the Crown of the Ocean, would also come under their scrutiny, and consequently, Raymond and others would be subject to some degree of attention.

Raymond nodded. He was still quite afraid of death, especially after narrowly escaping it with a blow to the head earlier. He had become even more cautious and didn’t step out of the city unless absolutely necessary.

“How are the goods being handled?”

Raymond’s expression turned serious, and he immediately replied, “Currently, our goods have been mostly delivered to the buyers, and the payments have been received.

We obtained a total of 30,000 units of rare resources from the ten ships of weapons and equipment. The valuable items such as timber and premium coffee beans have also been delivered to the elves.

Besides these two specialties, the elf ambassador named Miligas also conveniently purchased the golden bass and various ores we brought with us.

This time, through trade, we’ve collectively earned 120,000 units of rare resources, crystals, adamantine, and mithril, each totaling 40,000 units.

120,000 units of rare resources?

Ji Chen’s brow relaxed.

The 120,000 units of rare resources from this income were equivalent to the entire reserve of a medium-sized rare resource mine, which was quite substantial.

If he added the batch of rare resources to be obtained from the Deceiver's base, the second objective of this journey to the Northern Continent would have also been accomplished.

"I previously instructed you to find residents willing to move to the Crown of the Ocean. How is that going?"

At this point, Raymond also nodded. "I've asked Gilder and other prominent merchants to help with the search. Currently, there are already 3,000 homeless refugees willing to relocate, and this number will continue to increase over time."

In Ji Chen's plan, this migration plan would continue for a considerable period.

In his estimation, the Crown of the Ocean would continue to absorb newcomers until the human population reached around 200,000.

Approximately 200,000 in population was about the ecological carrying capacity that suited the New Moon Islands. Any more would have appeared quite crowded, and the food supply would have become challenging.

At first glance, 200,000 people seemed like a substantial number. However, for someone as ambitious as Ji Chen, it was just a starting point. However, due to the limited land area of the New Moon Islands, there was no way to accommodate an even larger population.

Population influx was essential to maintain the vitality and productivity of the territory, so he would find ways to enable the Crown of the Ocean to accommodate even more people.

The next day, the elves transported the spoils of war that belonged to him. Dozens of carriages filled with various spoils of war formed a long line as they entered the estate, leaving many players astonished.

Ji Chen briefly examined the spoils, which included but were not limited to, various war machinery, potions, weapon equipment, military recruitment camp cores, and various resources.

Among them was the batch of rare resources promised by Yasen, totaling 270,000 rare resources, including 100,000 crystals, 100,000 adamantite, and 70,000 mithril.

With the resources obtained from previous transactions, he now possessed 140,000 crystals, 140,000 adamantite, and 110,000 mithril.

This windfall, to say the least, was a substantial improvement in their fortunes.

Amidst the joy, Ji Chen hesitated as he looked at the piled-up spoils of war.

These spoils obtained from the Deceiver's base were certainly not ordinary items, but the problem was that most of them could be produced by the Crown of the Ocean.

Although the war machinery looked decent, according to Thotmudo's assessment after seeing them, "These are all junk. I'll personally make a batch when we return, guaranteed to be better than these!"

Ji Chen felt that it might not be worth the effort to transport them back.

Similarly, these potions were not as good as the ones produced by Lady Irona, and although the weapon equipment was excellent, the Crown of the Ocean could make do without them.

Just as he was somewhat distressed about how to handle this situation, Alice's words reminded him. "My Lord, you can sell these things you don't need to other Lords of Glory; they might need these items."

That's right; players were also a market.

These items could be sold to them, even if Ji Chen didn't value them, but most players rarely had the opportunity to buy such high-quality items.

Whether it was war machinery, weapon equipment, or potions, these were highly demanded items for players. A good piece of equipment or a healing potion could greatly increase their survival rate.

As for war machinery, it didn't need further explanation; just place it at the entrance of the territory, and any monsters that came would meet their doom! After rewarding Alice with a kiss, Ji Chen summoned Luo Yang and instructed him on this matter.

After dealing with the Deceiver, Luo Yang returned to the Cat Tail Tarven to continue running the business, completely concealing what had happened over the past few days from other players. He even claimed to be out doing business for two or three days.

Perhaps no player knew that Luo Yang, who was highly respected among the players in Maple City, had effectively submitted to Ji Chen.

All of this did not arouse any suspicion from others, and only Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair watched all of this with extremely complicated expressions but dared not say a word.

They knew that if they uttered a single word, there would be no place for them in Maple City.

Upon Luo Yang's suggestion, Ji Chen decided to hold a player auction in Maple City, specifically for auctioning these spoils of war.

Of course, he would appear at this auction as Zhao Liangchen; this identity had its uses.

The auction would take place at the Cat Tail Tarven.

Thanks to Luo Yang's promotion, this auction immediately garnered the attention of many players in Maple City. They halted their plans to venture outside and were even more interested when they learned that the auction items were proposed by Mr. Zhao.

After that night, there was hardly anyone in Maple City who didn't know Zhao Liangchen's name. Everyone expressed their intention to participate in this auction, hoping to find some valuable items.

Even those who didn't plan to auction anything wanted to see what this extravagant individual looked like and make some connections.. Perhaps, they thought, they could be led to profit alongside this super-spendthrift

Chapter 376: Auction, Market Barrier, Islander!

A large number of Maple City players gathered at the Cat's Tail Tavern.

A large number of players had gathered, surpassing what Ji Chen had anticipated.

After inquiring, he learned that the mountain trolls had all retreated and withdrawn into the Alvin Mountains.

This was undoubtedly the result of the Deceiver's actions. Without the Deceiver's assistance, the mountain trolls were no match for the Maple Principality and the Elves. They were chased all over by the airship fleet and ground forces, resulting in numerous casualties.

Therefore, they decided to retreat decisively and acted like turtles.

Seeing this, the Maple Principality and the Elves chose to withdraw as well, ending the war.

After the war had ended, players who had ventured out received their rewards and decided to come back for some rest. Coincidentally, there was an auction happening, which explained the unusually high player turnout.

Due to the large number of players, Luo Yang had to temporarily change the auction venue from the Cat Tail Tavern to the street outside.

They set up a wooden platform on the street as the auction stage and placed hundreds of wooden chairs in front of it. It was as rudimentary as it could get, but it couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of the casual players.

The streets, the houses on both sides, and even the rooftops were crowded with players.

Some players, sensing the business opportunity with so many people gathered here, immediately sat down and set up stalls, shouting and haggling. The marketplace came alive with the sound of bargaining and heated discussions.

What used to be a relatively quiet Black Gold District suddenly became one of the liveliest places in Maple City. This scene even attracted nearby patrolling soldiers who looked at the chaotic scene, somewhat disdainful of these Glory Lords who seemed to have no sense of propriety.

The patrolling soldiers couldn't help but wonder if these people were indeed from the countryside, given their rather unruly behavior.

They cursed silently but still carried out their duties nearby, watching them vigilantly to prevent any trouble.

On the third floor of the Cat Tail Tavern, in a room facing the street.

Ji Chen sat on the sofa, looking through the window at the bustling street outside.

He held a glass of wine in his hand and sipped it leisurely.

At that moment, he heard slightly hurried footsteps approaching from outside the door.

The door was gently knocked.

"Mr. Zhao, it's me."

It was Luo Yang.

"Come in," Ji Chen said calmly. The door opened, and Luo Yang, with a somewhat anxious expression, walked in. After gently closing the door, he approached.

He seemed a bit urgent in his tone.

“Now, most of the players have arrived, but it seems that the auction items haven’t arrived yet. If this continues, they might get upset.”

Ji Chen glanced at him and said calmly, “Don’t worry; the items will arrive soon.”

Seeing Ji Chen’s indifferent expression, Luo Yang felt a bit more at ease.

“How did the task I assigned you earlier go?”

“The storefront facing the street has already started renovations and will be ready for use soon. But if I may ask, what do you plan to sell in that shop?”

As far as Luo Yang knew, the specialty products that Ji Chen had brought seemed to be limited to a few items: high-quality timber, golden bass, premium coffee beans, weapons and equipment, and the never-before-seen Merfabric.

These specialty products are undoubtedly valuable, but it seems they have already been under long-term trade agreements with Maple City’s merchants and elves. Hence, they weren’t suitable for display and sale in a storefront.

Did he plan to sell everyday items?

In terms of profitability, a prime location like that storefront would be better off leased for a stable income rather than selling ordinary goods, which would likely incur losses.

“We’re going to sell wine.”

This was something Ji Chen had already thought through. The wine market was vast.

He had found a talented winemaker named Leysha among the refugees, capable of producing high-quality wine. Therefore, he wouldn’t miss out on this high-profit product.

“Sell wine?”

Luo Yang paused briefly before adding, “Mr. Zhao, selling wine in the Maple Principality isn’t as simple as it may seem.”

This statement left Ji Chen puzzled. “Why is that?”

“The reason is simple. Back on Earth, if you want to produce and sell alcohol, you need to obtain a series of licenses to qualify for sales. It’s similar here.

But the problem is that obtaining a sales license here is not a simple matter.

The Maple Principality is located by the sea, with a climate and soil perfectly suited for grape cultivation, resulting in a large production of wine.

And, as you know, products like alcohol yield profits that can make any merchant jealous. Therefore, some of the influential figures in the Maple Principality have joined forces to issue alcohol sales permits to only a very small number of people aligned with them.

As for other alcohol merchants, they simply can’t obtain permits, so they have no way to sell alcohol. They are even forbidden from importing foreign alcohol into the local market...”

Ji Chen furrowed his brow. This sounded like trade barriers and market access restrictions.

By using official rights to prevent other alcohol from entering the market, they achieved a monopoly effect.

Previously, the specialty products brought by the Crown of the Ocean were things that the Maple Principality lacked, so there was no conflict of interest. But when it came to alcohol, it was a different story.

This was indeed a matter worth considering.

Ji Chen thought for a moment and felt that he needed to consult with a merchant like Gilder to understand the situation better.

“Alright, I’ll take care of this matter.”

Luo Yang nodded without asking any more questions. He was fully aware of what was appropriate to discuss and what wasn’t.

Ji Chen kept this matter in mind and continued to focus on what was happening outside..

Chapter 377: Auction, Market Barner, Islander! (2)

As Luo Yang had mentioned, the gathered players began to grow impatient as the auction showed no signs of starting.

“What’s taking so long for this auction to begin? I left my limited-time quest for this.”

“Is Mr. Zhao and Luo Yang playing tricks on us? Are trying to fan the flames of conflict among players?”

As the players started discussing with increasing agitation, Luo Yang glanced once more at Ji Chen, who remained composed, as if everything was under control.

Just as many players were becoming more agitated and some were even preparing to leave, a group of elves suddenly appeared outside Black Gold District, escorting dozens of cargo wagons that slowly entered the plaza. They gazed coldly at the multitude of players.

The cargo wagons were covered with black cloth, concealing the contents within, but the sight of dozens of them forming a long procession was quite impressive.

At that moment, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair appeared seemingly out of nowhere and held up a simplified megaphone.

“All the items for this auction are provided by the Islander!”

This announcement left the players in astonishment.

Could it be the Islander they were thinking of?

As if they had guessed the players’ thoughts, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair continued, “Yes, you guessed it right! It’s the famous Islander who made a name for himself in the Silver Island’s mystic realm, ranking high on the player leaderboard and territory leaderboard!

The Islander have entrusted Mr. Zhao with these auction items!

Since the items are from the Islander, the quality is absolutely guaranteed!!!¹¹

The players who were acting foolish exchanged glances, and it was clear that they had noticed the astonishment in each other's expressions.

In reality, among the player community on the mainland and along the coast, the name "Islander" was renowned.

Not only did he hold a high position on the leaderboards, but he was also famous for his remarkable achievements.

In his first appearance at the Silver Island mystic realm, he single-handedly attacked several city gates of the Blood Sea City and collaborated with attacking players, securing an advantage for the assault.

This allowed the attacking players to obtain a substantial amount of crystals.

Furthermore, on King Kong Island, he used colossal waves to engulf several players attempting to take advantage, earning a terrifying reputation for his individual strength and formidable fleet power.

These two real combat records were sufficient proof of the formidable strength of the Islander.

In addition, he was widely praised by the players' alliance on King Kong Island, especially the enthusiastic acclaim from a player known as "I_Love_Black_Sockings/" who was famous on the leaderboards, calling the Islander the most handsome and generous player in the Central Ocean.

All these factors made the Islander subtly become the talk of the players as the Strongest player in the Central Ocean.

However, after King Kong Island, the Islander rarely appeared in chat channels and forums, causing the hype surrounding him to gradually fade.

It was only until now...

To say that this batch of auction items was provided by the Islander?

And he had so much influence that even the elves, who usually spoke with their heads held high, personally delivered them?

This was beyond prestigious!

At this moment, players were not just shocked; they were astounded.

Didn't this imply that the big boss Islander had also come to the Maple Principality?

Some players suddenly recalled that they had witnessed a player dueling with the elven fleet commander near the port before.

They remembered that this player couldn't be examined using the system, as his status panel displayed only question marks.

Among them, some players who had previously taken logistical tasks for the elven army suddenly had a realization.

That evening, they saw the elven army salute a player, and at the time, they wondered who that player was and why he had such an imposing presence.

Could that player be the Islander himself?

Looking at the elves escorting the cargo, their certainty grew.

If he hadn't befriended and assisted the elves, why would the elves personally come to transport these items?

Case closed!

In a situation where no one else knew, the Islander had already accomplished several significant deeds in the Maple Principality!

After understanding this, players' emotions soared.

The frustration they had felt from the long wait disappeared instantly.

This was none other than the big boss Islander. What did it matter if they had to wait a little longer?

Meanwhile, many players were scanning their surroundings, hoping to catch a glimpse of the rumored Islander.

Regarding this, Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair, who had already been instructed, raised their megaphones and shouted, "The Big Boss Islander is busy with his affairs and couldn't make it to the scene."

"The auction begins immediately!! !r1

The elves escorting the goods unemotionally drove their carriages to the auction platform one by one, handing over the cargo to the staff. Then, they dispersed strategically, keeping a close watch on their surroundings to protect the auction items from any would-be thieves.

Soon, the staff began the auction as per their instructions.

One by one, treasures, batches of war equipment, and pieces of weapon gear were auctioned off.

Most of the treasures were 1-star to 3-star items, which, for Ji Chen at this point, were nothing significant.

However, for other players, they were quite valuable. Most of the time, the treasures players could obtain through commissions and quests were primarily 1-star and 2-star items.

As for 3-star treasures, they were usually acquired from treasure chests, and only exceptionally high-risk commissions could yield them. If they got their hands on one, it would become a family heirloom.

In this auction, there were over a dozen 3-star treasures, indicating the Islander's strength so formidable that even 3-star treasures didn't catch his eye.

There was war equipment, numbering at least in the double digits, including fine iron crossbows, city defense ballistae, and cannons, just a few of which were enough to arm a small territory.

They were being auctioned in lots of ten.

Cores for recruiting military units were stacked casually in crates, and boxes of elixirs were bundled for auction.

At this moment, these players deeply understood what it meant to be extravagant to the extreme.

Had the Islander truly become this powerful?

To the point where he didn't even care about these items and decided to auction them all?

"Ten fine iron bed crossbows, starting bid at two thousand gold coins!"

"I'll bid two thousand one hundred!" a player who had been eyeing them raised his hand and shouted.

"I'll bid two thousand three hundred!" another player asserted without hesitation.

"Three thousand gold coins!" a player dressed in tattered clothing calmly called out, drawing the attention of many. They couldn't help but mutter to themselves, "With so much money and still dressed in such ragged clothes, is this guy pretending to be poor to catch us off guard!?"

Observing the players actively bidding at the auction, Ji Chen nodded with a sigh of admiration.

In fact, it proved that some players who appeared to be struggling on the surface actually had some wealth hidden away. Players who understood the value of discretion knew the essence of pretending to be weak to catch their prey off guard.

After watching for a while, he grew bored.

He gestured, indicating that Luo Yang should manage the auction by himself. Afterward, he used the Illusory Mask to alter his appearance, making sure he looked distinct from his usual self and different from Mr. Zhao.

He made himself slightly shorter, a bit chubbier, and adopted an unremarkable appearance.

Looking at the completely unfamiliar face in the mirror, Ji Chen nodded in satisfaction.

He then headed downstairs through a private passage to the street.

This time, not all players came solely for the auction. Some were here to take advantage of the crowd and set up stalls to sell various items.

On the streets beside the auction venue, stalls lined both sides of the road, displaying all sorts of miscellaneous items. Players would occasionally stop to inquire about the items and their prices.

This scene had a distinct market vibe.

Ji Chen, with his changed appearance, seamlessly blended into the crowd, appearing as an ordinary player out for some shopping.

"Rare snow lorus from the snowy mountains, one for three hundred, three for one thousand!"

"Top-quality fine iron longswords, your perfect companion for assassinations on dark, windy nights."

"Silver scale breastplate, blue-grade quality, five gold each!!!"

“Second-tier military recruitment camp cores for Forest Guardians, four in total, 250 gold each, buy all four for a ten percent discount!”

Vendor calls filled the air, but none of them seemed to be selling fake items. After all, players could easily verify item information using the system’s display, so it was clear whether the items were genuine or not.

Deceiving the indigenous population might work, but deceiving other players would be pointless.

Ji Chen strolled along, but suddenly, he halted in his tracks and glanced toward a secluded little stall at the corner of the street.

In his perception, there seemed to be something peculiar there..

Chapter 378: Little White Rabbit, Tidal Surge Core

This was a very basic stall, with a layer of burlap spread on the ground, and some items neatly arranged on the burlap.

The location of this stall was extremely unfavorable, as it was neither close to the main street nor nestled in an easily noticeable corner. Moreover, there were no scenic trees to provide shelter, leaving it exposed to the intensifying rays of the already scorching sun.

Fortunately, there was a white sunshade umbrella set up, which provided a bit of relief underneath, making the area slightly more comfortable.

The stall owner was a petite female player, not very old. When she saw Ji Chen approaching, her eyes lit up, and she wanted to greet him but seemed a bit shy. This awkwardness, coupled with her slightly chubby cheeks, made her appear somewhat cute.

Seeing her nervous expression, the chubby player persona that Ji Chen had taken on revealed a friendly smile. “Why did you set up your stall here? The location is quite poor. If I hadn’t taken a closer look while passing by, I might not have noticed your stall here.”

The chubby-faced player with a babyish appearance looked a bit distressed. “I wanted to secure a better spot for my stall, but I arrived too late. When I got here, all the good spots were already taken, so I had to settle for this secluded place.”

“Haha, but at least you brought a sunshade umbrella. Without it, you’d be suffering in this scorching sun.”

“I think so too.” The chubby player looked outside the sunshade umbrella at the intensifying sunlight and sheepishly touched her head.

As if sensing Ji Chen’s friendliness, she gathered her courage and said, “My forum username is ‘White Umbrella’, but you can just call me Umbrella.

Oh, by the way, have you spotted anything you like?”

Ji Chen nodded, and his gaze scanned the stall, quickly focusing on an irregular, ice-blue crystal in the corner.

This crystal was only the size of two fists, but its color was remarkably pure, giving off a feeling of being from the ocean.

Upon seeing Ji Chen's interest in the crystal, White Umbrella quickly introduced it.

"This beautiful crystal was something I stumbled upon while resupplying fresh water on a small island during one of my sea voyages."

"There's nothing particularly special about this crystal other than its exceptionally attractive color. It's also quite hard and can be used as a decorative piece. However, if you use it for carving, it's also an excellent material."

The price, I've already thought about it, 20 gold coins... How does that sound?"

Ji Chen looked at her with a completely open expression and couldn't help but be stunned.

Wasn't she being too honest?

White Umbrella was the most innocent player he had ever seen, directly revealing the cost of the crystal.

Other players typically tend to create a touching narrative about the challenges and difficulties they faced in acquiring a crystal like this.

Seeing Ji Chen's stunned expression, White Umbrella thought that the price might be too high, and her face showed a bit of panic. She quickly said, "Is 20 gold coins too much? How about 15? No, 20 gold coins should be enough."

10 gold coins is the lowest price I can go, or else I won't be able to cover the next voyage's ship fee."

Seeing her on the verge of tears, Ji Chen sighed and directly took out a handful of gold coins from his backpack and put them into a small bag for her. "This price will do."

Taking the bag, White Umbrella hesitated for a moment, then opened it to take a look.

Inside were a small pile of round metal coins, the universal Aureus gold coins of this world. She didn't know how many were in there, but it was definitely more than 20.

"This is too much..."

Ji Chen waved his hand indifferently. "Take it," his words carried an air of no refusal.

White Umbrella pursed her lips, hesitated for a moment, and then put the gold coins into her bag. She immediately handed over the crystal with both hands.

Then, she earnestly bowed and said with gratitude, "Thank you, big brother."

Ji Chen nodded and then put the crystal into his bag. Without any further delay, he turned and walked away.

There was nothing else here that caught his attention besides this crystal.

As he walked on the road, he pondered.

Even though their interaction had been brief, it was easy to see White Umbrella's distress.

She most likely had lost her territory. Players who lost their territory lost all the privileges that came with it. Apart from retaining some of the system's limited functions, they were hardly different from the indigenous inhabitants.

Among these players who lost their territory, those who managed to adapt well, like Luo Yang, could rely on the properties they acquired through various coincidences to live a somewhat comfortable life.

Then there were those who adapted somewhat less successfully, like Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair. They could still make a living by taking on missions and tasks, relying on their skills, courage, and adaptability.

Lastly, there were those who lacked both the necessary skills and courage and found it challenging to adapt to their surroundings. This group represented the most disadvantaged players, often struggling day by day just to meet their basic needs.

Seeing her so grateful for a few gold coins, it was clear that she belonged to the last group.

These gold coins might not even be enough for a few drinks.

But after some thought, Ji Chen shook his head.

He realized that he might have become too accustomed to dealing with large sums of gold coins, causing his sense of value to become unbalanced.

For example, the twenty gold coins White Umbrella quoted might seem like a small amount, but in this world, it was already considered quite substantial.

Even considering the relatively high prices in Maple City compared to other places, if one wasn't purchasing expensive items but merely using gold coins for their daily necessities, this amount would be enough to live comfortably for half a month.

By this standard, the thousand gold coins that Monkey Gift and Monkey Gift Hair had mentioned earning from a reconnaissance mission, split between the two of them at 500 gold coins each, would be enough to sustain them for one or two years..

Chapter 379: Little White Rabbit, Tidal Surge Core (2)

And the reason they spent their gold coins so quickly was probably because they liked to frequent the Sixth Street area.

That place was known as the gold mine of Maple City. With slightly deeper pockets, one could easily spend hundreds of gold coins in a single night. If one were to order top-shelf items, it would cost at least a thousand gold coins as a starting point.

Therefore, when Ji Chen, under the name of Mr. Zhao, reserved the Cat Tail Tavern for one night, he spent nearly a hundred thousand gold coins. It was a move that would astonish many players for a good reason.

The expenditure of a single night was equivalent to ordering 100 top-shelf items in the Sixth Street area. This was truly staggering.

However, he had no intention of supporting the likes of White Umbrella and similar individuals. There were too many people like her, and he couldn't possibly support them all. Besides, he had no obligation to do so.

Ji Chen returned to the Cat Tail Tavern, went to the third floor, closed the door to his room, and began to examine the crystal.

From the outside, this crystal appeared beautiful in color and luster, but it didn't seem to have any other special features.

He narrowed his eyes and examined its panel.

[A Beautifully Colored Crystal]

[Color]: Ice Blue

[Effect]: None

[A crystal that doesn't appear to be particularly special, perhaps it can be used as a decoration.]

Looking at the information on the panel, Ji Chen couldn't help but furrow his brow.

Thanks to the system's consistent accuracy in providing information, he was very certain about this panel information.

However, that didn't mean it couldn't be wrong.

Just like when he used the 7-star treasure, the Illusory Mask, his entire appearance underwent a massive change, and even his external panel changed. His name changed from Ji Chen to Zhao Liangchen.

But this didn't mean the system's information was incorrect; underneath that appearance, he was indeed Zhao Liangchen.

Therefore, there was such an example.

Ji Chen suspected that this crystal might also have a similar situation.

He extended his spiritual power over it, and that peculiar feeling resurfaced, even stronger than before.

How should he put it?

In terms of appearance, there was a scent of the sea emanating from the crystal, making him, who was already a Tidal Dominator profession, feel quite familiar.

This matched what White Umbrella said, that it was obtained from a small island in the ocean.

After a brief contemplation, Ji Chen decided to take a risky experiment. He tossed the crystal directly onto the ground.

Clang—

The crystal collided with the floor, emitting a dull sound, but it remained undamaged and smooth, as White Umbrella had described.

Physical impact couldn't break it?

Then let's try magic.

He picked up the crystal.

With a thought, a strand of mana surged from his palm, enveloping the crystal.

At this moment, a strange scene unfolded.

After being enveloped by mana, the hard crystal began to melt, and the surface layer of hard material turned into splashes of water, gradually revealing what lay inside.

It was a polyhedron with dozens of faces, filled with angles and lines of geometric precision.

The deep blue color exuded a sense of depth, vastness, and mystery. Wisps of tangible energy radiated from it, and at a glance, it was clear that this was no ordinary item.

Ji Chen was astonished. There was actually something hidden inside?

Suppressing his excitement, he looked closely.

[Tidal Surge Core]

[Tier]: Special

[Effect]: Can create a waterless area suitable for terrestrial creatures to live in underwater.

[Range]: 1 kilometer in diameter

[Duration]: Permanent

!!!

The moment he saw the information, he immediately thought of where he could use this Tidal Surge Core.

An area where terrestrial creatures could survive underwater...

If he placed it in a certain underwater location, he could create a temporary living space there. So, if the Crown of the Ocean encountered enemies it couldn't resist, he could evacuate a batch of residents to this refuge.

Or, it could be used for military purposes, by transferring the entire military recruitment camp here. Even if the enemy breached their territory, they wouldn't be able to find the recruitment camp, preserving their foundation and allowing them to make a comeback later.

Furthermore, it could also be used as a place for storing supplies...

There were so many possible uses for this Tidal Surge Core.

As long as it was used wisely, it could play a significant role.

Ji Chen happily stowed it away in his backpack, in high spirits.

To think that he had casually gone out and unexpectedly acquired such a valuable treasure. Anyone would be all smiles in his shoes.

With the idea of striking while the iron was hot, Ji Chen left the Cat Tail Tavern once again and continued to stroll through the streets, looking for anything others might have overlooked.

As he leisurely browsed, passing by the spot where White Umbrella had set up her stall earlier, he noticed that she was nowhere to be seen.

Ji Chen didn't pay it much mind; perhaps she thought this place was too remote and had set up her stall elsewhere.

With great interest, he wandered among the various stalls, wholeheartedly playing the role of an ordinary player.

Along the way, he didn't sense anything unusual, and there were no more opportunities to find something valuable.

After all, there weren't that many overlooked treasures lying around.

After some thought, Ji Chen changed his focus.

Next, he wanted to see if he could find a recruitment camp core that met his preferences. Since obtaining the Tyrant Azure Dragon as a unit, it had been a while since a new unit had joined the Crown of the Ocean.

After such a long time, and with increasingly powerful enemies, Ji Chen was no longer interested in third-tier units. At the very least, fourth-tier units were worth his attention.

Although there were external upgrades like the Military Talent Tree that could forcefully increase the tier of units, not every unit was worth investing resources in for advancement.

For example, there was no value in advancing a third-tier unit like the Murloc Ranger, as the Murloc race itself wasn't particularly impressive, with few skills and average effects.

On the other hand, the Dragon Blood Murlocs, which evolved from Shallow Sea Murlocs through a fortuitous event involving Dragon Blood Crystals, were worth their weight in gold. If it weren't for the coincidence of evolving into Dragon Blood Murlocs with the Dragon Blood Crystals, Ji Chen would have left them sitting on the bench with the Murloc Rangers.

All in all, the Crown of the Ocean had only a few usable units: the Tyrant Azure Dragon, the Lobster Rider, the Elemental Sea Pixies...

As Ji Chen strolled among the stalls, his eyes were sharp.

Soon, he stopped at a street-side stall specializing in recruitment camp cores.

The stall owner was a young male player, and seeing Ji Chen's apparent interest, he enthusiastically greeted him.

"Brother, you look like someone with great potential for the future!

Feel free to look around, and if you find a core you like, just let me know. I guarantee the price will satisfy you!"

He started with some flattery to stabilize the customer's mood.

Ji Chen smiled and casually crouched down, just observing without touching anything.

Players could directly store items in their backpacks, so there was an unwritten rule during transactions that you couldn't touch the items.

He pointed to one of the recruitment camp cores about the size of a fist and asked, “How much is this core?”

The young player glanced at it and said with a smile, “Brother, you’ve got good taste. This unit is the Water Nymph Archer, a 7-star Tier 2 unit. It’s a ranged damage-dealing unit that can condense water bows and arrows for shooting.

In a water-rich environment, as long as it doesn’t suffer fatal injuries, it can use water to heal itself, without worrying about post-battle healing, unlike human units.”

Hearing this, Ji Chen became somewhat interested. It sounded like it matched the style of units in the Crown of the Ocean.

Seeing his interest, the young player’s face displayed a sly smile. “Besides all that, the Water Nymph Archers have great figures. They’ve got a nice front and a perky backside. Just by their name, you can tell they’re quite ‘wet’.

They can handle the battlefield and the bedroom, you know.”

Ji Chen turned speechless.

Well, well, I didn’t expect a guy like you with thick eyebrows and big eyes to come up with these things.

He was quite interested, but not because of the “wet” matter; he hadn’t become so depraved as to be interested in units that way.

This unit did indeed fit well with the shortcomings of the Crown of the Ocean’s units..

Chapter 380: Two New Unit Types, Four Million Gold

Coins, Black Hawk Arrow Tower

Currently, in the Ocean Crown’s unit system, there were Nagas as melee tanks, Lobster Riders and Tyrant Azure Dragons for charges, and Elemental Sea Pixies for spell damage, but there was a lack of long-range damage.

Originally, Dragon Blood Murlocs possessed some ranged capabilities, and their tridents had made significant contributions to the Ocean Crown’s battles.

However, the issue was that while the Dragon Blood Murlocs’ trident throws had immense power, the process of throwing and summoning consumed a lot of time.

In gaming terms, they could deal instant damage, but their sustained damage output was insufficient, unable to provide continuous suppression and threat like other ranged units.

Furthermore, the highly mobile Dragon Blood Murlocs standing behind the Nagas seemed to contradict the primary advantage and intention of this unit.

Dragon Blood Murlocs were supposed to be agile archers, attacking while moving, rather than being confined to one spot.

Now, there was a need for a stationary archer unit that could deliver large-scale sustained fire, posing a continuous threat to the enemy.

This Water Nymph Archer seemed like a good choice.

[Water Nymph Archer]

[Race]: Nymph

[Tier]: Second Tier, 7 stars

[Starting Level]: 5

[Skills]: Water Condensation, Water Recovery, Physical Resistance, Water Vine Entanglement

[Unit Traits]: Magic Vulnerability (15% increased magic damage taken)

[A long-range ocean unit with no significant advantages other than a good physique]

Seeing Ji Chen continuously examining the recruitment camp core of the Water Nymph Archers, the stall owner's smile grew even stronger. He thought to himself that it seemed like another deal was coming.

"Besides this one, do you have more recruitment camp cores for Water Nymph Archers?"

"Yes, of course." The stall owner didn't waste any time since a big customer had arrived. He directly took out nine identical recruitment camp cores from his backpack, adding them to the one on the stall, making a total of ten.

Having ten cores was just enough, as having only one or two would result in producing only a few dozen each week, significantly reducing his interest in purchasing.

"How much for one?"

"One for 800 gold coins."

Ji Chen nodded; this price was acceptable to him. Without overthinking it, he took out a large bag of gold coins.

"Here's 8,000 gold coins."

He casually tossed it onto the stall, the weighty impact and the jingling of coins as they collided immediately drew the notice of onlookers. Even the stall owner was momentarily surprised.

His expression changed.

He thought Ji Chen only wanted two or three cores, but he didn't expect him to buy them all. 8,000 gold coins were not a small sum, enough to allow him to live comfortably for a long time.

Indeed, a big customer!

After a brief moment of shock, the stall owner suppressed his excitement and quickly collected the gold coins. When he saw that his gold balance had suddenly increased by 8,000, his smile became even brighter.

He promptly handed over the ten Water Nymph Archer recruitment camp cores with utmost respect.

When you have the money, you're my daddy!

After receiving them, Ji Chen left leisurely, continuing to stroll through the streets.

Since he was already here, he might as well continue exploring.

After all, he would soon board the returning ship after the auction, and he didn't know when he would be back in Maple City.

As he walked, he stopped at another stall, exchanged a few words with the stall owner, and then casually threw down 7,500 gold coins, obtaining ten unit recruitment camp cores.

[Crab Guardians]

[Race]: Crab

[Tier]: Second Tier, 4 stars

[Starting Level]: 5

[Skills]: Guardian, Recovery, Resistance, Taunt

[Unit Traits]: Life Link (able to share a certain amount of damage with each other, sharing a portion of their life)

From the name and skills, it was evident that Crab Guardians were purely defensive units, distinct from the Naga Berserkers.

It was also easy to see that they complemented the Water Nymph Archers.

In gaming terms, one was a fragile archer, and the other was a protective tank. Together, they significantly increased the survival rate of the Water Nymph Archers.

Having found two excellent units, Ji Chen was in a good mood, strolling through the streets like a boss.

However, he didn't come across any units that met his preferences after that, so he returned to the Cat Tail Tavern.

After a morning of auctions, the event gradually came to an end. Despite the conclusion of the auction, the influx of people didn't disperse immediately.

Many players still lingered in the Black Gold District, bringing substantial revenue to the shops, especially Luo Yang's Cat Tail Tavern. As the most prosperous tavern in the Black Gold District, it earned in a single day what it would typically make in half a month, leaving Luo Yang grinning from ear to ear.

After a thorough calculation, Ji Chen had earned approximately 3.8 million gold coins from the auction, making it his most significant gold income to date.

Combined with what he already had, he now possessed a whopping 4 million gold coins, a substantial fortune.

With so much gold, he could easily deposit it into the international bank established by the Elves in Maple City, and the annual interest alone would be enough for his extravagant spending.

However, gold only held value when used, so while in Maple City, Ji Chen decided to spend it as much as possible..

