

Ocean Lord 391

Chapter 391 - 391: The Six Major Troops, The Alarm Resounds

Before officially proceeding with the upgrade, Ji Chen first used the Resurrection Altar to resurrect a large batch of troops that had died before.

This included the Naga Berserker and Dragon Blood Murlocs who had died during the trip to the Northern Continent, as well as the Murloc Rangers and Self-Detonating Water Spider which had perished in the defense against Ferode's fleet.

Although the recruitment camps for the latter had been destroyed and could no longer expand in scale, the Resurrection Altar had the advantage of being able to resurrect a sufficient number of troops, and the resources consumed each time were fixed.

Therefore, resurrecting them together was not a problem.

Unfortunately, the Half-Orc Warrior, Lizardmen Warrior, and Ruins Guardian were not recruited from the recruitment camps and could not be resurrected using the altar.

After resurrecting these troops, Ji Chen proceeded to recruit the four troops that were about to be upgraded: the Naga Berserker, Dragon Blood Murlocs, and two others.

Currently, recruiting these units only demands regular resources, but once they are upgraded, it could necessitate rare resources.

After recruiting all the troops that had been accumulated for two weeks, he opened the military talent tree interface.

At the top of the interface, there were two new troop sub-pages.

He clicked on one to take a look.

To advance the Water Nymph Archer from Tier 2, 7 stars to Tier 5,1 star, required 210,000 ordinary resources and 40,000 rare resources, while advancing the Crab Guardians from Tier 2, 4 stars to Tier 5,1 star, required 200,000 ordinary resources and 45,000 rare resources.

Just these two troops alone required 410,000 ordinary resources and 85,000 rare resources.

Fortunately, the population of the Crown of the Ocean was now large, and the rate of resource collection was very fast. The ordinary resources had already filled the warehouses, numbering in the millions, and there was no need to worry at all.

Without a moment of hesitation.

Ji Chen directly upgraded them. With a burst of light, the recruitment camps of the two new troops became more magnificent and grand in the white light.

Then, he shifted his gaze from these twenty new troop recruitment camps to the recruitment camps of other troops.

After some consideration, he decided on four troops.

Naga Berserkers, Elemental Sea Pixies, Lobster Riders, and Dragon Blood Murlocs.

The reason was simple; these four troops were the main troops of the Crown of the Ocean. He had great confidence in their potential, and there were a sufficient number of recruitment camps for them, making it easier to expand their scale.

These four troops covered a meat shield in close combat, a spell-based ranged attack, a charge and breakthrough, and a mobile support role, forming a relatively complete combat system, with none being dispensable.

Setting aside distractions, he began the upgrades.

Consuming 260,000 ordinary resources and 50,000 rare resources, he upgraded the 4th Tier 5-star Naga Berserker to the 5th Tier 3-star, renaming it Naga Guardians.

Consuming 250,000 ordinary resources and 50,000 rare resources, he upgraded the 4th Tier 3-star Elemental Sea Pixies to the 5th Tier 2-star, renaming them Silver Sea Pixies.

Consuming 250,000 ordinary resources and 45,000 rare resources, he upgraded the 4th Tier 1-star Lobster Rider to the 5th Tier 1-star, renaming it Lobster Guardian Knight.

When it was time for the Dragon Blood Murlocs, Ji Chen took out the batch of Dragon Blood Crystals he had obtained from slaying the Marshland Dragon and chose to upgrade the Dragon Blood Murlocs on that talent tree.

Consuming 300,000 ordinary resources and 55,000 rare resources, he upgraded the 4th Tier 3-star Dragon Blood Murlocs to the 5th Tier 3-star, keeping their name as Dragon Blood Murlocs.

This wave of upgrades for the six troops cost a total of 1.47 million units of ordinary resources and 285,000 units of rare resources.

The resources in the Crown of the Ocean's account had significantly decreased, with almost a third of the recently acquired rare resources disappearing.

However, no matter how he looked at it, the reduction in resources always left a sense of disappointment and regret.

But the results it brought were quite pleasing.

All six troops had become 5th Tier troops, with their strength increased by several times, if not more.

Their external appearance had also clearly become much more powerful.

The Naga Guardians had become even more robust and fierce. Its already massive body had expanded by two more layers, and its height had reached an imposing 2.5 meters, making it look like a small giant.

The bulge on the head of the Dragon Blood Murlocs was even more pronounced as if a pair of dragon horns would burst through the skin at any moment. The scales on their bodies had a more streamlined feel, naturally emitting a strange dragon aura.

Even their fellow troops couldn't help but instinctively keep their distance from them—such was the power of their aura.

As their name suggested, the Silver Sea Pixies had several strands of silver on their skin, and their emanating magical fluctuations were even more turbulent...

The Lobster Guardian Riders donned heavy armor, and the four-meter-long lance in their hands seemed capable of tearing through any defense...

With greater power came higher recruitment costs.

Water Nymph Archers, 5th Tier 1-star, with recruitment of 14 per week, costing 900 units of rare resources per individual.

Crab Guardians, 5th Tier 1-star, with recruitment of 14 per week, costing 950 units of rare resources per individual.

Lobster Guardian Riders, 5th Tier 1-star, with recruitment of 14 per week, costing 1050 units of rare resources per individual.

Silver Sea Pixies, 5th Tier 2-star, with recruitment of 14 per week, costing 1200 units of rare resources per individual.

Naga Guardians, 5th Tier 3-star, with recruitment of 14 per week, costing 1250 units of rare resources per individual.

Dragon Blood Murlocs, 5th Tier 3-star, with recruitment of 14 per week, costing 1400 units of rare resources per individual.

Just like the Tyrant Azure Dragon, which was also a 5th-tier troop, recruiting these units now required rare resources.

Looking at the recruitment costs, even just recruiting these six troops per week... Ji Chen's mind raced, and he finally arrived at a number that left him dumbfounded.

94,500 units of rare resources.

If you added the recruitment of three Tyrant Azure Dragons at 7,200 units each per week and one Tidal Sea Spirit at 500 units, the total cost for a normal recruitment wave would be 102,200 units of rare resources..

Chapter 392: The Six Major Troops, The Alarm Resounds (2)

Taking a closer look, of the 690,000 rare resources, 285,000 have already been spent, leaving only 405,000, which should be sufficient for recruitment for just under four weeks.

Ji Chen initially thought that with this much-accumulated resources, it would be enough to last for quite some time. However, he didn't expect the recruitment cost for Tier 5 units to be so extravagant, depleting his resources so quickly.

Fortunately, he had pre-recruited the accumulated number of units for the next two weeks, saving him a considerable amount of resources.

But thinking about the upcoming hero upgrades, it was clear there would be more expenses ahead. Ji Chen shook his head with a hint of a headache, already contemplating where he could obtain another batch of rare resources.

The cost was significant, but recruitment was necessary.

With a light tap of his finger, 33,600 units of rare resources were instantly deducted from his account, and one by one, units with impressive auras emerged from various recruitment camps.

In an instant, the number of troops on the record of the Crown of the Ocean surged dramatically.

Apart from the Water Nymph Archers, Crab Guardians, two new units, and the Tyrant Azure Dragon, the quantities of the other four units had all surpassed the four-digit mark, with thousands of units densely arranged from the open space all the way into the forest.

The current main unit quantities were as follows:

Water Nymph Archers, Tier 5,1-star, 140 units.

Crab Guardians, Tier 5,1-star, 140 units.

Lobster Guardian Knights, Tier 5,1-star, 1,090 units.

Silver Sea Pixies, Tier 5, 2-star, 1,200 units.

Naga Guardians, Tier 5, 3-star, 1,100 units.

Dragon Blood Murlocs, Tier 5, 3-star, 1,120 units.

Tyrant Azure Dragon, Tier 5, 5-star, 18 units.

Tidal Sea Spirits, Tier 4,1-star, 10 units.

As the vendor had described, the Water Nymph Archers were all charming and graceful, with well-defined figures. However, upon closer inspection, their bodies emitted a faint blue light – their bodies were composed of water, and they could heal themselves when injured.

They wielded elegant crystal bows, with the bow made of crystal, and the string and arrows made of water, making them quite eye-catching.

As for the Crab Guardians, they were just as their name suggested, tall crab-like creatures in humanoid form, clad in heavy armor. They held large crab shell-shaped shields in their left hands and crab-claw-shaped polearm weapons in their right hands, truly embodying the characteristics of their unit.

Their fierce presence was no less impressive than that of the Naga Guardians. Standing beside the Water Nymph Archers, who were known for their beauty, the Crab Guardians formed a striking and visually impactful combination, resembling a fusion of beasts and princesses.

And their panel data also had some highlights.

[Water Nymph Archers]

[Race]: Nymph

[Tier]: Tier 5,1-star

[Level]: 25

[Skills]: Water Condensation (Red skill, allows the arrows to condense using water, increasing the range by 50%. In a watery environment, an additional 50% range and 50% power increase)

Water Recovery (Red skill, can use water to recover injuries, immune to certain death skills and curses)

Quick Arrow Draw (Red skill, increases firing speed by 50%)

Water Vine Bind (Red skill, 10% chance for arrows to burst into water vines, binding nearby enemies)

[Unit Traits]: Spell Penetration (Arrows carry spell burns and penetration)

[Fit for both the battlefield and the bedroom]

[Crab Guardians]

[Race]: Crab

[Tier]: Tier 5,1-star

[Level]: 25

[Skills]: Crab Shield (Red skill, raise a large shield to form a shield array, greatly reducing damage taken)

Rapid Recovery (Red skill, increases recovery speed by 300% after taking damage)

Resistance (Red skill, increases physical and magical resistance by 100%, enhances the shield's resistance to impact)

Taunt (Red skill, can taunt enemies within a certain range, greatly increasing their hostility)

[Unit Traits]: Life Link (Can share a portion of damage and life with each other)

The combat capabilities displayed by Water Nymph Archers in environments with and without water were entirely different.

Especially in the ocean, their ammunition was almost endless, and their combat power would reach another level.

The Crab Guardians, on the other hand, were more dedicated to their role as meat shields. Their skills all emphasized one thing: "Come and attack me."

Especially the classic meat shield skill, Taunt, would undoubtedly make them a headache for enemies.

Crab Guardians could not only protect Water Nymph Archers but they could also shield the extremely fragile Silver Sea Pixies under the cover of their large shields. This created an ideal environment for enhanced combat effectiveness and allowed the Naga Guardians to be fully utilized.

From the results, strengthening these two units was definitely worth it, and it was even a profitable decision.

After all, enhancing units through the talent tree involved a certain degree of luck. For example, a low-tier unit might look good initially, but after enhancement, it might only improve its existing skills to a limited extent. However, some units, despite having unimpressive starting stats, could gain powerful new skills after enhancement, making them take off directly.

Ji Chen couldn't help but admire his excellent judgment.

At this moment, an eerie alarm sounded throughout the Ocean Crown, echoing through the sky.

Ji Chen's expression suddenly changed. Enemy attack!?

The alarms in the Ocean Crown had three levels. The first was a mild alarm, indicating that roaming monsters of low threat level were approaching in groups. Residents didn't need to take shelter and could continue their normal activities, as the military would quickly eliminate the threat.

Events like mild alarms occurred every one or two days.

The second was a moderate alarm, signifying an attack by enemies with some level of threat. The territory would be put on alert, and residents needed to gather and follow commands for possible evacuation.

This level of alarm was rare, with only a few instances over the past few months, such as the Hanseatic Chamber of Commerce invasion.

The third and highest level of alarm meant entering a state of war. All residents had to immediately stop what they were doing and follow emergency plans to seek refuge in the Kobold Caves. The entire military would be placed on high alert and take up combat positions.

This level of alarm, representing the highest threat, had only been triggered by the invasion of the Sea Heirs and the recent attack by the Ferode Fleet.

Now, as the alarm signaling the highest level of threat rang out, it meant that either hostile creatures or another indigenous faction were invading.

Various possibilities flashed through Ji Chen's mind in an instant.

He quickly made up his mind.

Without wasting any time, Ji Chen led the newly recruited units to the Stone Plaza.

At this moment, numerous residents had gathered in the square.

They didn't show much panic on their faces. Under the command of Wilus and some lizardmen warriors, they orderly began moving toward the Kobold Caves.

Upon seeing Ji Chen, Wilus quickly walked over.

Ji Chen spoke with a serious tone.

"Report the information about the invaders."

Wilus's expression changed, and he hurriedly replied.

"Report, my lord. The warning lighthouse has detected fifteen large objects approaching from the northeast of the Stormy Sea. Based on the size of the red dots and the formation, it is highly likely to be a fleet.

But we currently cannot determine which faction they belong to, whether they are friend or foe, and we are unable to assess their strength at the moment.

For safety, I have dispatched a few Sky Guardians and Ocean Guardians for reconnaissance. We estimate that we will soon have more information about them."

Ji Chen's expression became serious.

“You did the right thing. However, ensure that the residents evacuate as quickly as possible. People are the most precious wealth of the Ocean Crown, and we cannot let any harm come to them.”

“I will evacuate the residents as soon as possible.”

Wilus nodded earnestly.

The Sky Guardians had the ability to soar through the skies, and their falcon-like forms made them highly efficient in reconnaissance. They quickly transmitted the information they had gathered.

The fifteen red dots were indeed fifteen steel warships, more than double the number of the Ferode Fleet, and their firepower was formidable.

However, the flags flying on these warships were not from the Kingdom of Bass, but from another nation—the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

Upon learning this information, Ji Chen couldn’t help but feel puzzled. This was a time when tensions were running high between the two nations. Why would a fleet from the Lienhardt Grand Duchy arrive here?

Although he was puzzled, Ji Chen remained vigilant, without letting his guard down.

Thinking in a more sinister direction, Ji Chen speculated that these might be warships from the Kingdom of Bass, disguised with the flags of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy to deceive others.

Setting aside these thoughts, Ji Chen wasted no time. With a commanding gesture, he led his troops and Anina into the sea, swiftly heading towards the direction of the fleet.

If this was indeed the latter scenario he suspected, the best course of action would be to intercept this fleet in the open sea, far away from the New Moon Islands. He couldn’t afford to let the already battered Ocean Crown face the threat of artillery fire once more.

After the recent strengthening and recruitment of numerous Tier 5 units, hundreds of them now stood ready, brimming with determination to face the enemy.

Ji Chen had confidence that he could keep them all here!

Chapter 393: Special Task Fleet, Surprise, Her Highness’ Favor?

Ji Chen and his group advanced at a rapid pace, soon spotting a fleet of fifteen steel warships on the sea. The majestic lion flag on the bridge fluttered in the wind.

The warships were bustling with activity, and their cannons were slightly raised, clearly in a state of readiness for battle.

Something seemed suspicious about this.

After some thought, Ji Chen ordered the entire army to submerge into the sea and prepare for combat.

With a wave of his hand, he led Anina forward.

After a moment, the fleet with the lion flag noticed them and changed course, heading in their direction.

Several escort ships on the flanks moved forward diagonally, and their gun turrets slowly rotated, positioning themselves for the best firing angles.

From Ji Chen's perspective, this formation appeared hostile.

He hesitated for a moment.

With a determined expression, Ji Chen knew that ensuring his own safety was the top priority.

Mana within him surged like a powerful engine, spreading substantial energy in all directions. Countless bodies of seawater defied gravity and floated upwards under the influence of his mana.

Then, like magnets attracting each other, the seawater bonded together, gradually forming a colossal water giant, standing at around forty to fifty meters tall. This giant was clad in armor, wore a helmet, and held a war spear.

Standing on the giant's shoulder, Ji Chen raised his right hand as if preparing to throw something, and the water giant mirrored his action, pointing its spear towards the center of the fleet.

Once launched, this attack would create massive waves, enough to deal a significant blow to the fleet.

Simultaneously, thousands of uniform fifth-tier troops lurked silently underwater, ready to burst forth and deliver a devastating assault at Ji Chen's command.

As the fleet drew closer, Ji Chen's eyes narrowed, preparing to launch the spear.

However, at that moment, all the warships lowered their gun barrels, deactivated all exposed weaponry, and raised banners bearing the Crown of the Ocean and other flags arranged in a specific pattern.

The arrangement of these flags conveyed a message — a message of friendship and goodwill.

Seeing this, Ji Chen's slightly furrowed brow relaxed. He lowered the raised war spear.

One of the warships approached rapidly, showing no signs of hostility.

At the bow of the ship, a soldier gazed at the towering giant with some apprehension and spoke loudly.

"May I inquire if you are Lord of the Stormy Sea, the Master of the Ocean's Crown, Ji Chen?"

Ji Chen remained expressionless and replied calmly, "Yes, it is I. What brings you here?"

"We are a special envoy fleet from the Lienhardt Grand Duchy's royal fleet. Her Highness Monica received news of the Crown of the Ocean and its situation, so she has specifically sent us to provide support."

Did Monica send them?

Ji Chen suddenly realized and, after some thought, pieced together the situation.

It seemed that Monica also knew that their information had been leaked. The Kingdom of Bass was undoubtedly taking action regarding the Crown of the Ocean, so they dispatched this fleet for support.

The idea was good, but it was a bit too late. The war had ended almost a day ago, and they were only arriving now. Their arrival could be seen as adding icing on the cake but not as timely assistance. Therefore, Ji Chen had no particular gratitude toward them.

He replied with a cold attitude, "I understand."

Ji Chen's response left the soldier puzzled.

Huh, why was his reaction so different from what we had expected?

Shouldn't he be grateful and excited that we came to the rescue?

In the soldier's eyes, when a prestigious Lord like Ji Chen learned that a small territory like the Crown of the Ocean was facing off against the Kingdom of Bass, even if it was just a small reconnaissance fleet, he might have been frightened.

So, when he learned that the Lienhardt Grand Duchy was coming to support, shouldn't he have been overjoyed?

Why does he seem so indifferent?

The soldier had mixed feelings, but he focused on his mission and asked, "Your Excellency, has the fleet from the Kingdom of Bass arrived yet?"

Ji Chen nodded without hesitation.

"Where are they now?"

"They have been captured."

The soldier was once again taken aback.

Captured?

Is it the capture he's thinking of?

Seeing the soldier's reaction, Ji Chen didn't want to waste more time there and casually said, "The leader of your troop can follow me back to the island while the rest of you remain here."

After saying this, he waved his hand, dispersing the colossal water giant, and mounted a Tyrant Azure Dragon, taking Anina with him. Without looking back, they headed back.

The soldier watched Ji Chen's receding figure and, after a moment of confusion, promptly reported all this.

A ship from the special envoy fleet docked in the harbor.

Soldiers and sailors on the deck looked at the devastated port and the five steel warships anchored not far away. They were familiar with the banners on those ships; they belonged to the Kingdom of Bass and were the target of their mission.

However, at this moment, those warships were quietly docked in the harbor. Some people were moving on them, but it was evident that they were not soldiers of the Kingdom of Bass.

Taking another look at the scene of devastation, it resembled the ruins of a port that had just endured a major battle.

Among the ruins, there were many robust men working diligently under the supervision of some lizardmen, earnestly clearing away the remnants of buildings.

This made them believe in the fact that this territory had successfully repelled the Kingdom of Bass fleet's attack and had even captured five out of six warships.

Among the soldiers and sailors, a young Lienhardt Grand Duchy officer felt particularly conflicted at this moment.

Just a while back, when Her Highness Monica personally called him, he was absolutely thrilled.

After all, she was the Grand Duke's prized gem, the most esteemed and gorgeous woman in the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, brimming with talent.. She was the ideal romantic interest for every man in the Grand Duchy!

Chapter 394: Special Task Fleet, Surprise, Her Highness Favor(2)

He was no exception. Her Highness Monica was still single, and it could be because she recognized his talent and good looks, which made her appreciate him.

Just the thought of that possibility filled him with excitement.

However, when he learned that Her Highness had instructed him to lead a special expeditionary fleet to rescue a territory belonging to a Glory Lord, and her words showed admiration, agreement, and closeness to that Glory Lord, he felt a strong sense of reluctance.

Why should a mere Glory Lord receive such favor from Her Highness?

Moreover, during this tense standoff with the Kingdom of Bass, she had specifically dispatched him to lead a fleet for support?

Why!?

Sob, sob... Did the prized gem of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, the one he held in high regard, really need to be claimed by some unknown Glory Lord?

Although he was reluctant, Her Highness's orders were absolute, so he set sail with his fleet, feeling somewhat uneasy.

Because he was going to save someone whom his beloved woman might be interested in, it made him feel like a pitiful figure.

So, he couldn't help but entertain some sinister thoughts, wishing that the Kingdom of Bass would eliminate this Glory Lord, preventing the Lord from taking Her Highness away.

It wasn't until just now.

Witnessing this Glory Lord's ability to summon such a fearsome Water Giant and discovering that the Kingdom of Bass's fleet had suffered defeat, with all of them taken prisoner, his feelings of disdain disappeared in an instant.

Instead, a sense of approval arose.

Indeed, he was a person recognized by Her Highness, and his reputation was well-deserved!

Suppressing his complex emotions, he, under the guidance of a fearsome young woman, arrived at a heavily armed castle still bearing the scars of war. There, he met the Lord of Glory.

A handsome and extraordinary young man sat casually on a throne on the steps.

The undeniable air of authority exuding from the Glory Lord gave him the impression that he was encountering a high-ranking noble in the Grand Duke's court.

It was quite imposing.

"I heard that you were sent by Monica to support the Crown of the Ocean?"

The young commander wiped the sweat that had appeared on his forehead at some point, nodded, and replied, "That's right, Your Excellency. Her Highness learned that news of the Crown of the Ocean had been leaked. Additionally, there were reports from the front indicating that a reconnaissance fleet from the Kingdom of Bass vanished in the ocean, and their disappearance was in the direction of the Stormy Sea."

Because of the concern that the Crown of the Ocean might come under attack from this fleet, she specially appointed me to lead a special expeditionary fleet to provide support.

Your Excellency, you're really lucky. You've made Her Highness Monica care so much about you..."

His words were filled with a sour tone.

Ji Chen glanced at the young commander, who wore a sour expression as if he had just tasted something extremely bitter, and couldn't help but chuckle.

Monica had indeed put her heart into it this time. In such a tense moment with the Kingdom of Bass, she actually dispatched such a fleet for support.

But what she didn't expect was that, in just a short month or two, Ji Chen had become so powerful that he could single-handedly destroy two warships and make Ferode and the others surrender willingly through his "virtue".

"Thanks for Monica's concern, but the Crown of the Ocean has already defeated them and emerged victorious."

The young commander nodded without reservation.

Although it seemed like they had suffered quite a bit of damage and appeared somewhat chaotic, being able to build such a promising territory and defeat a fleet was truly remarkable.

Moreover, he had witnessed several powerful heroes, and the fleet had detected a hidden army of thousands in the sea, a military force that, even if placed in the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, would undoubtedly be considered a main army.

The young commander thought for a moment and started feeling sour again.

Darn it, young, handsome, and powerful, with such a strong army under his command. Is there any room left for anyone else?

However, he was, after all, a well-trained commander, and he quickly suppressed his emotions and explained the other purpose of their visit.

“Your Excellency, besides coming to provide support... though it seems that’s no longer needed, Her Highness also instructed us to deliver a batch of rare resources and information to you along the way.”

Ji Chen’s expression changed.

What a pleasant surprise!

It seemed that Monica, unlike Elin, Thotmudo, and those guys, was quite trustworthy.

This batch of rare resources and materials should be the reward she had promised before.

Of course, this was probably only a part of it. Saving a duchess’s daughter and offending a kingdom wouldn’t come cheap.

Ji Chen was in a good mood and said loudly, “Please convey my thanks to Monica. Since I am her good friend, the Crown of the Ocean is a friend of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, and therefore, the Kingdom of Bass is our enemy.”

The young commander also nodded at this response.

This was what Her Highness hoped to hear, and it was what he had heard as well.

When Her Highness summoned him earlier, she mentioned multiple times that the Crown of the Ocean was a highly potential territory, and its Lord was an existence with boundless potential.

At that time, he had been somewhat skeptical and dismissive, thinking it was just an embellishment for someone she admired.

But after witnessing everything here, he began to agree to some extent.

The Lienhardt Grand Duchy was currently facing threats and pressure from the Kingdom of Bass, and having as many allies and friends as possible was undoubtedly a good thing.

For some reason, he had a subtle feeling that the Crown of the Ocean might give the Kingdom of Bass a big headache.

Setting aside these thoughts, the young commander politely said, “Your Excellency, may I make an earnest request?”

Feeling good after receiving the reward, Ji Chen casually agreed, “Go ahead.”

“This time, the Crown of the Ocean defeated the fleet of the Kingdom of Bass and captured five warships and so many soldiers. Can you hand over the senior officers and their fleet commander to us?”

“Currently, the Grand Duchy and the Kingdom of Bass are engaging in a war of words and actions in the public eye. The tension is increasing, and having these not-so-ordinary captives at this moment would undoubtedly allow us to gain some benefits...”

After a brief consideration, Ji Chen readily agreed.

To him, Ferode and the others weren't of much use. Even if he kept them, they would only serve as miners. Having one more or one less of them didn't make much of a difference. It was better to go with the flow and send them to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

After all, they were the ones footing the bill.

Thinking it over, Ji Chen continued, "The Lienhardt Grand Duchy and the Kingdom of Bass will have a showdown sooner or later, and you're probably making preparations for war right now, aren't you?"

The young commander didn't hide anything and nodded. It was obvious to anyone with common sense that the Kingdom of Bass had gone completely crazy. Their king and the warlords within the kingdom were becoming increasingly warlike, and the smoke of war had started to rise.

"That's right, but why do you ask, Your Excellency?"

"The Crown of the Ocean has a large number of lizardmen skilled in forging, so the warehouse is stocked with a lot of weapons, equipment, and military supplies. However, the Crown of the Ocean doesn't need this much, so..."

The young commander quickly realized his intention. He smiled and nodded.

"The Grand Duchy is currently importing weapons, equipment, and military supplies through various channels to prepare for the war with the Kingdom of Bass. I suppose we wouldn't mind another channel like the Crown of the Ocean.

But this is not a small matter. However, as you are a good friend of Her Highness, I believe Her Highness and the Lord Grand Duke will gladly approve.

This time, I'll load a batch of these goods to take back to the Grand Duchy. I hope their quality will satisfy our soldiers."

Ji Chen smiled confidently. "Don't worry, the goods from the Crown of the Ocean have already passed the market test. They will definitely meet your satisfaction."

The young commander nodded.

His words weren't just empty promises. Before leaving, Her Highness had indeed granted him a certain degree of authority, emphasizing that he should try his best to fulfill the requests of Your Excellency Ji Chen.

One of the privileges included the authority to obtain provisions, so he could accept this arrangement for the time being.

But as he contemplated, he started feeling a bit frustrated.

Her Highness seemed to place a great deal of trust in Lord Ji Chen.

He couldn't help but be infinitely curious about what transpired between Her Highness Monica and Lord Ji Chen during her stay here. It made him increasingly uneasy the more he thought about it.

He resolved to report this matter to the Grand Duke when he returned, as it was starting to seem like a potentially serious issue..

Chapter 395: Reduce Inventory, Cultivate Mindset, Herald

In fact, Ji Chen had provided weapons and gear to Gilder and his team in the Northern Continent, but this didn't impact his sales to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

The reason these four countries along the northwest coast of the Midland Sea, including the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, were distinct was due to a colossal mountain range stretching from southeast to northwest, setting them apart from countries like the Maple Principality and the Elven Empire.

So, these four countries were nominally part of the Northern Continent, but geographically, they weren't.

However, Ji Chen was quite pleased with the opportunity to promote products from his own territory.

Thanks to his ongoing "reduce inventory" efforts, the weapons and equipment that the lizardmen had accumulated in warehouses over the years had mostly been depleted in several large-scale exports. The order from the Lienhardt Grand Duchy had also cleared out the last batch of inventory.

What was exported next were weapons and equipment products that had incorporated dwarven forging techniques and contained higher technological content.

After chatting for a while, the young commander took the initiative to bid farewell.

Ji Chen agreed without hesitation and arranged for someone to escort them to their guest room.

The next afternoon.

The port.

"Don't you want to stay here for a few more days to rest? After all, you have come all the way from the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, and despite the comfort on the ship, there must still be some fatigue from the journey."

The young commander shook his head.

"This mission is to support the Crown of the Ocean and intercept the fleet of the Bass Kingdom. Since Your Excellency has already defeated them, we have no reason to stay any longer.

Moreover, the naval power of the Bass Kingdom is stronger than that of the Grand Duchy, and by taking this special task force away, the pressure on the Grand Duchy's sea area will only increase.

So we need to hurry back to prepare for any possible conflicts and wars that may erupt at any time."

Ji Chen couldn't deny this and nodded.

"Then I wish you a safe journey."

“Thank you for your advice, Your Excellency.”

As if remembering something, Ji Chen took out an envelope with the seal of the Crown of the Ocean and handed it over.

Facing the young commander’s puzzlement, he revealed a mischievous grin.

“Please deliver this letter to Monica for me, and be sure to hand it to her personally.”

He added with a supplementary remark, “There are some secrets concerning the Crown of the Ocean and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy inside, so please do not open it before delivering...”

The smile disappeared from the young commander’s face, and his mouth twitched uncontrollably.

Damn it!

What secrets could there possibly be? Could it be a love letter you’re sending to Her Highness!?

And I have to personally deliver it to Her Highness, too. This is too much!

He gritted his teeth and said, “I will absolutely make sure no one else sees its contents. Your Excellency, so please rest assured.”

Ji Chen looked at the young commander’s changing expressions and the awkward way he received the envelope, nearly bursting out in laughter.

Young man, go through some challenges in life and strengthen your mental fortitude.

Fortunately, at this moment, shouts from the soldiers on the warship came from above.

Sir, the last batch of cargo is loaded and ready to depart at any time!”

The young commander nodded to them, then turned back to look deeply at Ji Chen. After giving a naval salute, he walked up the gangplank onto the deck.

A long and drawn-out ship’s horn sounded gradually.

This special task force, which had visited the Crown of the Ocean and made a brief stop, set sail once again for the open sea, returning to their homeland to defend against ambitious adversaries.

Ji Chen watched them disappear on the distant sea horizon, then turned and headed back.

This time, Monica had sent a whopping 200,000 units of rare resources, partly due to the limited capacity of the warship’s warehouse.

Such extravagance was fitting for the daughter of a Grand Duke.

The saplings planted during their earlier adventure had now grown into abundant fruits.

This unexpected windfall significantly expanded the Crown of the Ocean’s inventory. It replenished most of the rare resources spent on upgrading units, bringing the quantity back to approximately 570,000 units.

This gave him more confidence for the upcoming hero upgrades.

Meanwhile, the severely injured half-orc hero, Daro, and the weakened Verena were recuperating.

Thanks to Irona’s potions, Daro’s injuries were fully stabilized. With the half-orcs robust vitality, he was quickly regaining his strength and would be combat-ready in just two weeks.

Verena, on the other hand, was a bit more challenging. Centuries of continuous damage had left her body riddled with hidden injuries.

Despite the assistance of potions, her recovery was slow. Her current level had only recovered to 28, and her combat strength was less than one-thousandth of her prime.

It seemed unlikely that she could carry a significant burden in the near future.

Ji Chen had to focus his attention on the bottle of Deep Sea Naga Original Bloodline.

According to the system's explanation, it could create a powerful Naga hero, but the specifics were unknown.

Without wasting time, he summoned a blue excellent-tier Naga Guardian hero.

Only Naga Guardian heroes with a certain foundation of strength could withstand this original bloodline enhancement pressure, and only hero units could maximize the value of this vial of original bloodline.

He handed it over.

"Drink it."

The Naga Guardian hero didn't hesitate and immediately downed the bottle. Even if Ji Chen had ordered him to die right now, he would have cut off his own head without hesitation.

In the eyes of the units, the Lord was the supreme being, and his commands were like divine decrees.

The original blood quickly took effect. The Naga Guardian hero turned bright red all over, with bulging blood vessels and clenched teeth, as if enduring immense pain.

Crack!

Perhaps because the energy was too intense, the scales on his body shattered one by one. Drops of blood fell from his body, and his bones crackled like popcorn.

Under the raging energy, his breath gradually weakened until there was no vitality left.

Alice and Anina on the side widened their eyes. Did he die from being unable to resist the energy?

"My Lord, he..."

Ji Chen made a gesture for them not to speak and kept his eyes fixed on the Naga Guardian hero, who remained motionless on the ground.

Suddenly, everyone present heard a heartbeat coming from the lifeless body.

One beat, two beats, three beats.

Like thunderclaps, the heartbeats continued, gradually becoming regular. A vast and surging energy radiated from his body, stirring up countless specks of dust on the ground, creating a whirlwind around him.

An invisible force shot straight into the sky, dispersing nearby clouds.

Until he slowly opened his eyes, revealing a gaze as cold and sinister as the depths of a 10,000-meter-deep sea. The system notification sounded in Ji Chen's ears.

“Ding- Naga Berserker hero has successfully evolved, bloodline evolved into Deep Sea Naga, tier upgraded to orange (legendary).”

Ji Chen’s gaze slightly intensified.

The Crown of the Ocean had gained another legendary hero.

Upon closer inspection, his body had expanded to a height of three meters, resembling a giant. Resilient scales covered his entire body, even his face was covered in blue scales, with only cold and malevolent pupils visible.

His eyes faintly flickered with thunderous light.

The broad bone blades on his hands transformed into a pair of claws, each thirty centimeters long, gleaming with a metallic sheen. No one would overlook their lethality.

Most striking were the bone wings on his back. As they trembled lightly, the sharp edges of the wings gave off an extreme sense of danger.

From head to toe, he was born for slaughter and combat, destined to be accompanied by death.

This appearance somewhat resembled the four-winged Naga Ji Chen had seen in the Krieg Laboratory.

The snake-like pupils of the Deep Sea Naga hero rotated slightly, then fixed their gaze on Ji Chen before lowering his head deeply.

In a hoarse and shadowy voice, he said, “Great master, thank you for granting me a new life. Please bestow upon me a name, and let me carry your fame.”

Ji Chen nodded slightly.

“Your name shall be Herald.”

“Herald...” The Deep Sea Naga hero murmured to himself, his shadowy gaze filled with excitement. “From now on, my name is Herald, and I will prove it with slaughter and combat!”

[Herald (Hero)]

[Race]: Deep Sea Naga

[Level]: 1

[Current Tier]: Orange (Legendary)

[Potential]: Orange (Legendary)

[Skills]: Thunder Control (Orange Skill, Deep Sea Nagas are naturally adept at manipulating lightning, capable of releasing terrifying lightning attacks on enemies)

Bloodline Instinct (Orange Skill, the bloodline contains countless experiences of Deep Sea Naga battles, granting formidable combat abilities)

Body of the Deep Sea Naga (Orange Skill, the Deep Sea Naga bloodline strengthens the body, increasing endurance and protection by 150%, immune to most curses, poisons, and other negative effects)

Naga Wings (Orange Skill, flapping the wings on the back can increase swimming speed by 150% in water and allow flight in the air)

Undying (Orange Skill, when life is threatened, all recovery abilities increase by 500%, and combat power increases by 200% until the threat is eliminated)

[Unit Characteristics]: Naga Lord (When leading Naga units, an additional 50 morale is granted, and combat power is increased by 300%)

[Evolved into a Deep Sea Naga, destined to make countless ocean races tremble]

Wow!

Is this a legendary hero?

Five orange skills were extremely luxurious. Not to mention his terrifying combat power, he could also provide significant bonuses to his Naga units.

A 200% combat power boost would make fifth-tier 3-star Naga Guardians as powerful as sixth or seventh-tier 5-star units.

The addition of a legendary Naga hero significantly increased the strength of the Crown of the Ocean's heroes.

With Herald, he now had two legendary-level forces. If he counted himself, the Crown of the Ocean possessed three legendary forces.

Among the indigenous people, this was enough to establish a large-scale power.

Ji Chen was in a great mood.

Herald's bloodline had changed, and as a result, he had reset his level. To tap into his full potential, he would have to gain experience and level up.

Currently, the Crown of the Ocean had seven main units, but the newly recruited army units were mostly at the initial level, ranging from level 15 to 25. This was clearly insufficient to face increasingly powerful enemies.

Therefore, the next thing he needed to do was to properly level up his army and the various heroes.

So, he immediately ordered Alice and Anina, the two heroes, to take a portion of the army and Herald and go out to hunt monsters and level up.

The two heroes complied with the orders and departed..

Chapter 396: Everyone Leveled Up, Learning Techniques

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Ji Chen also seized the chance to gain some experience.

At this moment, his level had already reached level 39, with about half of the experience bar remaining until he reached level 40. With the army's dedicated efforts in battle, the experience bar was steadily progressing toward being filled.

Every ten levels was a significant milestone. Ordinary professions could learn a new skill every ten levels, which was one of the stable channels for ordinary profession players to acquire skills.

However, this clearly did not apply to Ji Chen.

After all, the Tidal Dominator was a legendary profession. He hadn't learned any skills when he reached level twenty or thirty. Besides the initial skills he received when he obtained the profession, he acquired the rest through skill scrolls or various opportunities.

Skills like the Tidal Domain, Triple Casting, and Multitasking...

Ji Chen recalled the Multitasking skill. He had inadvertently comprehended this skill while helping the elves clear a collapsed cave.

Although it was only a purple-tier skill, there was a tremendous potential waiting to be explored. During this calm period, he planned to study it carefully.

With a wave of his hand, three water beings with spears appeared in front of him. Controlling three of them simultaneously was relatively easy for him. Under his control, they formed a simple three-person formation and charged towards the front line.

A few minutes later.

All three water beings were torn apart by the monsters and their bodies melted back into the ocean. Ji Chen didn't immediately recreate them, his eyes filled with contemplation.

Based on the brief test just now, the strength of these water beings was roughly at the level of Tier 4, 2-star to Tier 4, 3-star.

They had some autonomous combat capabilities, but they weren't exceptionally strong.

This might be related to the skill level, his current mana, and spiritual power.

Then, Ji Chen continued his experiments to see how many he could generate and control at the moment.

He went from three to five.

The mental pressure increased slightly, feeling like a small stone pressing on his head.

With a wave of his hand, he continued to generate more.

From five, he directly went to ten.

The mental pressure was like a gentle cushion enveloping his head, gradually warming up, almost as if an idle graphics card suddenly began its cooling fan.

Pressure was beginning to build.

Ji Chen's face showed some interest. Controlling ten entities that felt like extensions of his body was a strange sensation.

It was like an extension of his physical self.

The number of water beings increased from ten to twenty.

The mental pressure abruptly increased, but it was still manageable.

Then, they became thirty.

The pressure increased further but was not at its limit.

He focused all his attention, and the ongoing battle in front of him couldn't disturb his concentration.

In front of him, the row of water beings increased from thirty to forty, then from forty to sixty, finally coming to a halt at a hundred.

This quantity represented the limit of what Ji Chen could currently control. If it were merely about generating, he could easily create hundreds or even thousands at will, but the ideal number for both generation and control rested at a hundred.

He had experimented with generating more than a hundred water beings, and it proved challenging to control them. They became unruly, almost as if suffering from a seizure, making it difficult to even move, let alone command them in battle.

Ji Chen was quite satisfied with this experimental result. Compared to the Fifth-Tier units like Naga Guardians and Dragon Blood Murlocs, these hundred Tier 4, 2-star water beings were nothing special.

But Ji Chen remained optimistic.

Now, Multitasking was only a purple-tier skill. Once it advanced to a red-tier skill or even an orange-tier skill, the combat capabilities of the water beings would undoubtedly see significant improvements, possibly reaching Tier 5, Tier 6, or even the top-tier Tier 7.

The water beings possessed a natural undead characteristic – as long as there was water nearby and Ji Chen had mana, these water-bodied soldiers were practically immortal.

This was a unique combat style resulting from the interaction between the Tidal Dominator profession and the Multitasking skill.

“Ding- Due to your experimentation and development, the skill ‘Multitasking’ (purple-tier skill) has extended into a sub-skill: ‘Condense Water into Soldiers’ (purple-tier skill).”

“The strength of the sub-skill is determined by the main skill, and it will improve as the main skill does.”

Well, there's another setting he had never seen before.

This made him even more certain about the potential of the Multitasking skill!

Following behind the leveling army on the back of a Tyrant Azure Dragon, he seized both experience and time to practice and ponder. Soon, he had the hundred water soldiers under his complete control.

Due to the nature of water, aside from the spear-wielding soldier form, they could also transform into archers, sword and shield infantry, cavalry, and even some non-humanoid forms.

So, an odd scene unfolded during the Ocean Crown army's clearing of monster dens. Among the army, there were strange and diverse unidentified creatures.

Originally, due to Ji Chen's previous absence, the number of monsters in the Stormy Sea had risen. However, the Ocean Crown Army quickly cleared them out like locusts devouring crops.

The results were remarkable.

Three days later.

On a small island at the southern edge of the Stormy Sea, roughly the size of a basketball court.

As the last monster fell, aside from the Ocean Crown Army and the heroes, there were no more living enemies around. The area was littered with the corpses of monsters floating in the water.

"Herald, destroy this monster's nest."

"Yes, my lord."

Herald, the double-winged Naga, raised his right hand, and lightning flickered in his palm. A thunderous orb flew out and obliterated the monster's nest on the island.

"Ding- Your hero, Herald (Deep Sea Naga Hero), destroyed a Tier 4 monster's nest and gained experience..."

"Ding- As a result, you have gained 8,920 experience points, and your level has increased (39^40).."

Chapter 397: Everyone Leveled Up, Learning Techniques

(2)

With this wave of experience pouring in, a golden light enveloped Ji Chen, and a surge of energy flowed into his body, sweeping away his fatigue.

Ji Chen opened his personal panel and saw the number "40" on his level, nodding in satisfaction.

Over the past three days, he had been leading his army to clear out wild monsters and raid their nests all around.

Having all his units at Tier 5 meant that no wild monster in the Stormy Sea could stand up to them; they were defeated effortlessly, like slicing through vegetables.

Countless wandering monsters fled in panic, and hundreds of nests scattered on various islands and the seabed were destroyed.

Through this systematic extermination, Herald's level was skyrocketing, reaching level 36. While he couldn't match heroes like Anina and Alice, who had already hit level 40, he could still showcase remarkable combat abilities.

Over these days, Ji Chen closely observed the performance of this Deep Sea Naga hero. Not only did he possess terrifying strength and speed, but he could also control lightning.

A single strike of lightning from him could either kill the enemy on the spot or leave them paralyzed, helpless against him.

A lightning ball he conjured had destructive power equivalent to an alchemical cannonball explosion.

Apart from Herald, the newly recruited units were also leveling up rapidly and had already reached an average level.

Among the main heroes of the Crown of the Ocean, except for Daro, who was still lying in bed, as well as Verena, and Benbo, who were on his way back, the rest had all reached level 40, stepping into a new stage.

Ji Chen had just reached level 40, and his mana capacity increased significantly, equivalent to 120% of a level 39 mage's mana.

However, he couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed that he hadn't comprehended any new skills.

Observing the troops with a minimum level of 35 around him, Ji Chen was in high spirits. He glanced at the sky and broke into a smile.

With a grand gesture, he declared, "Let's head back!"

Finishing his words, he rode ahead on the Tyrant Azure Dragon. Alice and Anina exchanged glances and followed suit, with Herald closely behind, and finally, a massive army numbering in the thousands.

The group raced across the sea surface and quickly returned to the Crown of the Ocean.

Ji Chen walked through bustling construction sites and returned to the Lord's castle.

He called for Wilus.

"How is the post-war reconstruction going?"

Wilus, who hurriedly came, exclaimed with excitement, "The reconstruction is going even smoother than we anticipated. The residents, faced with a territory reduced to ruins, aren't feeling disheartened at all. In fact, their enthusiasm is soaring. At this rate, the reconstruction time may be significantly shortened!"

"It's all thanks to you, my Lord. You've bestowed homes upon the residents, filling them with hope!"

Ji Chen smiled and contemplated, realizing that it wasn't just him who instilled hope in the residents; they had discovered hope from within themselves.

"Wilus, remember that the prosperity of a territory is not something one person can achieve alone. The residents themselves are the true heroes who have contributed greatly to the growth of the Crown of the Ocean."

"I understand," Wilus nodded, his eyes filled with admiration.

Indeed, their Lord was different. He didn't claim all the credit for himself but attributed it to the seemingly ordinary residents.

When compared to rulers, nobles, and landlords on the mainland, who could achieve such a level of communal unity?

Wilus increasingly felt that his fortunate arrival here due to a shipwreck and his decision to become the Lord's Internal Affairs Officer were incredibly wise choices.

"Oh, by the way, how is the implementation of the 'Crown of the Ocean Resident Technology Learning Program' that I asked you to announce earlier?"

"Reporting to you, my Lord, everything is progressing smoothly. The institute dedicated to teaching technology has already started construction, and it's expected to be completed in ten days.

The response from the residents to this program has been very positive. Many of them are eager to learn new skills to contribute to the territory."

Ji Chen nodded in approval.

This was a project he had initiated long ago, and as the name suggests, it was a program for learning various skills.

These skills included but were not limited to, agriculture, wood processing, tool forging, shipbuilding and repair, weaving, and sewing. Essentially, any skill beneficial to the Crown of the Ocean could be learned at that institute.

Apart from non-human races like the Lizardmen, the Crown of the Ocean had around 3,000 human residents.

Some of them were part of the original indigenous tribes and specialized in managing the sea rice paddy fields, numbering over 400. Another group consisted of residents who already possessed various skills, along with those responsible for construction and management of the settlement, totaling around 1,100.

The majority of the residents, over 1,500, were engaged in manual labor.

While they would have been a valuable workforce in the past when resources were scarce, they had now become somewhat of a burden.

This was because the most physically demanding tasks, such as logging and mining, had been taken over by a large number of slaves, prisoners of war, and even non-human races like Kobolds and Lizardmen, who were better suited for such strenuous work.

Therefore, approximately one-third of the formal residents of the Crown of the Ocean were in a state of prolonged low-efficiency operation.

In simple terms, it was a waste of manpower.

Thus, training these residents to acquire skills and deploying them to perform technical work in various parts of the territory was an inevitable trend.

As the Crown of the Ocean's industries continued to grow, the demand for skilled workers would only increase. Whether it was the wood processing plant, the brewery, or the jungle plantation, they all required skilled workers to function properly..

Only the residents who knew how to work hard could handle these technical tasks.

“You need to keep a close eye on the implementation of this plan. If there are any difficulties or needs, just tell me directly. This is a major development for the Crown of the Ocean, and it should not be underestimated.”

“I understand.” Wilus nodded seriously and then, as if he had thought of something, asked, “My Lord, what about those slaves who have made a certain contribution? Should we promote them to residents?”

The Crown of the Ocean currently has a total of 4,500 slaves.

Some of them were purchased by Raymond from the outside, and the number of slaves purchased was around 2,000.

At that time, he had promised them that if they made enough contributions to the Crown of the Ocean, they could be freed from slavery and become full-fledged residents.

Now, the first batch of slaves had been in the Crown of the Ocean for several months, and this issue should be discussed openly.

For this issue, his answer was to allow slaves who had made contributions to obtain full resident status.

This was easy to understand. If he wanted these slaves to show initiative and stimulate their enthusiasm for work, he had to offer them incentives.

In addition to the issue of food and clothing, the biggest temptation for them was to become full-fledged residents.

After getting Ji Chen’s exact answer, Wilus nodded.

Another part of the slaves were prisoners of war, totaling more than 2,500, from the Hanseatic Chamber of Commerce and the Gassani Kingdom, two forces that once extended their dirty claws to the Crown of the Ocean.

Wilus wisely did not mention these prisoners of war, because these prisoners of war would not and did not qualify to become residents.

In a mysterious hall.

The burning braziers on both sides provided illumination, revealing rows of deceivers kneeling half-covered in robes.

In front of them was a figure sitting on a thick throne, with the upper half of the body shrouded in darkness.

But the faint golden glow emanating from the mask in the darkness showed her extraordinary identity.

“Revered Envoy, the situation of the Maple Principality branch has been investigated.

The elves and the Maple Principality launched a joint siege, secretly wiping out the branch members who were gathering and discussing matters in the city. In addition, they found the suburban base through the data that was not destroyed in the meeting point.

So, in just two days, almost all of our personnel in the Maple Principality were lost, and the base fell.

And playing a crucial role in this was a Divine Patron, also a Lord of Glory.

After the failed assassination attempt on the Maple Principality branch, the informant was not dealt with in a timely manner, which led to the Divine Patron tracing back to the gathering place in Maple City, resulting in a series of events.

In addition, this Lord of Glory was able to pinpoint the escape route of the branch members, set up an ambush in advance, and single-handedly killed hundreds of Iron Mask personnel while capturing the Silver Mask leader.”

At this point, the silent figure in the golden mask spoke slowly.

“Do you know his specific identity?”

“His name is Ji Chen, and he is the lord of a territory called the Crown of the Ocean.

The location of his territory is most likely on some overseas island, but the exact location is currently unknown.”

A moment passed.

“The war between the Bass Kingdom and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy is about to begin, and the organization needs to gather nearby forces to complete a plan. We cannot allocate resources to deal with this Lord of Glory in the near future.

However, we will continue to send a small number of personnel to investigate information about this person. After the plan is completed, I will personally send someone to his territory to capture him and torture him in the Soul Cage for a hundred years.”

“All right, you may all leave.”

The deceivers who had been kneeling stood up, raising their palms forward as if performing some kind of ritual, and then slowly retreated.

After a while.

“Lord of Glory?”

“Interesting....”

Chapter 399: Integration of the Refugees, Graveyard, Ghost Ship

The day after Ji Chen completed three days of continuous leveling, the fleet that was returning from Maple Harbor arrived at the port at a leisurely pace. However, they were all taken aback when they saw what looked like a combination of ruins and a construction site, interspersed with the remains of the Crown of the Ocean.

Especially the several steel battleships that looked fierce in terms of firepower made the dwarf Thotmudo widen his eyes.

“Hey, kid, how did you manage to get your hands on such good ships?”

As soon as he disembarked, he hurriedly ran over on his short legs and asked anxiously.

“These were confiscated from the Bass Kingdom...” Ji Chen didn’t explain much, “Let’s head back first. I’ll fill you in on what has happened these past few days on the way.”

“Okay.” Thotmudo looked at the ruins that had yet to be cleaned up but were obviously damaged by explosives. He had a hunch about what had occurred and nodded in comprehension.

After some explanations, Thotmudo finally understood the enmity between the Crown of the Ocean, the Bass Kingdom, and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, as well as the events that had occurred a few days ago. “So, you clashed with the Bass Kingdom this time? Is there a possibility they’ll send more fleets in the future?”

Ji Chen nodded, unable to deny it.

“Yes, this time, the surprise attack was partly due to our lack of preparedness, but it also exposed the fact that the Crown of the Ocean lacks sufficient defensive facilities.”

“Sir Thotmudo, we might need to ask for your help in this matter.”

Thotmudo reassured him, patting his chest. “You can count on me. I’ve been busy on the way back too, getting ready with some defense installations that’ll work well for your territory.”

Ji Chen expressed his gratitude. “Thank you for that. Oh, by the way, I don’t know if this information will be useful to you.”

With that, he took out a stack of blueprints, covered in characters that resembled a mixture of text and numbers. These were another batch of support materials sent by the special envoy fleet of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy. According to the young commander’s explanation, these were data on three military alchemical technologies. According to the data on them, they could be manufactured.

These were not the common blueprints that could be constructed or generated with a single click. In other words, someone who understood them would be needed to manufacture them.

Clearly, as a legendary dwarf blacksmith with considerable expertise in alchemy and forging, Thotmudo was the best choice.

Thotmudo took a look at the blueprints and quickly gave a definite answer, “No problem, I completely understand this level of technology, and I can produce it for you soon.”

“However, you’ll need to provide me with a group of apprentices to assist me, or else it would be too slow with just me working.”

Ji Chen readily agreed, “No problem, I’ll have Wilus select fifty apprentices to send over.”

“If you have any specific requirements, you can directly discuss them with him, and I’ll do my best to meet your needs.”

Thotmudo was very satisfied with Ji Chen's attitude towards him, which made him feel that this place was indeed a good one.

"Kid, you've earned the favor of the great legendary dwarf blacksmith Thotmudo!"

The return of the fleet brought nearly three thousand refugees who were willing to come to the Crown of the Ocean. Like the residents who had come here before, they felt unfamiliar and uneasy about this land.

As usual, Ji Chen gave them a speech to initially calm their emotions. He then had Wilus arrange their housing and assign them jobs.

After multiple waves of population influx, the Crown of the Ocean had gained quite a bit of experience in pacifying refugees.

Allocating housing, providing food and clothing, assigning work, holding regular feasts, organizing lectures, and so on – these were all effective means of pacification. They not only helped the newcomers alleviate their anxiety and integrate into the life of the territory but also quickly turned them into a labor force.

Inside the Lord's Castle.

Ji Chen stood by the window, gazing at the undulating sea in the distance, with a hint of worry on his face.

When he returned from the Northern Continent, he had sent Benbo with some Dragon Blood Murlocs to investigate the Mystic Realm Gate located in the middle of the ocean.

However, it had been seven or eight days, and they had not returned yet. This made him suspect that there might have been an accident on the way.

However, when he checked the territory panel, it showed that Benbo had not died. Otherwise, he would have already set out for the Mystic Realm Gate.

"I'll give it another two days. If Benbo hasn't returned by then, I'll depart immediately," Ji Chen thought to himself.

The return of the fleet didn't bring much turbulence to the Crown of the Ocean. This was because, except for a small number of native residents, most of the Crown of the Ocean's population had come from the outside world, mainly as refugees.

Since most of the residents in the Crown of the Ocean had come from the outside, there was little reason for them to reject newcomers. Therefore, the majority of the residents welcomed the new arrivals to the territory.

As a result, this group of refugees, equivalent in number to the original residents, quickly integrated into the Crown of the Ocean, providing significant assistance in the post-war reconstruction efforts.

In less than a week, new houses sprouted up rapidly, and the roads damaged by artillery fire were repaired and even expanded.

The bodies and wreckage floating near the coast were collected, and the chaotic harbor returned to normal operation.

Under Ji Chen's orders, a large cemetery called the Heroic Cemetery was established based on the burial grounds of the fallen half-orc warriors. This cemetery was designated for burying soldiers who had died in battle.

Ji Chen believed that this was an excellent way to foster cohesion within the territory.

After all, besides recruiting various military units, such as lizardmen, kobolds, and half-orcs, the Crown of the Ocean had received invaluable contributions from these non-human races, and he couldn't overlook their contributions..

Chapter 400: ntegration of the Refugees, Graveyard, Ghost Ship (2)

In addition, there was also a cemetery set aside nearby for burying ordinary residents.

As soon as this news circulated from the most authoritative place in the Crown of the Ocean, the Lord's Castle, to the entire region.

All the residents couldn't believe it.

Lord, the great one, wanted to set up a dedicated cemetery for the residents and the fallen warriors!?

Was this real?

When this news came out of the mouth of the Chief Minister, Wilus, all the residents and warriors were ecstatic.

Such a practice... they had never heard of it before.

According to the usual practices of the nobles on the continent, ordinary residents who died could only be buried far away from the settlement, in a customary burial ground—most of which were mass graves with no fixed boundaries and no long-term protection, meaning that their graves could possibly be disturbed by wandering monsters, leaving their bodies exposed in the wilderness.

Those landowners or merchants with more substantial means could, at most, build a small cemetery in the wilderness and maintain it according to the prosperity of their families.

As for those fallen warriors, it was even more direct. If it was possible to retrieve their bodies, they would be taken back and sent to their respective homes. If they couldn't be brought back, they would be directly cremated and their ashes scattered to the winds.

Only those native nobles could renovate cemeteries within the precious city, occupying vast land, lavishly maintained, and with dedicated soldiers patrolling and guarding the graves.

Therefore, for the residents who had earlier become refugees, the biggest hope after death was not to be dug up, with no expectation of having a cemetery to bury themselves.

So when this news came out, most people's first reaction was disbelief.

It wasn't until someone took the time to visit the cemetery location.

"Our Lord's words are true; someone has already started building walls there!"

"That's right, my friend from the mine was reassigned to build the cemetery; this can't be faked."

“Longlive the Lord!!”

Even those foreign warriors were quite excited.

Especially the lizardmen, they almost knelt down to thank the Lord for his grace.

Due to the unique terrain of the underground lizardmen world, most of the underground was composed of rocks and magma, and soil, which was limited, was primarily used for cultivating various crops. After death, most lizardmen were simply thrown into the magma river, which was time-saving and effortless.

Therefore, anyone who could be buried in the soil had to make significant contributions to the lizardmen.

Lord, the great one, saying that they could be buried in the soil after death, didn't that mean their actions had been acknowledged?

That was unexpected.

Whether it was human residents or the residents and warriors of other races, their sense of belonging and identification with the Crown of the Ocean was slowly increasing.

This was precisely the effect he wanted to achieve.

“Ding- Due to your policies and actions, the populace's approval has increased by 4 points, and the current approval rating is 91 points.”

“With the populace's approval rating exceeding 91 points, the efficiency of the citizens has greatly improved, the speed of learning has increased, and the probability of hero production has risen.”

When the system prompt came, Ji Chen smiled after a moment of astonishment.

Well, the approval rating had finally reached over 90.

Previously, no matter how he renovated luxurious houses or provided delicious food, the approval rating always hovered between 87 to 89, making him believe that it was impossible for the approval rating to reach 90 points or higher.

But now it seemed that it wasn't unattainable; it just required a special approach.

The benefits of increasing approval were also quite significant, not only did it greatly improve work efficiency, but it also accelerated the speed of learning.

The former was beneficial for the reconstruction efforts, while the latter had a significant impact on the ongoing “Crown of the Ocean Resident Technology Learning Program”. It could be described as a timely boon.

And the most outstanding effect was the increased probability of producing heroes, which was quite exciting.

Heroes, well, one could never have too many of them. Combat heroes, lifestyle heroes, and administrative heroes, especially the latter two, were scarce in the Crown of the Ocean.

If they could cultivate heroes who knew how to brew like Leysha or heroes who could forge like Thotmudo, it would be a huge gain.

Heroes were meant to be superior to ordinary people, possessing extraordinary talents and abilities. Another day passed.

Just as Ji Chen was considering leading troops into battle, news arrived of Benbo's return.

Upon receiving the news, he immediately changed into his attire and went to the port. At first glance, he saw Benbo and the Dragon Blood Murlocs, all of them covered in wounds, some more severe than others.

Benbo's injuries were particularly serious, and the neatly arranged scales on his body looked like they had been cut by dozens of steel knives, broken in various places, exposing the flesh underneath. His trident was also broken in half.

Clearly, they had encountered a fierce attack from the enemy. Although many were seriously injured, fortunately, there were no casualties.

"Lord, I..."

Benbo limped forward, holding his trident, his face filled with anxiety.

The Lord had ordered him to lead a group of Dragon Blood Murlocs to investigate the Mystic Realm Gate, a task that should have taken five days, but it had almost taken ten days. This made him feel somewhat anxious.

Ji Chen waved his hand and interrupted him.

"Let's not talk about that for now. First, drink this potion to recover. Your safety is the most important."

A hint of gratitude flickered in Benbo's eyes as he nodded gently.

He took the healing potion handed to him by Irona and drank it all. His complexion improved noticeably, and his breath was no longer as weak.

Seeing this, Ji Chen allowed him to start recounting what happened on the way back.

"At that time, I followed your orders to go to the Mystic Realm Gate for investigation. We arrived at the location very smoothly..."

There was indeed a Mystic Realm Gate there, and the types and numbers of monsters outside the gate were roughly as you described. We observed from a distance, confirmed it without any mistakes, and then silently left without alerting them."

"Then how did you end up like this? Did you encounter powerful enemies on the way back?" Ji Chen furrowed his brow and asked.

Although Benbo was not among the most outstanding heroes, it was only relative to top-tier heroes like Alice, Anina, and Verena.

His Purple-Rare Tier strength, combined with the hundreds of Dragon Blood Murlocs who shared a strong bond with him, made for formidable combat power.

Furthermore, if they couldn't win, they could always rely on their powerful mobility and speed to escape, couldn't they?

Benbo smiled wryly and said, "We did encounter enemies, but the enemies were quite peculiar..."

"Peculiar?"

"Yes, it was an extremely strange ship."

Ji Chen's expression changed slightly, and a hint of interest appeared in his eyes. "Continue."

"Yes, after investigating the Mystic Realm Gate, we immediately set off to return. However, not long after, a dense fog appeared at sea, and within the fog, a very dilapidated wooden warship suddenly appeared.

At first, we thought it might be a pirate ship or something similar, and because we were in a hurry to return, we didn't pay it much attention. Instead, we continued on our way. But what was strange was that this ship seemed to be tracking us. No matter how we changed course or submerged into the sea, we couldn't shake it off...

Considering that we couldn't bring back such an unidentified ship, my subordinates made the decision to deal with it before continuing our return...

But when we boarded the ship, we found that there were no living creatures on board... Just as we were thinking of leaving, a large group of translucent soldiers suddenly appeared, wielding similarly translucent weapons and attacking us. However, our counterattacks simply passed through them, causing no harm...

In desperation, my subordinates could only escape with our people. Fortunately, this time, we dived deep into the sea, and after resurfacing, the ship did not follow us..."

Ji Chen's brow furrowed deeply.

This sounded so much like a maritime legend from Earth, a ghost ship!

Could there be something similar in this world?

But upon further thought, this was a fantasy world, and the existence of strange and supernatural things shouldn't be surprising at all.

The problem was, why had this ghost ship targeted his heroes?