

Ocean Lord 431

Chapter 431 - 431: The Second Wave of Sea Beast Tide, Combo Punch (2)

The Guardian Legion transported cannonballs of various sizes from the warehouse to the frontline, piling them up next to the alchemy cannons.

However, two-thirds of the previously stockpiled ammunition had already been consumed in the unrestrained firing during the first wave of the Sea Beast Tide, and the remaining third would likely not last long once the battle commenced.

Therefore, Ji Chen decisively ordered to fire cautiously in the upcoming battle, aiming for high-efficiency output.

The military units that were injured in the first round had quickly recovered in just a few hours, thanks to their strong vitality, and had returned to the frontline.

This time, the defense line was extended, stretching from the southeast cliff to the middle of the main island, approximately six kilometers long, which was double the length of the previous one, consequently dispersing half of the military forces.

In this urgent situation, he also temporarily conscripted an army of 2000 Lizardman Warriors, equipped with a large number of city defense weapons, to supplement the land forces, temporarily led by Verena.

Once everything was ready.

The second onslaught of the Sea Beast Tide emerged on the horizon, larger than before. It spanned from the left to the right of our field of vision, nearly merging with the entire southern coast of the New Moon Islands.

This time, the Crown of the Ocean's forces didn't hunker down in defense. Instead, they took an offensive approach.

Under the leadership of the hero unit named Wilun, a legion of 1250 Lobster Guardian Knights raised their reins, driving their lobster mounts slowly out of formation, heading towards the incoming sea beasts.

The thousand-plus units, compared to the 350,000 sea beasts, seemed so insignificant as if they could be swallowed up by a wave.

Wilun, with fearless eyes beneath his armor, led the legion forward, maintaining a steady speed, until they were one kilometer away from the sea beast horde, then raised his bone spear.

He shouted.

"Follow the plan!"

"Yes!"

The twelve centurions of the Lobster Guardian Knights behind him responded in unison, leading their hundred-man squads to turn left and right.

The entire legion turned without any disorder, and the thousand-plus knights successfully evaded the approaching sea beasts before they reached them.

Seeing living creatures coming towards them, the sea beasts, as if already smelling the scent of flesh and blood, were too eager to let their prey escape.

Affected by this, the sea beasts on the edges of the horde broke away from the main group, chasing after the hundred-man squads.

But the Lobster Guardian Knights were bona fide cavalry units, far faster than these disorderly sea beasts. Under deliberate control, they led the sea beasts towards the open sea at a moderate pace.

This chase led away about forty to fifty thousand sea beasts, significantly reducing the size of the originally massive horde.

The original count of 350,000 sea beasts was temporarily reduced to 300,000, significantly lowering the threat.

The Dragon Blood Legion wasn't just passively enduring attacks. More than a thousand Dragon Blood Murlocs propelled themselves forward with powerful kicks of their fins, launching out like cannonballs.

On the edge of the massive, cumbersome sea beast horde, they used the advantage of their tridents for ranged attacks, continuously inflicting damage on the outer sea beasts.

The Dragon Blood Murlocs expertly employed guerrilla tactics: they advanced when the enemy retreated and harassed them when they halted.

When the sea beasts, angered by the attacks, chased after them, the Dragon Blood Murlocs would flee, quickly retreating to a safe distance, then turn around and strike with their tridents.

If they encountered sea beasts of similar speed, the Dragon Blood Murlocs would use their Dragon Might skill to intimidate them before attacking.

It was a fight to the death or severe injury.

Under this tactic, the sea beast horde was gradually whittled down from the outside, appearing scattered but in reality, the killing efficiency was astonishing. Over just a few kilometers, thousands of sea beasts perished miserably under their tridents.

Twenty Sky Guardians soared under the dark clouds, shuttling through the gloomy sky.

The sea beasts on the surface looked up at them, roaring in anger but helpless to act.

Upon closer inspection, the Sky Guardians' claws held large spherical bombs. Reaching above the sea beast horde, the soldiers perched on their backs took out specially made ignition devices from their waists, inserted them into the bombs to activate them, and then let the Sky Guardians release the bombs before swiftly ascending to safety.

The bombs, now unrestrained, fell freely towards the midst of the sea beast horde.

Suddenly, dozens of towering water columns burst forth below, accompanied by wails that even the fierce winds couldn't disperse. These simple yet brutally effective bombs killed and injured hundreds of sea beasts.

With a flap of their wings, the Sky Guardians returned to the island to pick up more bombs, repeating the process.

As the sky was in action, the sea was not to be outdone.

Large sea mines had been stealthily placed at a depth of two to three meters along the route of the advancing sea beast horde. Unaware of these hidden dangers, the sea beasts, agitated by the attacks from the Dragon Blood Murlocs and the Sky Guardians, heedlessly crashed into these submerged metallic devices.

After a brief delay, thunderous explosions resounded as the sea mines were triggered, sending countless sea beasts flying into the air, raining blood from the sky.

The surrounding sea beasts, not directly affected by the explosion, were also shaken by the terrifying shockwaves, bleeding from all orifices, their internal organs reduced to mush.

As the sea beast horde moved forward every 500 meters, multiple sea mines detonated. Each mine had enough force to obliterate a warship, making them more than capable of killing the flesh-and-blood sea beasts.

Even fourth-tier sea beasts were severely injured in such explosions, with those directly affected having no chance of survival.

The bombs from the sky never ceased, the sea mines in the water were relentless, and the surrounding area was constantly harassed by the Dragon Blood Murlocs.

The fury of the sea beasts had reached its peak, roaring angrily as they madly surged forward, intent on devouring all living beings in their path.

At that moment, they saw dozens of small boats floating ahead on the sea, giving off a strong scent of blood.

This scene immediately sparked their hunger and fury, causing them to speed up significantly. They surrounded and ripped apart the boats, uncovering fresh sea beast carcasses.

As they were trying to make sense of this, Self-Detonating Water Spiders, each with a swollen abdomen, suddenly emerged from under the corpses and jumped right into the center of the sea beast horde.

Boom, boom—

Explosions like firecrackers erupted, scattering smaller spherical bombs, causing a wider area of devastation and instantly clearing the surrounding sea beasts.

In a short time, the collective explosion of 1,400 Self-Detonating Water Spiders inflicted another heavy blow on the sea beast horde, creating swathes of death around the dozens of small boats.

Even the most frenzied sea beasts, witnessing such a horrific scene, dared not approach and instead chose to bypass it.

By this point, the sea beast horde, after enduring continuous setbacks, finally reached the New Moon Islands in a disheveled state. However, of their original massive numbers, only a little over two hundred thousand remained, many of them injured.

Ji Chen watched this scene and finally smiled satisfactorily.

All along the way, these were his arrangements, preparations made in the time leading up to the sea beast tide's arrival.

The Lobster Guardian Knights used themselves as bait to attract a portion of the peripheral sea beasts away, then the Dragon Blood Murlocs continuously bit them like mosquitoes.

Then, the Sky Guardians, utilizing their aerial advantage, dropped bombs like airplanes, while sea mines were strategically placed in the water along their path.

These sea mines were concocted by Thotmudo, originally intended to defend against enemies like the fleets of the Bass Kingdom, but were instead used in this defensive battle.

But now, it seemed the effect was excellent. These sea beasts, clearly unacquainted with the power of technology, had blundered headfirst into them.

If time was not a constraint, and only about a hundred sea mines had been produced, Ji Chen would have liked to place one every ten meters, deploying thousands to evaporate most of the sea beasts.

And the Self-Detonating Water Spiders, resurrected from the Resurrection Altar, were put to use once again.

First, using the fresh corpses of the first wave of sea beasts as bait, when the sea beasts gathered, the hidden Self-Detonating Water Spiders were detonated, ensuring a high kill rate and number of casualties.

At this point, after such a combination of tactics, the sea beast horde was clearly bewildered.

They hadn't even reached the New Moon Islands, hadn't even caught a glimpse of the enemy, and yet nearly a hundred thousand of their number had already been killed or wounded, with countless others injured.

Now, what lay before the Crown of the Ocean champions was a group of enemies whose threat level had significantly diminished.

The battle.... reignited once more!

Chapter 432: The Sea Beast Leaves, the Sea Beast Riot, and a Huge Harvest of Meat

The Sea Beast Tide, having been suppressed throughout their journey, finally saw their enemy and immediately swarmed to attack.

The Crown of the Ocean's army, well-rested and prepared, did not hesitate to unleash a barrage of arrows and spells, raining down upon the enemy.

The melee troops formed an unbreakable defensive line, preventing any sea beast from breaking through.

If this trend continued, the battle would undoubtedly end in victory for the Crown of the Ocean.

The only variable was the sea beast leaders. Observing the formidable frontline, a cunning, almost human-like slyness glinted in their eyes.

“Roar—”

A tribe of Grey Scale Serpent humanoids, numbering one thousand five hundred Tier 5, four-star sea beasts, heeded their leader's call. They broke away from the main force, planning to bypass the defense line and infiltrate the island from the side. Their plan was to let the foolish, barbaric sea beasts hold off the defenders while they sneaked in for a feast.

Ji Chen, ever vigilant on the battlefield, quickly noticed the Grey Scale Serpent Humanoids' movement.

He ordered Alice to intercept them.

She immediately led the waiting Soul Servant Legion to rush to the scene.

Soon, Alice, with her powerful mind control abilities, annihilated the Grey Scale Serpent Humanoid tribe, adding many of them to her ranks of Soul Servants.

Several sea beast tribes attempted to bypass the defense line and infiltrate the Crown of the Ocean's territory, but all were discovered and promptly stopped, meeting total annihilation.

As time passed, the strong-willed Crown of the Ocean's army caused many sea beasts to start doubting their purpose. No matter how they attacked or charged, the few kilometers of defense line stood unyielding, with countless of their kin perishing under gunfire and blades.

Unable to break the frontline and ineffective in stealth attacks, some of the more rational sea beasts, or rather, the Sea Clans, began to ponder whether it was worth it to forcefully challenge this tough nut to crack.

When sea beasts possess wisdom and order, they become Sea Clans.

Often, the difference between a sea beast and a Sea Clan is just a matter of thought.

What Ji Chen didn't know was that this Sea Beast Tide wasn't merely caused by the emergence of powerful sea beasts; there were more secretive reasons behind it.

This tide, starting from the southern part of the Western Mediterranean Sea, was massive and gathered countless sea beasts, driven by some will and purpose towards the northern part of the Western Mediterranean Sea.

Along the way, every ship they encountered and every human-inhabited island fell under their razor-sharp fangs, turning into nothing more than food in their bellies.

Although only a fraction of the Sea Beast Tide passed through the Stormy Sea, not the largest in number or quality, they still destroyed hundreds of villages and towns along the way, devouring countless lives.

But today, these usually invincible creatures faced a Waterloo on this seemingly insignificant island.

This surprised the attacking sea beasts.

Many intelligent sea beast leaders, seeing this situation, chose to retreat wisely, leading their people around this area to avoid delaying their subsequent plans.

The original army of 350,000 sea beasts first lost 50,000 lured away, then another 100,000 were depleted in various ways along the journey, leaving just over 200,000.

After a large number of Sea Beast Tribes retreated, only less than 100,000 mindless, bloodthirsty sea beasts remained on the field, still furiously attacking, completely unaware that most of their kind had already left.

Although they retreated, the Crown of the Ocean, situated in the open ocean and deep within the Sea Clan territory, was now etched in the memories of many Sea Beast Tribes.

Ji Chen, who had been closely observing the situation, was surprised to see the usually mindlessly charging sea beasts unanimously bypassing and leaving the Crown of the Ocean.

Even Anina was baffled, not understanding why this was happening. Logically, a Sea Beast Tide wouldn't disperse unless most of the sea beasts were killed.

The sight of over a hundred thousand sea beasts voluntarily leaving was undoubtedly reshaping her worldview.

Although Ji Chen didn't know why they had given up the attack, it was undoubtedly good news. The remaining beasts were mostly lower-tier and posed little threat to the Crown of the Ocean. They could be cleared out with some time.

At the same time, he didn't let his guard down and dispatched dozens of scouting teams to track the departing sea beasts' paths, preventing any potential surprise attacks.

The remaining sea beasts gradually disintegrated under the attack of the Crown of the Ocean's army, their numbers significantly decreasing.

"Have you ever seen anything like this?" Ji Chen asked.

"Unheard of," Anina replied, equally puzzled. "This is completely out of character for sea beasts. Once they join a Sea Beast Tide, they are filled with the desire to feed. The Crown of the Ocean has so many people; it's impossible for them to just give up like that."

"Unless..."

"Unless what?"

Anina's face showed a hint of seriousness. "Unless there are other factors that overcame their feeding desire."

Other factors?

Ji Chen furrowed his brow. "Could it be that powerful sea beast causing the Sea Beast Tide?"

"Maybe, but there's too little information known right now to make a judgment," Anina shook her head.

At that moment, Ji Chen suddenly noticed he had received a private message.

Upon opening it, he saw it was from l_Love_Black_Socks, whom he hadn't heard from in a while.

"Big Boss, Big Boss, have you been attacked by sea beasts? We've got a lot of them here, swarming in groups and wreaking havoc in the surrounding seas.."

“It’s not just King Kong Island alone; the sea beasts are showing up in the seas nearby and in different player territories, with their numbers increasing as you head further south.

These sea beasts are coming from the south, and since your position is even farther south than ours, you’ve probably already faced their attacks, haven’t you?”

Sea beast tide on King Kong Island too?

Ji Chen’s expression changed, and he quickly opened the chat channel and forums.

Sure enough, it was already in an uproar up there.

“I just woke up, and suddenly there are so many sea beasts. Is this some kind of large-scale mission?”

“Large-scale mission? Awesome, now we can have a good grind.”

“What the f*ck do you want to grind? Didn’t you see how ferocious those sea beasts are? A group of sea beasts just swallowed the troops I sent out to scout, and now they’re squatting at the entrance to my territory. I’m asking for help!”

“No, there are too many sea beasts. I just used flying troops to scout outside, and I found that the number of sea beasts in some areas is outrageous, like locusts covering the entire sea...”

It appeared that the main bulk of the sea beast tide had not yet reached north of the Crown of the Ocean. Around King Kong Island, there were only a few scattered groups of sea beasts, and they weren’t in large numbers.

But for other players, this was obviously also a significant challenge and threat.

After reading the players’ comments for a while and gathering enough information from them, Ji Chen replied.

“Today, we’ve suffered an attack from a sea beast tide, and we’re just wrapping up the last part of it.”

I_Love_Black_Socks seemed to be waiting for his response, and just a few seconds later, sent another message.

“Is it almost resolved, big boss? Ah, I was still wondering how to deal with them. These creatures have damaged several of my aquaculture fish farms, causing a huge loss of food.”

“Oh, by the way, do you know how these sea beasts came about?”

Ji Chen didn’t hide anything either.

“It’s probably because an extremely powerful sea beast was born, oppressing a large number of sea beasts to flee, forming a sea beast tide. We just happened to be in their path of escape.”

“I see, that’s why there are suddenly so many of them... But this sea beast tide is really not small. There are at least tens of thousands of them just outside King Kong Island, and their tier and level are not low.”

Tens of thousands?

Ji Chen’s face looked a bit strange.

“The sea beast tide is definitely not just this small. What you’re seeing there are just some scattered sea beasts. The real sea beast tide hasn’t arrived yet.

Just today, I’ve encountered attacks from two waves of sea beast tides here. The number of sea beasts directly assaulting the New Moon Islands alone exceeds 550,000, and this is just a part of it. The first and second waves combined have millions of sea beasts, and it’s possible that there could be a third, fourth, or even fifth wave in the future.

You need to tell King Kong Island and other players in the Western Mid-Ocean to be prepared. Otherwise, the consequences will be extremely severe.”

Far away on King Kong Island, I_Love_Black_Sockings, lying on a chair in black stockings, was stunned.

A look of shock appeared in her eyes.

She didn’t read that wrong, did she?

The big boss said there are millions of sea beasts in the sea beast tide, and this is just the number for the first and second waves?

I_Love_Black_Sockings rubbed her eyes with her hand and looked again.

The next moment, her body couldn’t help but shiver.

Millions of sea beasts, what a terrifying force?

Enough to destroy any village and town along the way, devouring any living creature.

Under such circumstances, do King Kong Island and other players have any chance of survival?

But fortunately, what Ji Chen said next eased her anxiety a bit.

“However, these millions of sea beasts are not acting collectively; they are divided into many groups. If you’re lucky, you may only encounter one of them. If you can unite and resist together, self-preservation shouldn’t be a big issue.

I estimate it will take another two or three days for them to arrive where you are.

You need to pay close attention to these sea beast groups. Their intelligence is not much inferior to humans, and they understand various tactics. Don’t underestimate them.

Besides, I think there's a more profound cause behind this surge of sea creatures, beyond simply the emergence of powerful sea beasts."

"We will definitely be on high alert, and I'll pass this message on to other players shortly!"

I_Love_Black_Socks quickly replied, and her face showed a hint of bitterness when she read the last sentence.

This sea beast tide, which was so terrifying that they might not even be able to withstand it, had them contemplating deeper into the underlying causes.

But she noticed what Ji Chen said earlier – "The number of sea beasts directly assaulting the New Moon Islands alone exceeds 550,000" and "Now, we're just wrapping up the last part of it."

It was not hard to imagine why the big boss could speak like that; it just meant that he had basically resolved the sea beasts' attack.

550,000.

I_Love_Black_Socks couldn't help but shudder at the thought of such a horrifying number of sea beasts.

How were they dealt with? Had the big boss' strength reached such an absurd level?

Soon after, I_Love_Black_Socks informed many players about the impending sea beast tide and warned them to be vigilant.

At first, most players didn't believe it, but when they heard that the message came from the Islanders, the atmosphere suddenly changed.

Many players finally started to take this matter seriously, reinforcing their territory defenses, recruiting troops, and actively contacting nearby players to resist the sea beasts.

However, a small group of players held a pessimistic attitude. They believed that millions of sea beasts were an unbeatable force, even if it was just one of the groups with hundreds of thousands. They didn't think they could contend with it.

So, they began packing up their belongings, abandoning their territories, and planning to take boats to the mainland to seek refuge with indigenous forces and countries. After all, no matter how formidable the sea beasts were, they couldn't go ashore to attack them.

Watching the commotion in the chat channel, Ji Chen had a vague feeling that a sea beast upheaval would sweep across the entire Western Mid-Ocean, causing profound consequences.

After closing the chat channel and forums, Ji Chen looked back at the battlefield. At this point, most of the remaining sea beasts had been cleared out. These stubborn sea beasts were mostly low-tier creatures, so they had little resistance against the Crown of the Ocean. They were easily eliminated as if slicing through melons and chopping vegetables.

Two to three hours later.

The system finally issued a notification sound.

“Ding- After a difficult struggle, your army successfully resisted and defeated large groups of sea beasts... Your level has increased (IV40—44).”

“Your heroes: Alice, Herald, Benbo... Level up...”

“Your units: Naga Guardians, Dragon Blood Murlocs, Dragonfin Catfish... Level up...”

Killing over three hundred and fifty thousand sea beasts brought them terrifying amounts of experience. Ji Chen’s level increased by 4 levels in one go, jumping from level 40 to level 44.

All the hero units benefited greatly. Alice reached level 44, Herald reached level 40, Benbo reached level 44...

The average level of units also saw a significant increase, with most of them gaining 4 to 5 levels compared to their original levels.

Units like the Dragonfin Catfish, which were recruited at level 1, skyrocketed to level 22, which was a terrifying boost.

In this way, this sea beast tide turned out to be a great opportunity for experience and leveling up. They might even be able to raise their levels to 50 during this sea beast chaos.

A large number of sea beast corpses remained on the surface of the sea, looking as densely packed and eerie as ant corpses submerged in water when viewed from the cliff.

In the relatively calm Stormy Sea, over three hundred and fifty thousand sea beasts had met their demise, and these corpses were a massive source of meat.

Therefore, as soon as the battle ended, Wilus led many residents, guardian legions, and lizardmen warriors to start harvesting the bodies and transporting them back to the island for processing and storage in temporary cold storage.

According to his estimate, they could recover around one hundred and fifty thousand bodies before they began to rot. This could be translated into nearly forty million units of meat, enough to sustain the Crown of the Ocean for several months without any food imports..

Chapter 434: The Direction of the Sea Beast Tide, Security Plan, and Courage After Knowing Shame

This was also one of the few benefits brought by the Sea Beast Tide.

Dozens of reconnaissance teams gradually returned, bringing back the latest news about the Sea Beast Tide.

The second wave of the Sea Beast Tide had completely left the Stormy Sea and had headed towards a more northern area. Inside the Stormy Sea, only scattered groups of sea beasts remained, numbering around ten thousand.

In addition, some of the reconnaissance teams dispatched to the south to scout the next waves of the Sea Beast Tide had brought back some good news.

The third and fourth waves of the Sea Beast Tide, which were hundreds of kilometers away, did not directly attack the New Moon Islands and the Stormy Sea like the first and second waves.

From their projected paths, it appeared that the third wave would pass through the Starshine Islands, several sea regions west of the Stormy Sea, while the fourth wave would pass by several hundred kilometers away from the Stormy Sea, with no human settlements along the way.

These two waves of the Sea Beast Tide, just like the first and second waves, continued northward towards the coastline of the Northern Continent.

The Starshine Islands...

Ji Chen thought for a moment. He seemed to have heard in the chat channel that, like the Silver Islands and King Kong Island, there were many players born there, so this time they might have to face the onslaught of the Sea Beast Tide.

And according to the reconnaissance team's description, the third wave of the Sea Beast Tide was even larger, numbering in the millions, stretching as far as the eye could see, like an unremovable blotch on the azure sea surface, wiping out all life along the way.

He was powerless to change this, so he could only announce this news on the forum and silently pray for the players on the Starshine Islands.

The information posted under the identity of "Islander" quickly caught the attention of many people, with varying reactions. Among them, the players from the Starshine Islands were particularly concerned.

For them, this was like a bolt from the blue.

Amidst a wave of pessimistic comments, other players from the Western Mid-Ocean region also expressed their worries. No one knew when the Sea Beast Tide would reach their doorstep.

For players who had only been developing for a few months, the crisis of a Sea Beast Tide with millions of sea beasts was too overwhelming and daunting.

If they could have a little more time to develop, perhaps they would be better prepared to face this crisis.

As players lamented their fate, Ji Chen stood in front of the table, gazing at the map of the Western Mid-Ocean, lost in thought.

Based on the positions, the Stormy Sea was located in the central-northern part of the Western Mid-Ocean, with King Kong Island situated further north, roughly to the northwest of the Stormy Sea. The Silver Islands, which Ji Chen had visited before, were located to the west-northwest, while the Starshine Islands were in the far northwestern direction.

He marked these three locations on the map and then drew the forward paths of these Sea Beast Tide waves.

The first and second waves passed through the Stormy Sea, the third wave would pass through the Starshine Islands, and the fourth wave wouldn't pass through any populated areas.

On the map, four arrows indicated their directions, all heading north in the northern part of the Western Mid-Ocean.

But what was strange here was that, usually, the Sea Beast Tide was forced to migrate due to the birth of powerful sea beasts and the threat to their lives.

Regardless of how they migrated, their purpose was always survival.

As long as they moved to relatively suitable areas, they would separate from the main group and settle down on their own.

However, now, except for a very small number that lagged behind, these four waves of Sea Beast Tide showed no signs of stopping. They seemed to be continuously advancing as if they were wound up and propelled forward, all heading north, with their ultimate destination being the northern part of the Western Mid-Ocean!

This left Ji Chen completely puzzled.

Could there be something in the northern part of the Western Mid-Ocean that was attracting them?

Although the Crown of the Ocean was no longer threatened by the Sea Beast Tide in the short term, he couldn't help but worry about this situation.

Therefore, the rampage of the Sea Beast Tide this time undoubtedly disrupted the maritime routes between the Crown of the Ocean and the Northern Continent. This had a significant impact on their economic connections, meaning that if the Crown of the Ocean wanted to transport goods to the Maple Principality, they would face attacks from sea beasts. Even with a military escort, the risk of cargo damage was high.

Being unable to send goods to the Northern Continent meant that they would have a hard time earning income through trade in the short term, which was a significant loss.

Thinking about the millions of rare resources needed for recruiting troops every week, he felt a sense of despair. Where could he obtain such a large amount of resources?

If only they could profit from hunting sea beasts...

Wait a minute.

A glimmer of hope flashed in Ji Chen's eyes.

This might have some potential...

To start, the Crown of the Ocean was currently out of harm's way when it came to major Sea Beast Tide attacks. Occasional sea beast intrusions could be effectively repelled with the help of coastal defenses and the guardian legion.

At the very least, they had the Coral Palace's army as a backup.

With this setup, several main legions could completely free up their hands to do other things.

For example, they could collect protection fees—oh, he meant, they could go and help other areas threatened by the Sea Beast Tide, like the Starshine Islands, which were about to face the onslaught of the third wave of the Sea Beast Tide.

Of course, this assistance wouldn't come for free. It could be done in the form of a fee, in other words, charging money for providing security services.

For such a terrifying Sea Beast Tide, would it be excessive to charge a hundred thousand units of rare resources per day for protection?

As far as he knew, the Starshine Islands were also a highly developed commercial area, and the indigenous people there were extremely wealthy. These wealthy but inadequately protected locals would be the target customers for this mission..

Chapter 435: The Direction of the Sea Beast Tide, Security Plan, and Courage after Knowing Shame (2)

Not only the indigenous people, but also the player community was a vast market waiting to be tapped. Ji Chen believed that some cute players who were unwilling to give up their territories would be willing to pay a high price for security.

Such good “leeks” shouldn’t go unharvested!

After figuring it out, Ji Chen’s mood instantly became smoother, as if he was already seeing countless rare resources beckoning to him.

Of course, this time he couldn’t appear as the Islander, Zhao Gongzi, or even as Ji Chen himself. It would be better to present himself in a completely new guise.

With the existence of the Illusory Mask, these were not problems!

And the even better choice was not to appear as a player at all but as an indigenous lord with a powerful army. This seemed more convincing to customers and could better conceal his true identity.

The principle of getting rich quietly was something he understood as well.

Ji Chen lightly tapped his fingers on the table, producing a rhythmic tapping sound. His train of thought became smoother, and the framework of his plan gradually took shape.

Alice stood by with a lowered brow, her gaze secretly fixed on the Lord, although she didn’t know what was on his mind. Seeing a faint smile on the Lord’s face, she knew he had probably thought of a good idea to develop the territory.

Seeing the Lord in such a good mood, her own mood improved as well.

If possible, Alice hoped that the Lord would always be this happy, and for this, she was willing to give everything, even her life.

Ji Chen looked at the map. The Starshine Islands were located to the northwest of the Stormy Sea, roughly in the middle of the coastal regions between the Kingdom of Bass and the Grand Duchy of Lienhardt, among other northwestern coastal nations. It would take about five days’ journey to reach them.

With the Sea Beast Tide surging like this and seemingly heading in that direction, perhaps the friction between the two nations would ease for the time being, at least until the Sea Beast turmoil subsided.

Otherwise, the warships of both countries might be surrounded by numerous sea beasts.

After all, for coastal nations like them, warships determined maritime supremacy, a critical factor in deciding wars.

This was another impact brought by the Sea Beast Tide, and Ji Chen believed that Monica would make good use of this time to prepare and improve the odds of winning the war.

As the next week approached, the available resources were not even sufficient to recruit a wave of troops. Ji Chen decided to deal with the aftermath of the Sea Beast Tide attack as soon as possible and then lead his troops to the Starshine Islands before the Sea Beast Tide moved north.

Otherwise, if everyone fled, there would be no business left to do.

“Alice, let’s go. We’re going to the Great Luminescent Sea.”

Alice was awakened by Ji Chen’s words, her expression concealing the affection in her eyes. She nodded and followed him.

Ji Chen entered the Great Luminescent Sea’s secret realm with the Coral Palace Legion.

As soon as he stepped out of the archway, a thousand-man team stationed here immediately saluted upon seeing Ji Chen, their faces filled with awe.

They knew that this Lord had single-handedly dispersed the Dragon King City army attacking the Coral Palace, led a powerful army to conquer Dragon King City, captured the Sea Dragon King, and even made the Lord of the Coral Palace submit, unifying the Great Luminescent Sea.

With such terrifying achievements, no sea tribe would underestimate them.

Moreover, this Lord came from the main world, and all the sea tribes of the Great Luminescent Sea were extremely curious about the outside world.

They heard that behind the portal, there were not only sea tribes and humans but also various strange races such as elves, dwarves, orcs, and others vastly different from sea tribes. It would be great if they could have a look...

Ji Chen naturally noticed the soldiers from the Coral Palace who were eager and curious about the world outside the mystic realm. He smiled at them and patted the shoulder of the leader of this thousand-man team. “Guard this place well. I’ll take you out to see the world in the future.”

The leader of the thousand-man team looked flattered. “I will definitely guard this place and not let a single fish pass!”

As they watched Ji Chen and Alice’s figures disappear into the fluorescent forest, the soldiers began to discuss.

“Is that the Lord who wiped out the Dragon King City’s hidden army and conquered the Dragon King City? He looks so young!”

“Isn’t that obvious? The stronger they are, the younger they look. Haven’t you seen the Lord of the Coral Palace? She’s already several thousand years old, but she still looks so young!”

“Are you crazy!? How dare you mention the age of the Lord of the Coral Palace! But she does look very young... Hey, who do you think is more beautiful, the Lord of the Coral Palace or the woman from the sea tribe with those long fin-like ears by the Lord’s side?”

“Oh, that’s an interesting question. I think the Lord of the Coral Palace is more beautiful, elegant, and dignified, with grace and grandeur.”

“I think it’s the one by the Lord’s side who looks better. She’s like a sea fairy who has come out of the endless deep sea, exuding a coldness that keeps people at a distance...”

“Shut up and focus on patrolling!” The leader of the thousand-man team scolded, and the soldiers closed their mouths and continued their patrols. But the leader couldn’t help but think, which one of those two honorable ladies was more beautiful...

It turned out that no matter the race, everyone enjoyed gossiping behind their backs.

Leaving the Luminescent forest, Ji Chen went directly to the Coral Palace. The thousand-man team stationed here also saluted with deep reverence. Whether it was the Coral Palace or Dragon King City, they all knew that the owner of the Great Luminescent Sea was this remarkably handsome human.

Ji Chen gestured for them to stand up and asked, “Where is Sonia? I need to see her.”

“Reporting to the Lord, Lady Sonia has led her troops out to clean up the remnants of Dragon King City and has not yet returned.”

“Where did she go for the cleanup?”

“She went to the Fishmouth Canyon on the north side of Dragon King City.”

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen didn’t waste any time. He nodded and signaled Tyrant Azure Dragon to turn around and leave, taking Alice with him as they immediately headed there.

Fishmouth Canyon was a naturally formed peculiar terrain. Its entrance resembled a fish’s mouth, hence the name “canyon,” but the interior was as spacious as a fish’s belly.

One day ago, a reconnaissance team reported traces of remnants from Dragon King City here, with an unknown number of them hiding in the canyon. Therefore, Sonia personally led three thousand-man teams to come here to eliminate them.

Upon arriving here, they discovered that a thousand-man team from Dragon King City had concealed themselves with thousands of residents inside the canyon.

Sonia had originally thought that leading her army personally would quickly eliminate these remnants from Dragon King City. However, she didn’t expect them to have such strong resistance, using the terrain of Fishmouth Canyon to repel wave after wave of attacks, even inflicting casualties on many Coral Palace soldiers.

Seeing the remnants from Dragon King City once again repelling the Coral Palace army’s assault, cheers and taunts echoed, and Sonia’s expression soured.

“Lady Sonia, it’s our incompetence in battle. I’m willing to accept punishment!”

A leader of a thousand-man team half-knelt and said with a look of shame. Three thousand-man teams against one thousand-man team, not only did they fail to swiftly capture them, but they also

suffered hundreds of casualties. Such a performance was not only embarrassing to show to that Lord, but even he himself felt ashamed.

Seeing his appearance, Sonia's expression eased slightly. She straightened herself and said sternly, "I'll give you another half-day. If you still can't capture them, then resign on your own, and I will personally take action."

"Yes!"

Just as this leader of the thousand-man team, filled with frustration, was about to lead the troops for another assault, a somewhat familiar voice suddenly sounded.

"Sonia, what's happening here?"

The leader of the thousand-man team turned his head upon hearing the voice and saw the Lord approaching on a massive Tryant Azure Dragon.

"Lord Ji Chen, why are you here? Why didn't you inform me in advance?"

Sonia's expression turned to one of great surprise, and she hurriedly went to greet him, performing a formal salute.

Seeing this, the leader of the thousand-man team and the Coral Palace soldiers also knelt down and lowered their heads, unable to look directly at Ji Chen.

This Lord here is the new ruler of the Great Luminescent Sea, the true sovereign.

Ji Chen gestured for them to rise, saying, "There's no need for such formalities every time. A simple fist to the chest will suffice."

"Yes, as you wish."

Sonia nodded, and with her officers and soldiers, they stood up.

"How are these remnants from Dragon King City that you were clearing out?"

As soon as this question was asked, Sonia looked somewhat embarrassed. She couldn't directly say that the Coral Palace army of three thousand had faced off against a mere one thousand and suffered hundreds of casualties.

As the leader, she felt quite awkward about it.

Seeing Sonia's demeanor and noticing the strange expressions on several thousand-man team leaders, Ji Chen understood the situation.

There was no blame, just a mild comment.

"To know shame and still be brave is the mark of a true hero.."

Chapter 436: Nightmare, Underground Workshop, Destroyer

Fishmouth Canyon.

The leader of the Dragon King's City's thousand-strong army watched as they once again repelled the attack from the Coral Palace troops, his face filled with excitement. He couldn't help but feel elated.

When Dragon King's City was about to be breached, he originally intended to sacrifice himself for his country, to repay the Water Dragon Lord's previous mercy of sparing their lives.

However, when faced with thousands of enemies, he hesitated and chose to lead his remaining troops away from the battlefield. Along the way, they gathered the scattered soldiers and brought along thousands of residents to this easily defensible location, where they could plan their next move.

But shortly after arriving here, the Coral Palace troops had found their whereabouts, and three thousand-strong armies led by none other than the Coral Lord herself had come marching in.

Initially, they felt despair, thinking there was no escape, but what happened afterward left them astonished.

The Coral Palace troops not only failed to quickly conquer them, but they were also seriously wounded in their relentless counterattacks. Three thousand against their one thousand, yet the enemy's assaults were repelled time and time again, and hundreds of them were even killed by his forces, with minimal casualties on their side.

Even the Coral Lord herself couldn't defeat them when leading the charge, which made them feel rather smug.

"As long as we hold onto Fishmouth Canyon and train these residents, we might be able to launch a counterattack to reclaim Dragon King's City and rescue the Water Dragon Lord!"

"That's right, those Coral Palace fools who are content with the status quo can't possibly match our battle-hardened warriors. We are bound to retake Dragon King's City!"

"What's the big deal about the Coral Lord? She only colluded with humans to sneak attack the Water Dragon King. In a fair battle, we will surely emerge victorious!"

"Long live Dragon King's City!"

Listening to the soldiers' cheers, the leader of the thousand-strong army couldn't help but smile as if the Coral Palace troops that had driven them away were nothing, and the recapture of Dragon King's City was imminent.

However, at that moment, a soldier suddenly exclaimed, "Look outside, there are about a dozen big fellows coming our way."

The leader of the thousand-strong army followed the gaze and immediately saw more than a dozen Azure Dragons descending slowly among the Coral Palace troops. At the head of one of these dragons stood a tall figure. Due to the distance, he couldn't make out the details of this figure.

He watched as the Coral Palace troops knelt before this figure.

Those Azure Dragons... he vaguely remembered them appearing during the Battle of Dragon King's City. They seemed to be... the army of that outsider, the human!

So, that figure... could it be the same human!?

At that thought, the leader of the thousand-strong army turned pale.

Memories he'd rather not recall flooded his mind, and he would never forget the day when the Dragon King's City's formidable army, with all its might, had approached the Coral Palace, only to be effortlessly decimated by that emotionless human who merely waved his hand.

Endless fear surged through him like a bursting dam, causing his body to tremble uncontrollably.

There was only one thought in his mind.

These humans are absolutely unbeatable!!

In the eyes of the Coral Palace troops, Ji Chen was like a savior, but in the Dragon King's City army, he was an unshakable nightmare.

At this moment, the other soldiers, seeing the expression on their leader's face, seemed to have guessed something. They all wore terrified expressions, unable to even hold onto their weapons, with morale completely depleted and a look of fear and confusion on their faces.

"Leader, what should we do..."

"How about we surrender? Otherwise, that human will surely kill us all."

"I heard that the Coral Palace doesn't kill surrendered sea creatures. If we surrender, maybe we can survive..."

The leader of the thousand-strong army remembered the Water Dragon King, who was rumored to be imprisoned in the dark and miserable dungeons of Dragon King's City, likely enduring torture and interrogation by the Coral Palace, resisting the persecution of the enemy.

If even the Water Dragon King was in such a state, how could they, as his subordinates, surrender without a fight?

The Water Dragon King gave him a chance to redeem himself. How could he betray the expectations of the Lord?

The leader of the thousand-strong army clenched his teeth and shouted loudly, "We absolutely cannot surrender! The Water Dragon King is still waiting for us to rescue him, and Dragon King's City is still waiting for us to reclaim it!"

"For the loyalty to the Water Dragon King!!"

As if inspired, the other soldiers exchanged glances and mustered some courage. They raised their weapons and cried out, "For the loyalty to the Water Dragon King!"

At this moment, the Coral Palace troops, which had paused for a moment, suddenly moved again, launching a vigorous attack.

They had just prepared to defend themselves when they saw the tall figure also advancing, raising his right hand slowly.

A whirlpool suddenly formed, growing larger and larger, as if it connected heaven and earth. Even from a distance, one could sense the terrifying power contained within it.

Seeing this scene, the little bit of courage they had mustered disappeared like smoke. They knelt on the ground, their faces filled with fear.

The leader of the thousand-strong army, seeing this, inwardly cursed them as cowards, then rushed forward with a resolute expression.

Even if he were to die, he would die on the battlefield!

Soon, his figure was overwhelmed by the Coral Palace's vast army.

This battle, which was supposed to continue for much longer and result in more casualties among the sea creatures, abruptly ended with Ji Chen's arrival.

The thousand-strong army from Dragon King's City in Fishmouth Canyon chose to surrender. After being disarmed, they were escorted to Dragon King's City and locked away in its dungeons. They returned to the city in a different way.

In the palace that originally belonged to Diago, Ji Chen sat on the golden throne steps..

Chapter 437: Nightmare, Underground Workshop, Destroyer (2)

Under the steps, Sonia stood, awaiting orders.

"I've come this time to instruct you on some matters."

"Please, speak, my lord. I will act according to your will."

"No need to be so tense, have a seat." Ji Chen glanced at the solemn-faced Sonia and smiled.

Sonia hesitated for a moment but eventually sat on one of the stone chairs, only halfway, keeping her back straight.

Seeing this, Ji Chen didn't say anything more and continued, "Currently, the Western Mid-Ocean is under attack by a Sea Beast Tide. Our connections with settlements like the Northern Continent have been forcibly severed, which has a significant impact on the development of the Crown of the Ocean."

Sonia nodded. The Lord had previously mentioned the outside world to her to some extent, and she was aware of places like the Western Mid-Ocean and the Northern Continent, so understanding now was not a problem.

"Although the Sea Beast Tide has passed through the Stormy Sea, there are still many scattered sea beasts roaming.

In the coming days, I will lead the Legion to the Starshine Islands, which are several days' journey away from our territory, to acquire the resources needed for the development of our domain. So, you must quickly pacify the Great Luminescent Sea and, if necessary, lead the Coral Palace army to take on some of the defense responsibilities."

Sonia's face lit up with joy. Didn't this mean that they would soon be able to visit the colorful Main World?

While Ji Chen spoke, he observed Sonia's demeanor discreetly, and after seeing that her worries had been dispelled with the prospect of visiting the Main World, he nodded in approval.

Her concerns were all but gone.

After a moment of joy, Sonia stood up again and saluted. "I am willing to issue a military order that the Coral Palace will resolve the remaining remnants of Dragon King's City as soon as possible.

And handle other matters in the Great Luminescent Sea promptly, and, if necessary, lead the Coral Palace army to take on defense duties."

Seeing Sonia's commitment, Ji Chen nodded with reassurance.

"Besides this matter, you should also dispatch reconnaissance teams to explore the terrain, enemies, and other aspects of the Abyssal Layers of Darkness."

Sonia's expression changed slightly. "My lord, do you intend to explore the Abyssal Layers of Darkness in the Great Luminescent Sea?"

Ji Chen nodded without hesitation.

Dragon King's City had once obtained a large number of precious resources from the Abyssal Layers of Darkness in the Great Luminescent Sea. With such a treasure trove before them, it would be a waste not to explore it.

However, they knew nothing about the current situation inside, and it was clearly not suitable for large-scale exploration.

Sonia proposed, "We can go to the human kingdoms above the sea. They are descendants of those humans and may still possess and preserve important information about the Abyssal Layers of Darkness."

"Sure, I'll leave this matter to you." Ji Chen considered the approach feasible and agreed with a sweeping gesture. "Feel free to be bold with your ideas as long as they align with the interests of the Crown of the Ocean."

He didn't want a mere obedient robot who followed orders blindly. He wanted someone who could oversee the bigger picture.

All along, he had been consciously or unconsciously nurturing the autonomy of his subordinates. For example, Wilus was the best representative of this approach.

By establishing legions, he aimed to transform his heroes into generals who could both fight and command, rather than mere brutes charging into battle.

Heroes like Alice, Herald, Benbo, and others were progressing in this direction.

As for Anina, it seemed she lacked such talents, so she would be treated as a super-powered individual.

After explaining these matters to Sonia, Ji Chen left the Great Luminescent Sea with Alice.

The current inventory of the Crown of the Ocean had just over two hundred thousand rare resources, barely enough for one round of recruiting units. Therefore, he decided to use this limited resource to strengthen the core heroes—those who played crucial roles in the Legion.

It typically took around 50,000 to 70,000 rare resources to upgrade a blue excellent-tier hero unit to a purple rare tier. With just under 240,000 rare resources, he could roughly upgrade four heroes.

The list of upgrades had long been in his mind: Half-Orc hero Daro, Lobster Guardian Knight hero Wilun, one Naga Guardian hero, and a Water Nymph Archer.

The Naga Guardian hero would take on temporary leadership duties when Herald fought alone, while the Water Nymph Archer would command the Guardian Legion.

When four new purple rare-tier hero units appeared on the territory panel, it signified that the Crown of the Ocean had become stronger and that its rare resource inventory had been completely depleted.

If no new resources came in, they would be left with nothing to recruit more units.

As Ji Chen was preparing for another sea expedition with great enthusiasm, Thotmudo brought good news: the object from the second alchemical blueprint had been successfully manufactured.

During the previous Sea Beast Tide attack, Thotmudo stayed in the underground lizardman world, working tirelessly in the blacksmith's forge. His goal was to create the prototype from the second alchemical blueprint as quickly as possible.

Upon receiving this news, Ji Chen quickly made his way through the lengthy tunnels and returned to the underground.

The underground lizardman world remained the same, with molten lava and rocks constituting its eternal landscape.

However, outside the capital of Dork City, on the vast surface, there stood imposing workshops. Molten lava, redirected from the lava rivers, flowed through designated channels, providing ample heat and energy for the workshops' production operations. Piles of ore as tall as mountains accumulated on the nearby open ground.

Under the supervision of the legendary dwarf blacksmith Thotmudo, several large-scale production workshops were established here. They utilized the abundant ore resources and the continuous flow of lava to produce various iron tools, weapons, alchemical cannonballs, arrowheads, and ammunition.

It could be said that this place was the industrial park of the Crown of the Ocean, occupying more than eighty percent of its industrial capacity.

This was Ji Chen's original plan, to leverage the secrecy and security of the underground lizardman world to ensure the production of various supplies.

In addition to being an excellent refuge, the underground lizardman world also served as a backup production base.

Ji Chen walked into one of the towering workshops and saw Thotmudo standing in front of a pitch-black cannon platform.

“Sir Thotmudo, I heard that you have successfully manufactured the prototype from the second blueprint. Is this it?”

Upon hearing this, Thotmudo turned to look and confidently replied, “Of course, this little thing doesn’t require much technical skill. It took a bit of time, but I managed to make it.”

Ji Chen smiled and didn’t press him further. Instead, he looked at the cannon platform.

The hexagonal metal base of the cannon platform extended diagonally in the middle, with an extremely thick barrel that was longer than a battleship’s cannon, exuding a terrifying aura with its jet-black color.

At a glance, it exuded a sense of security.

“This cannon is called the Destroyer. It’s a type of coastal defense alchemical cannon with a considerably long attack range. It can accurately hit targets several kilometers away, and its power is quite impressive. A single shot can sink small iron warships immediately or render them combat ineffective.”

But the drawbacks are also quite evident: slow ammunition loading, high craftsmanship requirements, and a relatively long manufacturing cycle. However, these shortcomings cannot overshadow the power of the Destroyer cannon.”

Thotmudo, who was usually critical and proud, couldn’t help but show a hint of admiration. “It seems that over the past few thousand years, humans have made some progress in alchemical technology.”

“What’s the relationship between you and that daughter of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy? Is she your mistress? How could she be willing to give you a blueprint for something like this?” Thotmudo questioned, wearing an expression that said he found it hard to believe.

Ji Chen almost spat out his drink and chuckled, saying, “Monica is just a friend of mine, not my mistress.”

Thotmudo gave him a skeptical look. Would an ordinary friend give such a valuable item as a gift?

However, he didn’t dwell on it and continued, “Right now, this Destroyer is only the prototype, and there are some adjustments needed in terms of design and craftsmanship.

It can’t be put into use immediately if you want to deal with those sea beasts.”

Ji Chen waved his hand and had an air of confidence. “That’s okay. We can go at your pace. The Crown of the Ocean can afford to wait.”

“You’re easy to talk to, and I bet you get along well with other dwarves.”

Ji Chen smiled. “Thank you for your praise. There’s one more thing... we’ve run out of alchemical cannonball inventory. Can you produce another batch quickly?”

“Of course, that’s not a problem. I’ll have the apprentices work overtime to produce them.”

Thotmudo nodded..

Chapter 438: Depart, Divine Ruin, Masked Woman

In fact, Thotmudo had now become the head of industrial production for the Crown of the Ocean. In terms of both strength and position, even Wilus dared not show any disrespect to him.

He was responsible for the entire industrial park of the underground Lizardman world.

Ji Chen was also pleased with this. Since Thotmudo was willing to take on this position, he didn't mind delegating authority and sharing some of the pressure.

At the same time, this seemed to be a way to tie Thotmudo to the Crown of the Ocean.

Killing two birds with one stone.

"Sir Thotmudo, in a couple of days, I will lead my army to the Starshine Islands. I hope that when I'm not around, you can intervene if the Crown of the Ocean is in danger."

Although Ji Chen had already taken several precautions, he didn't mind adding another layer of security.

The aftermath of the last incident caused by the Kingdom of Bass was still fresh in his memory, and he didn't want to be robbed again.

"That's certainly not a problem. As long as you remember the promise we made back then."

Thotmudo waved his hand, making a hammering motion with one hand.

"I'll smash those sea beasts one by one, and knock their brains out."

With the assurance of this dwarven powerhouse who stood at the pinnacle of the world, Ji Chen felt much more at ease, and his worries disappeared.

After visiting several workshops that were dozens of meters high and bustling with activity, Ji Chen returned to the surface.

He checked the time.

The Sea Beast Tide should be about halfway through its journey by now, and it would arrive at the Starshine Islands in seven or eight days at most. It was time for him to set out.

"Assemble the entire army!"

The main legions gathered here.

This time, there were six main legions, and the Dragon Horn Catfish, as a magical damage output unit, was incorporated into the Guardian Legion.

The Dragon Horn Catfish had performed exceptionally well in the previous Sea Beast Tide, with its lightning magic output being explosive.

After the army was fully assembled.

Ji Chen waved his hand, and thousands of troops set off towards the open sea.

Along the way, they encountered many scattered groups of sea beasts, ranging from a dozen to over a hundred, but in front of the Crown of the Ocean's army, they were no match. Any legion could easily deal with them.

After five days of sailing, the group arrived safely in the waters where the Starshine Islands were located.

Upon entering this sea area, they could feel the strange atmosphere pervading the place. It seemed that even the sea breeze had become tense.

The news that the Sea Beast Tide was about to arrive here had already spread throughout the entire sea area. Countless natives and players chose to leave, taking all their belongings with them.

On the sea surface, one could see ships fleeing from this place everywhere.

Ji Chen even saw some players rowing fishing boats to leave, and he couldn't help but shake his head.

Fishing boats could barely be used in the nearshore areas, but once they entered the open sea, they would capsize in no time. By then, they might have to witness a maritime survival drama.

The Crown of the Ocean army, going against the current, stood out among the many teams fleeing outward. Many natives and players looked at Ji Chen and his group with curiosity, not quite understanding why they had come here at this time.

Ignoring these curious looks, Ji Chen led the army closer to the Starshine Islands.

The reason why it was called the Starshine Islands was because it was a large group of islands. Thousands of islands, large and small, were embedded in the sea like stars, forming a relatively calm sea area with layered island chains.

Before players arrived, this was a bustling archipelago where countless ships passed through for resupply and trade. When players arrived as "foreign visitors," the local authorities here quickly sensed the players' extraordinariness and potential.

Not only did they show a very friendly attitude, but they were also willing to give all these islands to the players as territories, as long as they followed the local rules.

This way, they could both earn goodwill and maintain order here, and harness the power of the players to explore islands that they couldn't even consider. This would make the area even more prosperous.

It could be said that the Starshine Islands were a perfect example of friendly coexistence and integration between the native forces and players.

Everything was developing in a better direction.

Then, the sudden Sea Beast Tide disrupted the prosperity and stability here.

On the largest island near the center of the archipelago, there stood a castle complex on the central mountain, which was the headquarters of the Starshine Islands' governing power – Starshine City.

In a magnificent hail, more than a dozen councillors of Starshine City sat at the conference table, their faces filled with worry.

“I heard that another Lord of Glory’s group has chosen to leave. At this rate, I’m afraid everyone will run away.”

“Not only Lords of Glory, many merchants have left in advance, and some even sold their island properties. Shouldn’t we intervene?”

“No, the Starshine Islands have always advocated for free trade, and this would disrupt the very soil on which we depend for survival!”

“But how long can we hold on like this? As soon as the Sea Beast Tide arrives, everything will get destroyed, so why cling to these principles?”

“Why the hell did this accursed Sea Beast Tide appear?! And it had to conveniently hit our place.”

At this point, the councillors all sighed. In the end, all of this was the result of the impending Sea Beast Tide. If someone could resist it, the Starshine Islands could be saved...

“Councillors, there is hope for the Starshine Islands!”

At this moment, the cry of a guard suddenly came from outside the hall.

The councillors looked at each other, not knowing what had happened.

Chapter 439: Depart, Divine Ruin, Masked Woman (2)

Just as the Starshine Islands were feeling uneasy about the impending Sea Beast Tide...

Thousands of miles away, on the New Moon Islands.

Inside the Great Luminescent Sea Dragon King’s prison.

The leader of a thousand-person squad slowly regained consciousness as he awoke from his stupor. Upon seeing the unfamiliar ceiling above him, he hesitated for a moment, then quickly got up.

Memories flooded back to his mind like a tide. He remembered charging alone, and the last thing he recalled was being overwhelmed by the incoming Coral Palace troops.

Despite the pain coursing through his body, there was no doubt that he was still alive.

Muttering to himself, he pondered, “Why didn’t they kill me... But where am I now?”

Without dwelling on the question of why the Coral Palace hadn’t executed him, the leader of the thousand-person squad looked around at his surroundings in bewilderment. Soon, he realized that he was in the prison of the Dragon King’s Castle!

He had heard that Lord Diago was imprisoned here!

“Lord, are you here...”

As he reached the edge of the cell, intending to find Lord Diago, he witnessed a scene that shattered his world view.

“You idiotic piece of trash! If I were you, I would have smashed my head against the pillar and died long ago! Betraying the Dragon King’s Castle and still having the audacity to live?!”

“Do you even know whose hands the Dragon King’s Castle fell into? You’re just the Water Dragon King, and merely the last one at that. If the previous generations of Water Dragon Kings heard this news, they’d probably roll over in their graves!”

“You’re the one who led the way and not only allowed outsiders to breach the Dragon King’s Castle but also exposed the treasury. In terms of defying fate, you’re at the top!”

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In the adjacent cell, the figure that he had once regarded with immense dignity and power, Lord Diago, was now engaged in a heated exchange of insults with a fish-like creature that had equally long horns.

Although he didn’t fully comprehend the odd use of auxiliary verbs at the end of sentences, the scene before him was undeniably real!

Diago also noticed the awakening leader of the thousand-person squad and, after a moment’s thought, furrowed his brow. “You look somewhat familiar. Have we met before?”

“...Lord Diago, I am the leader of the thousand-person squad you once gave a chance to redeem himself.”

After a brief moment of contemplation, Diago suddenly realized, “It’s you. So, you’re not dead yet.”

The leader of the thousand-person squad swallowed hard. “Thanks to your mercy, Lord Diago. After the Coral Palace captured me, they didn’t kill me but instead brought me here.”

“Is that so? Tell me everything about your experiences until now.”

Taking a deep breath, the squad leader recounted everything, from the defeat at the Dragon King’s Castle, the defense of Fishmouth Canyon, to his solo charge and being overwhelmed by the Coral Palace troops.

Diago was somewhat surprised and praised, “I didn’t expect to have such a courageous leader among my ranks.

You’re at least a leader of a thousand-person squad; it’s not beneath you.”

“...Lord Diago, now that the Dragon King’s Castle’s army has been completely wiped out, there are no more thousand-person squads.”

“That’s true...”

“May I dare to ask, Lord Diago, who is the sea creature who bears a striking resemblance to you?”

“That idiot? Oh, he’s my younger brother.”

“Younger brother?” The leader of the thousand-person squad looked bewildered. Because he had left with his subordinates after the Dragon King’s Castle’s defeat, he didn’t witness the scene where Ji Chen used Diago to threaten Andar. Naturally, he didn’t know that Diago had a younger brother.

However, this was clearly a minor issue.

After looking around to ensure there were no guards or soldiers nearby, he spoke in a low voice.

“Lord Diago, I have something to report to you that may be related to whether the Dragon King’s Castle can rise again.”

Upon hearing this, Diago’s expression turned serious, and he finally regained a trace of his dominant aura.

“Speak.”

“I previously defended Fishmouth Canyon with a thousand-person squad and several thousand residents. While exploring the canyon, I accidentally discovered a ruin deep within the canyon walls.

That ruin was definitely not constructed by the Great Luminescent Sea’s sea creatures or humans. It exudes an aura of profound holiness and nobility, as if... it was left behind by a deity.”

The Great Luminescent Sea had long been connected to the main world, or rather, there were traces of external civilizations there since the time when the people of the Mystic Realm were still weak.

As a result, concepts like deities had also made their way here and continued to be passed down.

“I didn’t have the chance to explore that suspected divine ruin because of the intervention of the Coral Palace.”

The leader of the thousand-person squad seemed excited. “But since it might be a divine ruin, there could be some artifacts inside that could help us drive away the outsiders, overthrow the Coral Palace, and reclaim the Dragon King’s Castle!”

Diago also felt a twinge of interest. “Is this information reliable?”

“I swear on my life and honor!”

If they could truly obtain artifacts from that ruin, perhaps they could defeat Sonia, destroy the Coral Palace, and then he could break the Mystic Realm Gate, permanently severing the connection with the outside world. In that case, the Great Luminescent Sea would ultimately return to his control.

“In that case, we’ll need to plan our escape carefully...”

As the master and servant quietly discussed their plan, Sonia, who had been observing them from the shadows since the beginning, gradually lit up with anticipation in her eyes.

Previously, the decision not to kill the leader of the thousand-person squad who had charged alone but to imprison him was initially to appreciate his talent. Being able to command a thousand-person squad to hold off several attacks from the Coral Palace was impressive, and he might be of use.

The arrangement of the cell next to Diago's was just a casual choice to see if they had given up hope.

For this reason, she intentionally kept the prison guards and soldiers at a distance.

But little did she expect that such a casual decision would yield a pleasant surprise.

"A divine ruin..."

Sonia murmured to herself. This news needed to be told to Lord Ji Chen...

In the Starshine City Council Hall.

The council members looked at the tall, masked woman before them. Even though most of her face was concealed by the mask, the remaining part revealed that she was exceptionally beautiful.

However, they had no time to appreciate this beauty. Just a moment ago, the guards reported that a masked woman wanted to see them, claiming she could help the Starshine Islands withstand the Sea Beast Tide.

"Ma'am, may I ask for your name? We heard that you can help us defend against the Sea Beasts," said Hadman, the chairman, in a serious tone.

The masked woman slightly parted her vermilion lips and spoke with an ethereal voice, "My master has sent me. If you are willing to pay the price, we can assist you in resisting the Sea Beast Tide."

"Your master? Why doesn't he come here in person to negotiate with us?"

Furthermore, this time, there are hundreds of thousands of Sea Beasts flooding through the entire Starshine Islands. Not just anyone can stop them. What confidence does your master have to block them?

If you've come here, you should be aware of the consequences of deceiving us!"

Faced with Hadman's skeptical words, the masked woman showed no emotional fluctuations and simply replied, "Whether you believe it or not is entirely up to you, but without us, the Starshine Islands will be reduced to ashes in the clutches of the sea beasts.

My master is occupied with many matters and doesn't particularly care about this place. However, upon passing by and witnessing the calamity befalling the Starshine Islands, he didn't wish to see too many lives lost needlessly. That's why he sent me here to inquire.

Moreover, the extent of my master's power is beyond your imagination. All you need to know is that we can save your lives."

Hadman, the chairman, had a changeable expression on his face. He found it difficult to gauge the truth in the words of this masked woman.

But they seemed to have few other choices. The Sea Beast Tide would arrive in two days at the earliest, and by then, even if they had to abandon much of their heritage and leave, they would still risk becoming the prey of the Sea Beasts if they stayed.

But if possible, they are unwilling to abandon the legacy and wealth passed down through generations here.”

“...Perhaps we can discuss the price you mentioned.”

Behind the mask, the stunning woman raised a faint, delicate smile. “Very well, you’ve seized the opportunity to survive..”

Chapter 440: The Parliament, the Price, and the People’s Hearts

In the council chamber.

Several dignified, well-dressed council members sat at the long table, facing off against the woman standing in front wearing a mask.

Although just a mere woman, her presence alone seemed to subtly overwhelm the council members on the other side.

Sunlight streamed through the glass dome on the roof, forming shapes due to the refraction of the glass. These regular patterns cast onto the woman while the council members and the table were shrouded in darkness.

At this moment, it was as if the council members were beings trapped in darkness, and the woman was an angel descending from the heavens to save them.

With a voice as lovely as that of an ancient fairy gifted with a beautiful singing voice, the woman’s captivating words resonated throughout the grand hall.

“My master instructed me that if you wish to seize this unique opportunity, you must offer ten percent of your family’s wealth.”

After a moment of silence, the council chamber, which had always represented the highest ruling body of the Starshine Islands, erupted like a marketplace.

“This is impossible!” The council members exploded in anger, like enraged lions.

“Even the most expensive and powerful mercenary guilds on the Western Continent wouldn’t demand such an exorbitant fee!”

“Ten percent of our family’s wealth? You might as well just rob us!”

“I believe you’re just playing with us! Guards, seize this woman and throw her into the sea as fish food!”

The council members glared at her, some clenched their fists, some became furious, and others called for the guards. They displayed various forms of anger, like a microcosm of beings before a catastrophe.

Even Council President Hadman had a dark expression. Despite having prepared to pay a hefty price in advance, he was still shocked by the woman’s tone.

Ten percent of their family’s wealth.

The Starshine City had occupied the Starshine Islands for centuries. Initially established by a group of immigrants from the mainland, they quickly assimilated with the local indigenous tribes, thriving on these scattered islands.

Passed down through these immigrant noble families, thirteen council families gradually formed. Each family had a representative council member to safeguard its interests. Every five years, an election was held, choosing the Council President, symbolizing the highest authority.

The thirteen council families maintained connections with each other, preserving and upholding this order on the Starshine Islands for hundreds of years.

Over these centuries, each family had accumulated a wealth that could rival the treasuries of dragons. Even though they suffered losses in an accident a century ago, their wealth was still unimaginable to outsiders.

And now, this woman with a mask was demanding ten percent of their family's wealth!?

What kind of outrageous joke was this?

The fully armed guards heard the shouts of the council members and immediately pushed open the gates, surrounding the woman. If she showed even the slightest hint of resistance, the sharp edge of their swords would fall upon her.

Confronted by the guards' sharp blades, the masked woman remained unfazed and composed. She stood there with composure, her gaze steady, and a touch of scorn in her eyes as she regarded the guards.

"Stop."

The voice of Council President Hadman made the guards pause. After exchanging glances, they sheathed their weapons but remained in place, ready for action at any moment.

"Does your master know the concept of ten percent of our family's wealth? His appetite seems insatiable. Isn't he afraid of biting off more than he can chew?" Hadman's temples throbbed as he resisted the urge to curse.

The masked woman smiled faintly. "My master's generosity can encompass an ocean."

"So, you're saying there's no room for negotiation?"

"Life is non-negotiable."

Hademan's forehead veins bulged as he restrained himself from swearing. He waved his hand.

"Then please depart, madam."

Upon hearing this, the masked woman showed no displeasure. Instead, she performed a departure gesture more elegant and refined than palace etiquette.

"If you are willing to accept this modest condition, you can find us on the islands at the northern edge of the archipelago. We will stay there for some time."

With that, the woman didn't linger any longer. She turned around gracefully, the sea breeze lifting her, and disappeared among the guards behind the gates.

After a brief silence, the hall erupted in arguments once more.

“This condition is too harsh! I can’t believe this so-called savior is like this, taking advantage of us!”

“I suspect she’s just a fraud. She doesn’t have the power to stop the sea beast tide at all.”

“Don’t think Starshine City is defenseless. We have a formidable army, and we can rely on the coastal artillery on the island. We can resist.”

“That’s right, I’d rather sink all my money into the sea than give it to someone with such a voracious appetite!”

“But what should we do? The sea beast tide is set to arrive in two days...”

Hadman looked at the bickering council members, feeling a headache and frustration. This was the nature of a parliamentary system, often noisy and filled with debates that yielded no effective solutions.

In the end, he slammed the table with force.

The noise in the hall gradually subsided.

Hadman spoke in a solemn tone, “Regardless of the situation, we need to send someone to monitor this masked woman. We must prevent them from making any moves on the Starshine Islands when the sea beast tide approaches!” “That’s right, we must protect our wealth!”

“The sea beast tide is a threat, and these newcomers who suddenly appeared are also a threat..”