

Ocean Lord 461

Chapter 461: Talent as a Dog, Huge Resources, and “Acknowledge “(2)

Ji Chen took a sharp breath, a pleasant surprise appearing on his face.

Thirty million gold coins, enough to equip several armies of the same scale as the councilors' private forces. He couldn't help but wonder why these councilors preferred to hoard their gold instead of using it to strengthen their military or develop their holdings.

“However, this is only a part of the Thirteen Council Families' wealth. When they faced the Sea Beast Tide, they had a two-pronged plan.

One was to seek our help in defending against it, and the other was to transport most of their easily portable wealth, as well as their families and trusted aides, aboard their private fleets. They secretly left the Starshine Islands before the Sea Beast Tide arrived.

Except for Xhakas, Kieran, and Herman's fleets, which are currently returning, the private fleets of the other councilors should have completely left the nearby waters. They probably heard the news that the Starshine Islands have changed hands and are unlikely to return. Finding them in such vast oceans is like searching for a needle in a haystack.”

Ji Chen nodded. He already learned about the last point from Xhakas. This was undeniably a massive loss.

The councilors, especially Hadman, had made detailed preparations. They moved most of their wealth and families on ships as a precaution in case the Crown of the Ocean couldn't withstand the Sea Beast Tide. This way, they would have the resources to make a fresh start.

As for the residents of the Starshine Islands?

Xhakas reported that Hadman had included the residents in the evacuation plan, using them as bait to attract the attention of the Sea Beast Tide, allowing them enough time to escape.

Once the Sea Beast Tide passed through the Starshine Islands, they would return and regain control of the highest authority here.

They didn't particularly care about the population; in this world, the population was the least valuable. As long as they had enough money, they could easily acquire a large labor force.

In this way, apart from losing a large number of buildings, they didn't suffer too much. As long as they return, the Thirteen Council Families would still be the supreme rulers here!

However, for these private fleets loaded with a wealth of resources but lacking sufficient armed forces, they were like a juicy piece of meat in the middle of the ocean, quickly devoured by anyone who coveted it.

Therefore, he wasn't too worried that these family members and trusted aides would come back for revenge. Even if they did, the Crown of the Ocean would only give them the same fate as those councilors – death and destruction.

Your father couldn't defeat me, and you believe that you and your descendants can?

Putting aside these thoughts, Ji Chen signaled for Alice to continue.

It wasn't until an hour later that all the various matters were reported.

Even for Alice, who was a Siren, she couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief at the end.

For her, dealing with these human affairs wasn't particularly enjoyable. She preferred the simplicity of battling enemies.

Seeing her relieved expression, Ji Chen felt a twinge of sympathy but could only come over and pat her little head.

"You've been through a lot. Once Wilus sends someone over, you won't have to do these things anymore."

Alice gently shook her head and looked at Ji Chen earnestly, "My Lord, as long as you need it, I'm willing to do it for you."

Ji Chen had no words in response and could only embrace her with comfort.

But in his heart, he began to contemplate whether it was right to involve someone like Alice, born into the boundless ocean with pure blood, in these disgusting and worldly matters of humans.

They were originally living in the vast ocean, singing freely with their voices, without having to pay attention to all this.

It could be said that Alice, who was originally a blank canvas, was gradually being colored by him with various shades.

After some thought, Ji Chen realized he might be overthinking things.

Even though Alice was bound to him through that potion, after so much time of interaction and communication, the relationship between Alice and him had evolved beyond just a bond of loyalty.

Her "approval" of him was why she was willing to do so much.

Similarly, many residents of the Crown of the Ocean, the different races, and even newcomers like Raymond were willing to follow him, recognizing the order and rules he established.

Because they believed Ji Chen could lead them towards a brighter and better life, perhaps even usher in a new era.

This, ultimately, was the reason why Alice and many others were willing to charge into battle for him.

Unbeknownst to him, his shoulders were gradually bearing the expectations of many.

For some reason, Ji Chen began to feel more attached to this world. He was slowly moving away from seeing it solely as a hyper-realistic game like the other players did.

The people and things here had long become inseparably connected to him.

Sensing the changes in Ji Chen, Alice, with her keen perception, merely glanced to the side and nestled herself once again in that warm chest.

No matter how this world was, she would always accompany the Lord.

The sea breeze was slightly cool.

Ji Chen stood by the harbor, gazing at the sea illuminated by the bright moonlight.

Xhakas and a few others stood respectfully nearby.

They were preparing to welcome the Coral Palace army from the New Moon Islands, located thousands of miles away.

As affiliated forces of the Crown of the Ocean and colleagues, coupled with the fact that this Coral Palace army was about to take over the defense of the Starshine Islands, they felt it was necessary to make contact.

However, when they saw the army that numbered as high as ten thousand, each one emitting a much stronger aura than the private armies of the councilors, their faces couldn't help but show a hint of shock. They exchanged glances and saw the astonishment in each other's eyes.

Even an affiliated force possessed such a powerful army. What was the true strength of the Crown of the Ocean?!

The Coral Palace army arrived near the shore, and a tall figure leaped onto the pier from the sea, swiftly approaching and kneeling down with a respectful expression.

"My Lord, Sonia has brought ten thousand Coral Palace soldiers to answer your call."

This person was none other than the Coral Lord, Sonia.

A few days ago, when she received Ji Chen's order to lead her army away from the Great Luminescent Sea and head to the Starshine Islands, she was overjoyed.

This meant that, after thousands of years, a Great Luminescent Sea sea clan had finally arrived in the main world. She could finally fulfill her long-cherished wish.

Filled with joy, she immediately organized her troops and rushed here overnight.

"Rise, I said a simple salute is enough." Ji Chen smiled and extended his hand to help her up. "I hope you didn't encounter any unexpected issues on your journey."

Sonia stood up, still somewhat shocked, and shook her head. "We didn't encounter any unexpected issues. We only encountered scattered sea beasts on the way, which we quickly dealt with."

But I must admit I'm a bit surprised. The main world doesn't seem as...?"

"As dangerous as you thought?" Ji Chen finished her sentence and looked at the well-organized Coral Palace army on the sea. "The strength of the Coral Palace army is indeed an excellent force."

However, the Intercontinental Ocean is much wider than the Great Luminescent Sea, and there are some extremely secretive and terrifying existences within it. Don't let your guard down."

"I understand," Sonia replied obediently.

Ji Chen clapped his hands. "Alright, let's start patrolling as soon as possible. Many sea beasts are causing trouble on various islands."

But be careful not to approach the territories of other Glory Lords and avoid conflicts with them."

“Yes!”

With the command given, the ten thousand Coral Palace soldiers divided into several teams and began patrolling with the Starshine City island as the center, clearing out scattered sea beasts.

The Coral Palace army quickly took over the defense of the entire Starshine Islands. When their presence appeared everywhere, it surprised many players.

When they learned that this was a subordinate army of the indigenous people who had occupied the Starshine Islands, they were left speechless.

Damn, although this army may not be as strong as the initial one, their sheer numbers are intimidating.

The masked indigenous leader must be a “High-level Indigenous” with so many troops.

Even today, they still considered Ji Chen as a full-fledged indigenous person..

Chapter 462: Players Behind the Scenes? Once Again, The Ghost Ship

As they watched the sea clan soldiers known as the Coral Palace Army patrolling and hunting scattered sea beasts in the vicinity, a sudden message from Starshine City was sent to the players.

“Ding- Xhakas, one of the remaining three councilors, has issued a commission to all players in Starshine Islands.

Commission Details: Assist in rebuilding Starshine Islands after the sea beast attack, including reconstructing buildings and facilities on the southern islands, hunting remaining sea beasts, and constructing residential houses and facilities.

Commission Rewards: Generous rewards including regular resources, rare resources, gold coins, weapons and equipment, military recruitment camp cores, various treasures, etc. Rewards are substantial; for example, every contribution point can be exchanged for an equal amount of gold coins.

The top one hundred contributors will be awarded the honorary title and status of ‘Honored Citizen’ and will have access to various special privileges within Starshine Islands.

To accept, please go to the entrance of the Starshine City Hall and look for the staff to register and receive the tasks.”

The accumulated wealth of the Thirteen Council Families over centuries, which could not be transported away, had now become the bait to attract players to participate in the reconstruction of Starshine Islands.

When the casual players heard this news, they were all excited.

Various types of sailboats and even rowing boats all headed towards Starshine City.

Receiving such a generous commission was a first for them.

After just a few days, how did these councilors become so generous?

Oh, right, the Starshine City Council no longer exists now, and the councilors have become someone else's lackeys? Well, there will no problem then.

On the second floor of the City Hall, Ji Chen watched the players excitedly registering and accepting the commission on the street below, with a hint of a smile on his face.

This opportunity to issue commissions to players was obtained from factors such as Xhakas and other Glory Lords not knowing his player status.

Afterward, Ji Chen took the initiative to search and investigate thoroughly in chat channels and forums.

Perhaps it was because his combat power and army had far exceeded the current player limits, so all the Starshine City players subconsciously assumed that he, wearing a mask, was a legitimate native and didn't even consider him as a player.

Therefore, upon learning of this strange misunderstanding, he took advantage of it.

Since you all think of me as a native, I'll go along with it and act like a genuine native. Being a native, it's only natural for me to assign tasks and commissions to you, right?

As a player himself, Ji Chen fully understood the characteristics, principles, and motivations of players.

In this way, he devised such commissions and rewards.

Generous rewards were the most basic motivation, but what really got them fired up were some bizarre things that natives would find hard to imagine.

For example, the title of "Honored Citizen" was something they could obtain that held special significance, something that regular people could not have. This title satisfied their desire to show off, and that was the most important thing!

Xhakas clearly couldn't understand these players' motivations. He looked at the excited players outside, a puzzled expression in his eyes.

"My Lord, are we really entrusting these Glory Lords with so much reconstruction work? Based on my impression, they are somewhat unpredictable, and it might be challenging for them to complete the commission. They might even delay the completion time."

"Oh, tell me more about your impression of them," Ji Chen leaned back in his chair and asked.

"My impression..." Xhakas pondered his words for a moment. "Just as I mentioned at the beginning, they are truly unpredictable. Most of them are very short-sighted, only caring about immediate gains, and they are driven by personal profit.

Moreover, it's like they suddenly dropped from the sky, full of uncertainties.

No one knows what they will do next moment."

Khakas recalled a few months ago when these Glory Lords appeared overnight on various islands of Starshine Islands. Their first question upon arriving in Starshine City was always, “Do you have any quests?”

In addition, they could be found wandering the streets and alleys, looking for beggars, helping elderly people cross the street, or even entering residents’ homes and rummaging through their belongings, among other bizarre actions.

These incidents even reached the attention of the Council.

In the end, after arresting dozens of Glory Lords who had broken into residents’ homes and detaining them for a whole week, these antics came to a halt.

Although later, the Council made the decision to “loan” those deserted islands occupied by the Glory Lords to them and expressed a certain level of goodwill.

But honestly, Khakas still had some contempt for them, and this inherent impression continued to influence him.

They should consider themselves lucky if they didn’t cause trouble, and they actually expect to accomplish something?

However, at this moment, Khakas suddenly remembered that Ji Chen was also a Glory Lord. Cold sweat broke out on his forehead, and he hastily added.

“Of course, my Lord, you are a unique and different entity from them.”

Ji Chen waved his hand, not paying much attention to the remark. “If you simply see them in that light, it might be a bit short-sighted.

Just wait and see; they will surprise you.”

Khakas nodded hesitantly, but he didn’t really believe it.

However, what happened next completely changed his perspective.

The players displayed an unexpected level of initiative and efficiency in this endeavor.

Hundreds of Glory Lords, after accepting the commission, immediately brought their troops to Starshine City. They acted like bulldozers, demolishing the slums where residents had already been evacuated, clearing vast areas of leveled ground..

Chapter 463: Players Behind the Scenes? Once Again, The Ghost Ship (2)

To his astonishment, they used numerous sailboats and even rowing fishing boats to transport large quantities of building materials such as wood and bricks from various islands, embarking on a massive construction project.

In just less than half a day, the open land was dug into numerous foundation pits that resembled burial grounds. After just one day, the houses, although not large, had already taken shape, much better than the previous slums.

In addition, the players who took on the task of exterminating sea beasts were plundering the islands, eagerly attacking the sea beasts on sight, and going on a killing spree.

The indigenous people of the City Hall said that they only needed the heads of the sea beasts as evidence; they didn't want anything else. In other words, besides gaining contribution points by defeating sea beasts, they could also obtain sea beast corpses as food.

Unexpectedly, the indigenous people who occupied the Starshine Islands were really quite conscientious!

They were much better than the bunch of idiots in the Starshine City Council from before!

Khakas, Kieran, Herman?

Even so, Khakas was truly frightened by their enthusiasm.

One could imagine a group of Glory Lords wearing strange equipment, working day and night with their respective subjects and troops.

The noise on the construction site never stopped, and the clanging sounds echoed throughout Starshine City all day long.

This level of efficiency was astonishing.

Through the hard work of a substantial labor force, along with round-the-clock overtime to speed up the construction, the initial set of ten residential houses was completed by the third day since the commission was initiated.

When that player finished the task, they would receive 20 contribution points, which could be used to exchange for twenty gold coins at the City Hall. In addition, their names and contribution points would appear on the leaderboard displayed at the entrance.

Everyone was ecstatic.

Wow, they could actually make this much money!?

One contribution point could be exchanged for twenty gold coins, which was equivalent to the food for hundreds of subjects for a month, and they had only worked for a few days.

What a lucrative opportunity!

However, the contribution points leaderboard was the key!

If they could obtain a special title, that would be impressive, turning them into top-notch players in no time!

While players were fighting hard to earn more contribution points, Ji Chen had already set off to return to the New Moon Islands with all the precious resources.

With Sonia and the Coral Palace army in place, he wasn't too worried about enemies or sea beasts attacking, nor was he concerned about any ulterior motives from Khakas and the others.

Or maybe he deliberately sent Sonia over to suppress the Starshine Islands.

Ji Chen stood atop the Tyrant Azure Dragon, leading the army in a swift march. Although their speed was already faster than ordinary ships, the long journey still required quite some time.

If it were an ordinary day, there shouldn't be any issue, but if they encountered a powerful enemy invasion during this several-day journey, it would become the biggest obstacle, and they might get attacked and defeated.

Looking at the vast sea before him, with no end in sight, he suddenly sighed. If only the ocean had something like highways on land, he could travel quickly between the two places.

Or perhaps if there were a way to open a spatial gate, traveling between the two locations would be a matter of moments.

But no matter which faction it was, opening a spatial gate was an extremely challenging task that required a massive amount of resources, let alone maintaining a spatial gate for an extended period.

He still had a long way to go.

Just as Ji Chen was contemplating these matters, a sudden mist began to rise before him, enveloping them all in a white expanse. Visibility was reduced to less than two hundred meters, and the surroundings became incredibly calm, with only the faint sound of water as their bodies swayed.

In this mist, not only was their vision obscured, but it seemed that even their voices were suppressed.

Benbo suddenly exclaimed, "My Lord, this is the same mist I encountered back then!"

Ji Chen's expression turned stiff, and he became vigilant.

"Stay alert, be prepared for battle at any moment."

During their previous return from the Northern Continent, Benbo and the Dragonblood Legion had split into two groups, with Benbo leading the Dragonblood Legion to investigate the Mystic Realm Gate in the Great Luminescent Sea. On their way back, they encountered the mist and a mysterious pirate ship.

And now, it seemed that the mist had targeted them once again.

In this world, there were many things that ordinary people couldn't comprehend, and in the vast ocean, there were countless strange and abnormal phenomena.

He wasn't afraid of powerful enemies because they could be seen and defeated through continuous growth. But things of the unknown were unsettling.

If it had targeted Benbo last time, could it be targeting him this time?

Ji Chen's expression became extremely solemn. Within this white mist, he seemed to have lost his sense of direction, and even his spiritual power was compressed within a two-hundred-meter radius.

This was astonishing because, with the dual bonuses of the Tidal Dominator profession and the territory talent of the Crown of the Ocean, he had never lost his sense of direction at sea.

This indicated that this was not a common occurrence.

Before they could travel much further, a massive black shadow suddenly appeared in the depths of the white mist.

Squinting his eyes, Ji Chen looked closely.

It was a colossal ship, no less impressive in size than the New Moon, slowly advancing through the dense white mist.

Just as Benbo had described, the ship's exterior was extremely dilapidated. Tattered sails hung from towering masts, and the source of propulsion was lost. One of the mast's poles was even snapped in

half, with one end wedged into the ship's side. The ship's hull was maintained for who knows how long, with large, dark holes scattered around, some of them almost at the waterline.

However, even with such a dilapidated ship, it could still navigate the sea smoothly, making one wonder if it was powered by nuclear energy.

The ghost ship came to a stable halt about a hundred meters away from them, as if in a standoff, and no one made a move.

After a long while, Ji Chen attempted to maneuver around it.

But every time he moved, whether to the left or the right, the ghost ship adjusted its position to keep its bow pointed directly at him. Yet, it didn't close the distance, as if teasing him, neither approaching nor departing.

???

What do you mean by this?

As time passed, both sides remained motionless.

Just as Ji Chen was considering whether to initiate an attack, a voice that seemed to come from beyond the heavens suddenly echoed softly from the ship.

"...this is your mission...growth..."

"...blessing...consumption..."

"...time is running out...they will return soon..."

The voice was unlike that of any creature, and it was even impossible to discern its gender. It spoke intermittently, with only a few words audible.

Before he could think much about it, the ghost ship suddenly retreated and quietly disappeared into the white mist.

Subsequently, the white mist seemed to lose its source, gradually thinning and dissipating. The sound of the rolling sea once again filled their ears, and sunlight poured down from the sky.

However, Ji Chen's face was filled with confusion. What was that all about?

"Did you hear what it was saying?" he asked the others.

"It? Who is it?" Alice asked in confusion.

Ji Chen's expression darkened, and he suddenly felt that something was amiss. He spoke in a low voice, "Didn't you hear a voice coming from the ship?!"

"We didn't hear any voice," Alice said, a hint of surprise flashing across her face as she shook her head. The other heroes also looked puzzled and shook their heads, indicating that they hadn't heard anything.

Seeing this, Ji Chen furrowed his brow deeply. Could it be that only he could hear the voice? That would be quite strange.

At this moment, he had a thousand questions in his mind but no answers.

But he knew that this was no ordinary occurrence; otherwise, the ghost ship wouldn't have sought them out, as if trying to convey something to him.

"Blessing..."

Could this be related to the military talent tree cheat?

"They... could it be something about to manifest?"

"My mission..." It was utterly perplexing.

After pondering for a long time, Ji Chen rubbed his temples, feeling a headache coming on. Although he desperately wanted to understand what was going on, he lacked crucial information and couldn't derive any useful conclusions.

At this point, he couldn't help but grumble at the dilapidated ghost ship. Couldn't it have said a few more words?

He could only temporarily bury these questions in his heart.

Ji Chen's brow gradually relaxed, and he said in a deep voice, "Let's continue on our journey."

With that command, the halted army once again set off, speeding towards the direction of the Crown of the Ocean.

Time gradually passed.

After nearly ten days of travel, they finally returned to the New Moon Islands.

It was evident that Wilus and the others hadn't slackened in their efforts to rebuild the territory in Ji Chen's absence.

Now, at a glance, most of the structures in the Crown of the Ocean had been rebuilt, and there were even some new additions, giving it a fresh and rejuvenated appearance..

Chapter 464: Recruiting Again, A Submarine from Another

World? His Highness's Beloved

Upon returning to the Crown of the Ocean, the first thing Ji Chen did was to resurrect all the units that were lost in the battle and then recruit all the units accumulated over the past three weeks.

"Ding- Consuming 3,813,000 units of rare resources, a total of 3,018 units of troops have been recruited."

The current main unit numbers are as follows:

- Water Nymph Archers, Tier 5, 1-star, 700 units.
- Giant Crab Guards, Tier 5, 1-star, 700 units.
- Lobster Guardian Knights, Tier 5, 1-star, 1,670 units.
- Silver Sea Pixies, Tier 5, 2-star, 1,788 units.

- Naga Guardians, Tier 5, 3-star, 1,660 units.
- Dragon Blood Murlocs, Tier 5, 3-star, 1,680 units.
- Dragon Horn Catfish, Tier 5, 4-star, 560 units.
- Tyrant Azure Dragons, Tier 5, 5-star, 90 units.

A total of 8,848 units.

This recruitment consumed nearly four million units of rare resources, bringing the primary military force of the Crown of the Ocean close to the size of a ten-thousand-man army.

What's even more terrifying was that, unlike some other players who achieve a ten-thousand-man army by recruiting low-tier troops, his army consisted of incredibly high-quality units, consisting entirely of Tier 5 units.

The strength of this army was enough to rival the main forces of kingdom-level and duchy-level powers.

At this point, the Crown of the Ocean truly possessed the strength to contend with the Kingdom of Bass.

Ji Chen was overjoyed.

After a period of development in secret, they finally had the power to establish themselves in this world.

Kingdom of Bass, huh?

When the time comes, I'll pluck your hair and break your ass!

I'm telling you, even Jesus can't save you!

Afterward, Ji Chen went to the underground world of the Lizardmen and found the Dwarf Thotmudo, who supervised the apprentices' forging.

He explained the encounter with a ghost ship on the return journey.

Thotmudo was one of the top-tier experts in this world and might know some secrets not widely known.

"A ghost ship?"

"Yes, that ghost ship had previously tracked one of my subordinates, and this time it came after me. It's quite large, not inferior to the New Moon."

Thotmudo furrowed his brows, his rough palm rubbing his beard.

"This is somewhat unusual. Ghost ships are quite well-known in the Mid-Ocean. I know of at least a dozen versions, some are warships, some are fishing boats, but I've never heard of one as large as this.

Other than what you have mentioned, did you spot anything else unusual?"

Ji Chen pondered for a moment. "It might sound strange, but I heard the ghost ship speaking at that time, and no one else heard it, only me."

"I could only vaguely make out a few words, like 'mission' and 'blessing.'"

Thotmudo looked puzzled, and a gleam of interest flashed in his eyes.

Ji Chen sensed these reactions and asked anxiously, "Sir Thotmudo, do you know anything about this?"

"I don't know more than you do," he said, shaking his head. "But I believe that this ghost ship didn't appear by chance. There must be a reason for it to seek you out.

Perhaps it's trying to remind you of something."

Ji Chen felt a sense of frustration.

Remind me of what? Are they about to return?

But who are 'they'? Just saying that doesn't help at all!

This feeling of being kept in the dark was uncomfortable, especially when it was such an unusual occurrence. He felt like a clown searching in vain without enough clues.

Seeing Ji Chen's frustrated expression, Thotmudo tried to console him.

"Kid, if you can't think of anything, it's better not to dwell on it. As long as you become stronger, these things will eventually become clear."

"Focusing too much on things that are unclear right now would be putting the cart before the horse."

Ji Chen looked at Thotmudo with some surprise. He hadn't expected this rough and irritable dwarf to speak in such a manner.

However, it did bring him to his senses. He realized that dwelling on these unfounded matters would only be a waste of his energy.

"Thank you for your reminder, Sir Thotmudo... Oh, there's one more thing."

He proceeded to explain how he conquered the Starshine Islands, acquired a shipyard capable of producing steel warships, and a large alchemy cannon manufacturing plant.

This piqued Thotmudo's interest greatly. "Weren't you supposed to help others resolve the Sea Beast Crisis? How did you end up taking over their base of operations?"

Ji Chen coughed and simplified the explanation, "Long story short, those councilors failed to keep their promises, and in the midst of confronting them, we accidentally took over."

Thotmudo didn't pay much attention to those details but was more intrigued by the mention of the shipyard. "A shipyard? Can it produce steel warships like the ones docked in the surface harbors of the Kingdom of Bass?"

"Close, but the level of technology is significantly lower, and it's only capable of making smaller escort ships. After all, this is the limit of what an island could do."

In terms of technological sophistication, the “warships” produced by the Starshine Islands were essentially steel civilian ships equipped with alchemy cannons. They were far from reaching the systematic shipbuilding capabilities of the Kingdom of Bass.

Their combat capabilities were naturally limited, but still better than wooden sailboats.

Moreover, even if they didn’t produce warships, they could make some steel cargo ships and merchant ships for transporting goods and people, which were much sturdier than fragile wooden ships.

However, this time Ji Chen had other ideas..

Chapter 465: Recruiting Again, A Submarine from Another World? His Highness’s Beloved (2)

“Lord Thotmudo, I have a question.

“Can alchemical technology be used to create steel ships that can travel rapidly underwater?

“Underwater steel ships?” Thotmudo looked puzzled for a moment, then furrowed his brow in thought. “I haven’t heard of such ships, but it sounds very interesting.”

“Unlike on the surface of the sea, if you want to travel underwater, you must consider the steel’s sealing and water pressure resistance, which places great demands on the type of steel and alchemical craftsmanship.

At the same time, when underwater, the conventional weaponry used on warships wouldn’t work, so we might need other weapons capable of attacking underwater. Perhaps we can draw inspiration from the sea clan’s methods of attack...

However, the propulsion system might be similar to the propellers used on surface ships since they both operate in water...”

As he spoke, Thotmudo’s eyes brightened, and he seemed to ignore Ji Chen as he walked over to the table, picked up a pen, and began sketching on parchment.

Little did Ji Chen know, Thotmudo stared at him in astonishment, a look of delight surging in his eyes.

Indeed, Thotmudo was a legendary dwarf blacksmith. After Ji Chen merely mentioned the concept of “submarine,” Thotmudo’s mind swiftly connected a series of crucial elements.

Perhaps they could indeed create a version of a submarine in this otherworldly realm!

Seeing Thotmudo so enthusiastic, Ji Chen didn’t want to disturb him and quietly left.

Outside, several workshops were operating with a loud rumble, and the clinking sounds of various metalwork filled the air, creating a symphony of steel.

Hundreds of lizardmen craftsmen worked here, constantly producing weapons, ammunition, and various metal goods.

It was like a heart, pumping a continuous flow of blood and energy into the entire territory.

Connected to the workshops was a track leading to the surface, where a peculiar alchemical locomotive pulled dozens of minecarts, shuttling between the surface and underground, transporting surface materials and workshop products.

This was the otherworldly version of a mining locomotive that Ji Chen had commissioned Thotmudo to create. Thanks to the advanced alchemical and runic technology in this world, the construction of such an alchemical locomotive, similar to a steam train, was not very difficult.

However, the principles behind its construction seemed rather baffling to him.

He still remembered the time when Thotmudo explained the alchemical and runic principles involved. Ji Chen couldn't help but feel utterly bewildered during that explanation.

This only reinforced Ji Chen's belief that he lacked the innate talent for such matters.

In the future, he planned to lay tracks throughout the underground lizardmen world and the New Moon Islands, allowing goods and manpower to circulate at the fastest speed possible.

Goods produced in the underground lizardmen world would be transported via the tracks to the docks and then directly loaded onto ships for overseas markets. It was simply perfect.

A spark of industrial revolution was quietly blooming in the depths of these remote island territories, far from the mainland.

However, Ji Chen heard in chat channels and forums that there were gnomes who excelled in alchemy and possessed the technology to create alchemical mechs for mining and even warfare.

He didn't know if he would have the chance to acquire such technology.

After all, mechs were every man's dream, and who wouldn't want to pilot a mech that could wreak havoc like a Gundam?

He remembered that he still had a key to the gnome's main city, Gigantooth City, in his backpack. This gnome city was located on the Western Continent. Apart from gnomes, the dwarf tribes that Thotmudo entrusted him to gather were also located there. Furthermore, the appearance of the Radiant Commerce Guild belonging to Xhakas gave the Ocean Crown an opportunity to expand its market there.

It seemed like it was time to prioritize a trip to the Western Continent.

Ji Chen thought to himself, but first, he needed to wait for the conclusion of the Sea Beast Tide. After that, he would quickly resolve the matters between the Bass Kingdom and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

Thinking about it, he boarded a conveniently available train back to the surface.

Back at the Lord's Castle.

He began contemplating how to get involved in the affairs of the two countries.

First and foremost, his enemy would undoubtedly be the Bass Kingdom, and his natural ally would be the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

Regardless of the cause of the conflict, the Bass Kingdom had launched a reconnaissance fleet to attack the Ocean Crown, forging an irreconcilable enmity between them.

Ji Chen wanted to lend his support to the overthrow of this kingdom, while the latter aimed to eliminate the Ocean Crown, which they considered weak but troublesome.

In this stance, he naturally leaned towards the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, or more precisely, Princess Monica.

When he first met Monica, the Ocean Crown was still an inconspicuous small territory with only a few hundred troops and a human population of just over a thousand. The territory consisted of only one island, the New Moon Islands, and didn't even have any noteworthy goods or commodities.

But after several months, his power had expanded rapidly.

Almost reaching the size of a ten thousand-strong army.

The Great Luminescent Sea's mystic realm was brought under control, and the renowned and prosperous Starshine Islands also submitted to his rule.

The goods from the Ocean Crown were selling well on the Northern Continent, greatly increasing its reputation.

He thought that all of this would surely surprise Monica.

Thinking of that elegant and lively young girl who longed for freedom deep within, Ji Chen couldn't help but smile.

Perhaps they would meet again soon.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away in the city of Tressburg.

If one were to ask the indigenous people along the northwest coast of the Inner Ocean which coastal city was the most beautiful, they would undoubtedly answer Tressburg.

As the capital of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, Tressburg was nestled by the seaside, surrounded by the sea on two sides, backed by mountains on one side, and bordered by a river on the other, boasting a long and excellent coastline.

Not only did it have excellent large sheltered harbors, but it also had long stretches of beautiful white sandy beaches. Flocks of seagulls soared in the sky, overlooking the city below, which stretched for dozens of miles.

The white-walled, blue-tiled houses clustered together, winding around the high ground and built into the mountainside, but they did not appear steep. With the nearby deep blue sea, it gave the feeling of a paradise on earth.

At the highest point of the entire city, the castle was the residence of the rulers of the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, the Valencia family.

At this moment, in a spacious room within the castle, Monica, dressed in a pristine silk gown, held a quill in her delicate hand and was fully focused on painting a piece of parchment in front of her.

Judging by the faint smile that unconsciously curled up at the corners of her mouth, her mood seemed to be quite good.

Suddenly, there was a gentle knock on the door, causing Monica to startle. She quickly stowed the parchment carefully into a drawer, then forced herself to regain composure and calmly said, "Come in."

The door was pushed open, and several maids entered, with the mature head maid leading the way, who respectfully said, "Lady Monica, His Majesty requests your presence in the hall."

"Father?" Monica blinked slightly, perhaps this had to do with inquiries about the conflict and war between the Grand Duchy and the Bass Kingdom.

"I understand. I will come over shortly."

With the help of the maids, Monica put on an exquisite blue dress. The ordinary dress, when worn by her, radiated a unique beauty that made the maids nearby dazzled.

The floral shoulder straps delicately hung on her pure white, soft shoulders, and beneath the modest neckline was an astonishing curvature. The form-fitting waist of the dress outlined her slender waist perfectly. Her swan-like graceful neck was adorned with a necklace adorned with sapphires, adding the finishing touch.

"Your Highness looks so beautiful. I wonder who Your Highness's future husband will be. He must be so lucky to marry a woman who combines beauty and wisdom," the head maid sincerely praised.

This made a faint blush appear on Monica's cheeks. "I won't be getting married. I am determined to devote everything to the Grand Duchy and witness its prosperity and strength."

However, as she spoke these words, her mind wandered to someone, and her gaze became slightly unfocused.

Seeing Monica's expression, the astute head maid couldn't help but realize that there was someone in her heart. She wondered whether it was a young noble from a prominent family or a prince from another country who had won the heart of their Highness.

Nevertheless, this could be a good thing. If she married into a prominent noble family, it would undoubtedly further stabilize the position of the Grand Duke and fulfill the Grand Duchy's long-cherished wishes.

If she married into another kingdom, it would be even better. With the intelligence and abilities of their Highness, they would surely outmaneuver and outwit their spouse, and when the two countries reconciled and exchanged resources, the Grand Duchy would only become stronger and more prosperous..

Chapter 466: Monica's Sorrow, the Cargo Ship from the Southern Continent, Ari

Seeing the teasing look in the head maid's eyes, Monica blushed even more, feeling her cheeks burning. She had to force herself to maintain a composed demeanor and said, "Let's go quickly. Father must be getting impatient."

The head maid, seeing Monica's discomfort, stopped teasing and reverted to the dignified manner she had cultivated while serving the Lienhardt court for decades. She followed Monica to the castle's main hall.

In the hall, two figures had been waiting for a while.

One was a burly figure with muscles like layered rocks, and a face adorned with a dense beard that resembled the dark forests. The thick, black eyebrows exuded an imposing air. He sat there like a slumbering lion.

This was Julius Valencia, the Grand Duke of Lienhardt.

However, the fierce gaze that was pressuring the attendants softened the moment it fell upon Monica. His booming voice filled the hall.

"My dear daughter, you're finally here!"

"Don't be so loud! Don't you realize your booming voice is like a bear's!?"

The slim figure sitting next to him scolded him gently. Although the voice was soft, it made the lion-like Julius lower his volume instantly.

With a hint of reluctance, he muttered, "I was just so happy to see my daughter..."

"Didn't you meet her just yesterday? Do you want to see her every moment of the day?"

As Monica watched her mother, who appeared delicate, admonishing her father, who was as massive as a bear, a smile couldn't help but appear on her face.

For the past two to three decades, the queen and the king had been inseparable companions. They bickered every day, but it was their way of getting along. In reality, they were deeply in love, supporting and bolstering each other.

In the duchy, their relationship had long become a heartwarming tale.

Monica followed the customary practice of politely greeting both of them before taking a seat on the opposite sofa.

"Father, is there something you want to discuss with me?"

Julius cleared his throat and said, "My daughter, I've called you here to discuss the matter of the sea beast tide."

"Sea beast tide?"

Monica furrowed her brows slightly, feeling a sudden sense of unease in her heart.

Julius nodded, his eyes showing a hint of seriousness.

"Yes, according to information gathered from various sources, a once-in-a-century sea beast tide has fully formed in the southern parts of the Western Ocean and is heading northwest towards the coast.

Based on reports from fleeing merchants and residents, the sea beast tide has already swept through and ravaged the central sea areas of the Western Ocean, with numbers reaching tens of millions. Many islands and archipelagos have been submerged under the iron hooves of these sea beasts. This will undoubtedly have an impact on our war with the Kingdom of Bass...”

Seeing Monica’s face suddenly turn pale, Julius was taken aback, becoming flustered as he spoke, “What’s wrong with you, my daughter? Are you feeling unwell? Why are you all still standing there? Quickly, call the palace physician!” “I’m fine!” Monica bit her lip, her eyes showing signs of panic. “Father, among the fleeing residents, were there any from a territory called the ‘Crown of the Ocean’?”

Julius paused for a moment. “I haven’t heard of it for now. But... is there anything noteworthy about that territory?”

At this moment, he suddenly remembered that his daughter had sent a small fleet to the central sea area of the Western Ocean. Could this territory called the ‘Crown of the Ocean’ be related to their expedition?

Seeing his daughter’s complexion grow even paler, he hurriedly spoke, “My dear daughter, don’t worry. First, tell me why you’re so concerned about that territory.”

Monica tried to calm herself down, her voice trembling as she said, “The ‘Crown of the Ocean’ is the territory of the Lord of Glory who rescued me and the Radiant Envoy and others when we were attacked by the Kingdom of Bass on our way back. Its location is in the central sea area of the Western Ocean.”

Julius suddenly realized what was happening. He heard about a Lord of Glory who had risked offending the Kingdom of Bass to save his daughter. Later, his daughter withdrew a batch of rare resources and a few blueprints from the treasury to send as a reward. He chose to turn a blind eye, considering it as payment for rescuing his daughter.

However, apart from that, he hadn’t paid much attention to that Lord of Glory or the territory, as with the Kingdom of Bass as a major threat, anything that couldn’t help them immediately had to be set aside.

But now, he didn’t know what to say.

Such a large-scale sea beast tide might have already submerged that territory. He didn’t believe that a Lord of Glory could withstand the onslaught of a large number of sea beasts.

The Queen timely took a seat beside Monica and comforted her, saying, “My daughter, try to think positively. Maybe that Lord of Glory has already sensed the danger and evacuated to a safe place in advance.

Perhaps he didn’t come here to the duchy but chose to go somewhere else, or maybe he’s still on the way. Those Lords of Glory have exceptional information networks, and they should have received warnings from others.”

Seeing the worried expressions on her father and mother’s faces, Monica nodded with an effort to hold back her inner sadness. “Yes, it’s likely that he’s taken precautions. He defeated a reconnaissance fleet of the Kingdom of Bass and captured several warships. With those warships, they should be able to evacuate in time, even with the sea beast tide approaching.

Father, Mother, I'm sorry for startling you earlier. I just didn't expect this, and I panicked..”

Chapter 467: Monica's Sorrow, the Cargo Ship from the
Southern Continent, Ari (2)

Seeing Monica calmed down, and the two of them breathed a sigh of relief.

Julius asked curiously, “Daughter, you mentioned that the Lord of Glory defeated the reconnaissance fleet of the Bas Kingdom?”

“That's right. At that time, I sent a fleet to the Crown of the Ocean because I learned that the Bass Kingdom's spies discovered that they had saved me and sent a fleet for retaliation.

But when our fleet arrived, the Bass Kingdom's fleet had already been defeated, and even the fleet commander was captured.”

Julius realized at that moment.”So, those several Bass Kingdom military officers you brought here earlier were sent by the Lord of Glory?”

Monica nodded proudly, “That's correct. But in order to protect him, I didn't reveal his territory or name to the outside world. Instead, we spread the word that our fleet had sunk their reconnaissance fleet. Otherwise, the Bass Kingdom, for the sake of their reputation, would have sent troops to retaliate.

We can't let those who helped us suffer more hardships.”

“You're absolutely right, my daughter!”

Julius laughed heartily but then, realizing that the Lord of Glory might have lost his territory, his laughter seemed somewhat impolite. He cleared his throat a few times and stopped.

“It sounds like this Lord of Glory is truly remarkable. He managed to deal with a reconnaissance fleet and captured so many naval officers.

With these actions, he not only saved my daughter but also sent us several high-ranking captives. His contributions are significant. Well, when he arrives in the kingdom, I'll make sure to meet him in person and bestow rewards upon him!”

The Queen suggested, “How about granting him an honorary title and then offering some rare resources or treasures?”

“Excellent idea! Let's proceed with that plan!”

Seeing the joy on the faces of the Queen and the King, Monica's heart sank to the bottom.

Only she knew that the Crown of the Ocean was located in the Stormy Sea, which was in the southern part of the central ocean, very close to the southern region, and there were hardly any inhabited medium to large islands in the south.

The Crown of the Ocean might not have received any warning at all, and the sea beasts passed through the area like locusts. By the time they were spotted with the naked eye, there was no chance to evacuate.

In other words, Lord Ji Chen was very likely...

Thinking of this, Monica's heart ached.

She could still recall those peaceful islands, the hardworking and hopeful people who lived there, and the eyes that shone as brightly as the stars.

However, the conflict between her Kingdom and the Bass Kingdom had reached a critical point, and the sea beasts were ravaging the area. She couldn't send anyone to check on it because of her personal feelings.

Monica could only keep these thoughts hidden in her heart and endure the pain.

"Father, let's continue discussing the impact of the sea beast tide on us..."

Little did she know that in Monica's heart, Lord Ji Chen, who was currently inspecting the territory, had just received a message.

A merchant ship from the Southern Continent had crashed on the reefs outside the Stormy Sea.

Upon hearing this news, Ji Chen's interest immediately piqued.

He promptly dispatched troops to rescue all the survivors.

Several hours later.

In the great hall of the Lord's castle, Ji Chen looked with curiosity at the dozen or so people bowing on the steps below.

Among them were men and women. The men wore turbans and white robes, with slightly dark skin.

The women, on the other hand, also wore hoods but were dressed in black robes. Their faces were covered with black silk scarves, and even their hands were adorned with black silk gloves. The only exposed part of them was the upper part of their faces, which had complexions as fair as ivory.

This exotic style and attire reminded Ji Chen of a nation in a certain region on Earth.

Leading the group was a man with a golden-patterned mask. Judging from his body's contours and the color of his clothing, he appeared to be male.

After a brief assessment of them, Ji Chen's expression became serious.

"I am Ji Chen, the ruler of the New Moon Islands and the Lord of the Crown of the Ocean.

I heard that you came from the Southern Continent?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

The man with the golden-patterned mask continued, "My name is Ari Camp, a merchant from the Kingdom of Ugisai. These are my guards and attendants. We embarked on a long journey across the vast ocean to trade in the distant Northern Continent. However, we encountered severe sea

conditions and suffered damage to our ship. We even collided with rocks and sank outside this area of the sea.

We were fortunate to have Your Excellency's assistance, which allowed us to survive the treacherous waves!

Thank you for your generosity! May the spirits of the sands protect you!"

Upon hearing this, Ji Chen became even more interested.

Indeed, they had the distinct flavor of people from the Southern Continent.

Unlike the Western and Northern continents, 85 percent of the Southern continent's area was dominated by a massive desert known as the Barren Desert. Only in the oases, along the riverbanks, and in the delta regions at the mouths of the rivers did human settlements and civilizations exist.

The people born and bred in this environment naturally differed from those of other continents.

As for the Kingdom of Ugisai, Ji Chen heard about it from casual players. It was a desert nation located within the Barren Desert.

As for the spirits of the sands, they were a pantheon-like belief system unique to desert regions, akin to the concept of certain deities.

However, the protection of desert spirits did not extend to the turbulent waters of the vast Central Ocean. Nevertheless, Ji Chen found their presence intriguing.

Regarding the merchant's identity, it was a matter of debate. Although Ji Chen couldn't see their faces clearly, their exposed, delicately nurtured skin didn't seem typical of desert merchants.

Instead of pointing it out, Ji Chen smiled and said, "Extending a helping hand to travelers lost at sea is something that all Central Ocean dwellers should do."

Upon hearing this, Ari was deeply affected by Ji Chen's words. In the vast and equally treacherous desert, they shared similar customs and expressions, creating an instant bond between them.

"Forgive my curiosity, but may I inquire about your destination in the Northern Continent?"

Ari hesitated for a moment and said, "Originally, we planned to go to the Maple Principality in the Northern Continent. But it seems that our journey will be delayed now."

"The Maple Principality?" Ji Chen smiled slightly. "My territory already has fleets that were heading to Maple Harbor in the Maple Principality. However, they are temporarily halted due to the Sea Beast Tide."

Ari's face brightened.

"Your Excellency, could you please allow us to travel with them when they set sail? I am willing to pay for the fare and expenses!"

"Of course, you can stay here at the Crown of the Ocean for a few days to rest while waiting for the Sea Beast Tide to end," Ji Chen replied.

“Wikis, prepare guest rooms, food, and fresh water.”

Ari once again expressed his gratitude and bowed to him before following Wilus to leave.

Ji Chen didn't rush to learn about the cultural aspects of the Southern Continent's people. The Sea Beast Tide's duration was uncertain, and there was plenty of time.

Inside a building at the Ocean's Crown that was specially arranged for guests and resembled a courtyard.

Ari and his group were led into the courtyard.

As they watched Wilus depart, they began to converse.

“Prince...”

“Quiet. Don't use that title outside the kingdom, even when it's just us. Remember our current identities!” Ari whispered harshly.

“I understand.” The guard nodded and cautiously glanced around. He continued in a hushed tone, “Your Excellency Ari, this Lord seems somewhat friendly, but I still think we should remain cautious, especially on this remote island...”

Ari couldn't deny it. Just like in the ocean and the desert, there were both good-hearted people who helped lost travelers and malevolent individuals with hidden intentions. Since leaving the Kingdom of Ugisai, they have encountered many similar situations.

However, it seemed that this Lord Ji Chen might fall into the category of good-hearted people.

Ari's eyes became resolute, and he spoke in a serious tone.

“Our ultimate goal for this journey is to reach the Elven Empire in the Northern Continent and seek the elves' assistance in warding off the Sand Plague.

“Only the formidable natural abilities of the elves can drive back the relentless sandstorms, halt the shrinking of the oasis, and ensure the survival and growth of our people in the Barren Desert.

Everyone, this time we carry the hopes of our kingdom, and failure is not an option!”

“Ypsj”

Numerous guards and handmaidens replied with determination..

Chapter 468: Malicious Existence, Resources in Hand, and Rush to War

The next day at noon, Ari was once again invited by Ji Chen to share lunch.

On the dining table were various specialties from the Crown of the Ocean and food with a strong marine theme. There were deep-sea monsters three to four meters long, strange arrowfish with unique horns, giant squids two to three meters long that were only found in the depths of the ocean, and deep-sea clams the size of washbasins.

The appearance and taste of these foods were eye-opening for Ari, who had always lived in the desert. His hands didn't stop as he stuffed various things into his mouth, all the while praising them.

"Lord Ji Chen, the taste of these clams is simply amazing. I've never had such delicious seafood before!"

"The meat of this fish is also excellent, very tender and it tastes like desert scarab beetles."

Ji Chen had a smile on his face and waited until Ari ate his fill before casually asking, "I'm very curious about the Southern Continent. Would you mind giving me an introduction later?"

Ari couldn't refuse, especially since it was just an introduction.

He considered it as the cost of accommodation and meals during his stay here.

After finishing the meal, Ari followed Ji Chen to a small lounge area. They sat on soft sofas, and a fireplace on the wall was burning with a warm, orange flame.

"Most of the Southern Continent is occupied by Barren Desert... I suppose you're aware of that,"

"Yes, I am," Ji Chen replied with a smile. "Although I live far out at sea and have never been to the Southern Continent, I've learned some basic information through other means."

Ari nodded. He was informed that Ji Chen was a Lord of Glory, and the Ugisai Kingdom had given birth to quite a few of them.

From what he knew, there seemed to be a peculiar way for Lords of Glory to quickly transmit messages, so he wasn't surprised by Ji Chen's knowledge.

"Among the few habitable places in the Barren Desert, there are a few large oases, scattered riverbanks, and a few river mouths leading to the sea. The rest of the land is just as desolate as the name suggests..."

Listening to Ari's introduction as a local expert, Ji Chen occasionally nodded, gaining a rough impression and outline of the continent he had never set foot on.

Everywhere he looked on the surface was a sea of yellow sand, filled with dangers that outsiders could hardly imagine—sandstorms, getting lost, extreme temperature differences between day and night, wild beasts, monsters, and bands of marauding bandits.

However, within the yellow sand buried countless civilizations and relics that had disappeared in the river of history, waiting for someone to discover and excavate them.

It could be said that the vast desert of the Southern Continent was a miniature version of the Small Ocean, full of opportunities and dangers.

But within the boundless desert, there were some oases that shone like pearls, allowing humanity to survive.

Listening to Ari's somewhat enthusiastic words, Ji Chen became somewhat curious about the continent.

However, it was only curiosity, and he had no intention of going there—of course not. For someone like him, whose strength was entirely focused on the water, going to a place without water was simply seeking discomfort.

Furthermore, he didn't like overly arid environments, whether it was due to the influence of being a Tidal Dominator or other preferences.

However, there was an opportunity to send trade caravans there for lucrative business ventures. Despite the desert's scarcity of resources, its unique environment occasionally yielded rare items not found elsewhere, which resulted in substantial profits when transported to other continents.

"So, you mean these naturally formed oases sustain the entire Ugisai Kingdom?"

"No, the oases aren't naturally formed," Ari said seriously. "They are the sacred gifts bestowed upon us by the Sand Spirit, our precious homeland for every desert dweller."

Ji Chen raised an eyebrow as if he had heard a hidden piece of information known only to the indigenous people.

Ari seemed to have fully opened up and wore a serious expression.

"Lord Ji Chen, for certain reasons, I have knowledge of some hidden information that ordinary people don't know. Consider this information as your reward for helping us."

Ji Chen's interest grew significantly. Hidden information?

It seemed that Ari's identity was not that of an ordinary merchant; he must be a noble of the indigenous people.

In this world, nobles firmly controlled knowledge and information.

"Please go on."

"In a time long, long ago, in an era so ancient that there are no records of it, the Southern Continent wasn't like what it is today.

Most of the regions were covered by endless yellow sand, but it was once a prosperous continent filled with lush grass and boundless vitality, stretching from the west coast to the east coast. Everyone lived happily under the guidance of the Sand Spirit.

However, one day, the sky suddenly tore open a black rift, like endless malevolence extending its tentacles towards the land, seeking to devour all living beings.

At the moment when all living beings were in panic, the Sand Spirit stepped forward for the sake of its people."

Ari's face was filled with pride as he continued.

“The Sand Spirit possessed boundless power, and its will permeated the heavens and the earth. With their combined efforts, they repelled the malevolence and sealed the rift.

However, the power of their battle was too overwhelming. During the fight against malevolence, it affected the entire continent, destroying its vitality. The frenzied yellow sand spread at a terrifying speed.

But in the last moment before departing, the Sand Spirit used its final strength to create several places that were immune to the encroachment of the yellow sand. These places are the large oases in the Barren Desert today, leaving hope for its people to survive..”

Chapter 469: Malicious Existence, Resources in Hand, and Rush to War (2)

Listening to Ari narrate this ancient mystery, Ji Chen’s mind surged with waves of curiosity.

These pieces of information seemed to correspond with some of what he knew.

Having the knowledge from Earth, certain terms were quite comprehensible.

A crack appeared in the sky, and malevolence descended upon the world—did this mean that some kind of entity invaded this realm?

The being known as the Sand Spirit, probably a deity, drove these malevolent entities out of the world but exhausted its power in the process. It created a few large oases with its last ounce of strength and then “departed.”

Did these deities not willingly leave but rather expend their power resisting the invasion, forcing them to abandon their divine realms and people?

At this moment, he recalled the words of the ghost ship.

“They” were about to return.

So, did “they” refer to the malevolent entities that had invaded in the past?

Furthermore, were these malevolent entities about to invade once again?

The more he thought about it, the more uneasy Ji Chen felt.

It was clear that even the most powerful beings in this world, the deities, could only repel but not slay these malevolent entities. They even depleted their power and left.

Motherfucker, did I just learn about something important?

Based on the ghost ship’s words, it seemed like it was urging him to grow quickly and defend against these malevolent entities.

Ji Chen’s mouth twitched.

What kind of otherworldly joke was this?

After months of hard work, he only reached level forty-something and acquired quite a few heroic units.

Although he now possessed a decent army, it was still not much stronger than ants compared to the power of the deities.

Throwing such a massive challenge at him now placed immense pressure on him.

After the conversation, Ari left the side hall, and Ji Chen leaned back on the sofa, his brow furrowed.

A sense of urgency suddenly surged within him.

If he truly had to face enemies of that level of power, his current growth rate was far from sufficient. He needed to strengthen the power of the Crown of the Ocean more rapidly.

Based on the ghost ship's words, it seemed that there wasn't much time left before the malevolent invasion arrived.

Moreover, these malevolent entities wouldn't be limited to the now desolate South Continent; their evil influence would undoubtedly reach every corner of this world.

He had to accelerate his path to strength!

Everything needed to be expedited!

Ji Chen immediately checked the current inventory of rare resources. Out of the four million rare resources brought back from the Starshine Islands, only less than two hundred thousand units remained after the previous recruitment. This meager amount wouldn't even cover the costs of the next recruitment cycle.

The most significant reliance for rapid strength enhancement now lay in the Military Talent Tree.

Therefore, he needed to acquire more rare resources through various means to enhance the strength of both his military units and hero units, recruiting more troops.

He began to contemplate what information and resources he had at his disposal.

The Crown of the Ocean's trade, by exporting various goods, could steadily obtain rare resources. However, this method, although reliable, required a significant amount of time to traverse the vast seas and couldn't yield large quantities of rare resources in the short term.

The Abyssal Layers of Darkness in the Great Luminescent Sea was a clear indication of the vast resources concealed within. However, he knew nothing about it at present and would need to send an exploration team to pave the way before conducting extensive exploration.

He once obtained a handbook of adventures and learned about the lost underwater city of Argo, which, according to the adventurer's notes, contained a vast amount of mithril.

However, the location of Argo was in the Eastern Central Ocean, and unless there was a fast means of travel like a portal, it was currently too far away for exploration.

The key to Gigantooth City, which he took from the Gnome merchant, was potentially valuable, and he might get unexpected rewards...

The elven treasury of Gloria, an ancient elven city, held promise, but he only had one treasury key at the moment, and he didn't even know its location, so that was a no-go for now...

Similarly, the enslavement contract scroll he obtained from the Gnome merchant could forcibly enslave a higher being, but there didn't seem to be a worthy target at the moment...

The divine realm key that could lead to a divine realm was extremely dangerous, and even epic-level powerhouses dared not enter it recklessly...

Upon closer reflection, Ji Chen had many valuable items at his disposal, but none of them could be used at the moment.

As he contemplated, it seemed that the ongoing war between the Lienhardt Grand Duchy and the Kingdom of Bass was the most immediate opportunity.

War often brought unexpected gains, and if he could take a substantial piece from the Kingdom of Bass while they were preoccupied with the Sea Beast Tide, it would be enough to make the Crown of the Ocean prosper.

So, he couldn't just sit back and wait for the Sea Beast Tide to end.

While the Sea Beasts were causing chaos and the Kingdom of Bass was distracted by the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, it was the perfect time for him to strike from behind.

Calming his thoughts, Ji Chen summoned Wilus.

Seeing his solemn expression, the loyal Chief Minister of Internal Affairs realized the gravity of the situation.

"Convey my orders. I will leave with the army in the coming days to participate in the war between the Kingdom of Bass and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

During this time, you must protect the Crown of the Ocean diligently and ensure that you wait for my return."

Wilus didn't hesitate and bent his tall posture, his demeanor resolute.

"I shall follow your supreme will."

One day later....

Chapter 470 - 470: Malicious Existence, Resources in Hand, and Rush to War (3)

Less than two days after the shipwreck, Ari and his group once again boarded a Crown of the Ocean warship.

They would part ways with Ji Chen halfway, following their agreement to head to the Maple Principality, while Ji Chen and his team would proceed to the Starshine Islands, and then make their way towards the northwest coast of the Central Ocean, where both nations were located.

Ari had no objections to this plan; it seemed the sooner they reached the Maple Principality, the better for him.

Two days later.

Both parties arrived at their designated separation point.

Ari expressed his gratitude to Ji Chen, saying, “Thank you, Your Excellency, for extending your hand to us. If you ever come to the Kingdom of Ugisai, I will surely repay your generosity.”

Ji Chen nodded with a smile, appreciating the desert dweller whose identity was not entirely clear.

If the man hadn’t voluntarily disclosed some long-buried secrets from history, Ji Chen might not have realized the significance of the situation and might still be taking things slowly.

After a simple farewell, the fleets and armies separated.

In this instance, the fleet of the Ocean Crown, braving the risks of sea beast attacks, chose a relatively safe route to forcefully traverse the ocean towards the Maple Principality.

Ji Chen, too, was willing to risk sea beast assaults as he journeyed to the northwest coast.

And that place was precisely where the colossal sea beast tide, with all its grandeur, would ultimately reach.

He believed that something must be drawing the sea beast horde collectively to that location, and this expedition might provide an opportunity to investigate further.

Two days later, they arrived at the Starshine Islands one day ahead of schedule due to their accelerated travel.

While Ji Chen was away, Sonia and the Coral Palace troops kept things under control. Xhakas, Kieran, and Herman dutifully carried out Ji Chen’s policies, motivating players to participate in developing the Starshine Islands.

In just a few days, the islands’ southern side, which had been destroyed by Sea Beasts, was revitalized and returned to life.

And the once conspicuous slums in Starshine City were completely razed and replaced with two-story buildings. The sounds of residents’ laughter and joy faintly echoed in the air.

After a brief update and instructing them to continue implementing the policies, Ji Chen departed from the Starshine Islands once more, heading towards his destination.

As Ji Chen left, Xhakas, Kieran, and Herman couldn’t help but show concern in their eyes.

They had no choice but to worry because, due to the master-servant contract, if one party died, the contract rules would directly erase the other party, which was extremely overbearing.

At this moment, all they could do was silently pray in their hearts, hoping that Ji Chen would return safely.

At the border between the Kingdom of Bass and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

The night fell, and the moon was obscured by dark clouds.

A soldier stood guard on a watchtower at the duchy’s border, holding a crossbow.

Suddenly, he noticed flickering shadows in the distance within the jungle and squinted his eyes to get a better look.

However, the night was too dark, and he couldn’t see anything.

Just as he thought it might be his imagination, a glimmer appeared in the darkness. The next moment, an arrow whizzed through the air and struck the soldier, causing him to fall.

In the darkness, a skilled marksman from the Kingdom of Bass put down his powerful bow, looking grave.

He gestured to the rear.

Soon, a group of plain-clothed soldiers from the Kingdom of Bass emerged from the jungle, moving quietly toward a gap in the border between the two nations. Their eyes gleamed with cruelty and coldness.

But just as they were about to cross the border, the soldier who was shot down by the marksman earlier suddenly propped himself up against the railing. In the moment he saw the glint, he instinctively shifted his body slightly, and the arrow had not hit a vital spot.

Now, the soldier stood up, enduring the pain, and saw thousands of enemy troops sneaking in. A flash of shock crossed his eyes.

The Kingdom of Bass was actually planning to attack under the cover of night!?

Damn it, they must not succeed!

The soldier, clutching his wound, quickly triggered the alarm.

Woo—

A piercing sound shattered the silence of the night, and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy's military camp erupted into chaos. Many soldiers hurriedly donned their equipment.

The moment they saw this soldier stand up, the Bass Kingdom soldiers knew something was wrong. Without further concealment, they sprinted at full speed, crossing the border and charging towards the enemy soldiers.

An officer raised his longsword high and shouted loudly.

“All forces, charge!”

“The first one to breach the enemy camp will be rewarded with a noble title and an audience with His Majesty!”

“Today, we shall bring ruin to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy!”

“Attack!”