

## Undead 25

Chapter 25: This Evil Must Be Found!

Eight goblins briskly followed behind a slightly taller goblin that were adorned in a crude armour with a tattered cape and a sheathed saber at its waist.

They all wore aged leather armour with swords and spears as their weapons of choice, only a single one among bearing a staff to show that it was of a spell-casting class. A few of these goblins held torches to cater for lighting in the dark place they were about to enter.

They had to be vigilant.

Some of these goblins troops had painted faces, and others had animal skulls acting as masks - all for the sake of intimidating the enemy, though the brand they were up against were likely to be unaffected.

The goblin in the lead exuded a different air from the others and though all its visual features except for height matched those of the others, it was much stronger.

As this squad rushed through the streets, the other goblins gave way for them, giving short bows to the goblin that led the others.

This was because this goblin was special. He was different from the rest.

He was the only one with a Special Class - an Advanced Class - within the entire clan of goblins, and was its pride.

His name was Shirota.

"Are we really supposed to defend against an army of undead?" one of the goblins who wielded a spear asked with a hint of concern.

"Who said it's an army? Tekala said he only saw two of them. Besides, we just have to check the situation. If it's too much, we'll have to migrate again," said another.

"Let's not worry about all that. We have Shirota with us after all," another goblin said with a proud smile across its ugly, painted face.

As the goblins marched, reaching the edge of ravine where a bunch of crude steps were carved, Shirota suddenly turned and gazed at the image of the large structure at the centre of the settlement.

He felt that something was off, his senses giving a warning to him.

He held the hilt of his sword and frowned.

"You all go ahead. I'll catch up after I make sure of something," he said before he bolted towards the hut where Ukur lived.

"...."

The other goblins who were left behind were dumbstruck. Their source of confidence had just dashed away for an unknown reason.

What would they do now?

"Uh... should we..?"

"Yes.. uhm.. we must.. still go, right..?"

"He did say so... so I guess we should."

The goblins mumbled amongst themselves before hesitantly scaling up and entering the forest with caution. They didn't know what they would find.

Had Shirota been with them, they would have been courageous enough to split up and cover more ground, but they decided that it was best to travel as a group and 'expertly scrutinise every aspect of the forest for clues'.

Soon they saw the dead bodies of goblins in multiple places.

Stabs, stabs, stabs.

That was the majority of the wounds they found with a few bashed in faces.

"Is it really an undead that did this, or was Tekala hallucinating?" one goblin asked as it looked at the corpses. Undead were usually ruthless and crude. The weaker ones at least. They had been their prime suspects, as expecting a powerful undead to just suddenly appear and start roaming about slaughtering goblins, seemed too far fetched.

"This footprint..." one of the goblins said, illuminating a bony footprint on the ground with his torch. "Tekala was right."

Silence pervaded for a while before the goblin with a staff spoke.

"If that's the case, let's proceed with caution."

And so they did.

The goblins moved forward, searching for traces of conflict until they discovered more bodies.

Of the numerous they found, they saw one belonging to a member of their squad who was relative in strength to them.

"Aikil..." one of them said with a dark expression. The split body of Aikil oozed of blood and happy juice from the brain.

The goblins turned sombre. Unlike when they saw the bodies of the standard warriors whom they didn't have much respect for, or a deep sense of familiarity with, seeing their comrade in this state rattled their hearts.

"Hey! Look at this!" one goblin who was crouching down beside the body hastily said.

The others gave him their attention only to see him undressing the lower half of Aikil which was barely covered up.

"Of all the things, you choose to look at another goblin's jewels?" one goblin barked as it backed away from the one crouching beside Aikil.

"Have you become... a 'blessed one', Bailo?" another goblin asked with guarded caution.

The goblin whose name was Bailo face palmed and pointed towards the raisin-like growth on Aikil's crotch.

"I mean, this!" he growled.

The others looked and instantly grimaced, demanding Bailo to cover it up!

"What cruelty! What would do such a thing? This is no simple matter!"

"Poor Aikil. This was not a warrior's death."

"Whatever did this must be exterminated! We will search the entire forest section if we have to!"

"To de-jewel another! This must be some kind of devil, not an undead!"

Such evil had to be punished.

What witchcraft was this?

The goblins were motivated. They checked the other corpses around and saw that the same misfortune had befallen them as well.

They drew their weapons and raced ahead, covering each other.

The farther they travelled without seeing traces of an army of undead, the more confidence they got.

They split up with enough distance in between to be able to see each other and respond to unexpected circumstances, continuing with their search.

After walking for nearly ten minutes, they found nothing at all.

No traces.

No bodies.

Had the undead retreated?

One of the goblins decided to voice out what was on the others' minds.

"I don't think there's an—"

BOOOOM!

A resounding explosion emerged from behind them, causing all the goblins to vigilantly turn and look.

An orange light could be seen far ahead within the darkness in a direction that made their hearts sink.

Their home!

Immediately, they chose to abandon this mission and race back home to see what was going on, the low rumble of the explosion still ringing on the ground.

As they began to run, something else they couldn't have possibly foreseen happened.

An arrow whizzed through the air, whistling softly before it lodged itself into the head of Bailo!

The goblin dropped dead on the ground, its fall attracting the attention of the goblin closest to it, which opened its eyes wide and attempted to warn the others but was interrupted by another arrow flying towards its head!

The goblin swiftly dodged, but before it could firmly settle, a quick shadow bolted towards it, blue flames flickering in its sockets!

The shock from that instance stunned the goblin for a moment, but that was enough for the tall assailant that rushed it to ruthlessly stab it in the chest with a double-edged sword that flickered with the white light of mana!

The goblin screamed, garnering the attention of others who got ready to fight, but not before another one of them was nailed in the head with an arrow, falling to the ground in death!

The other goblins went on high alert, seeing the tall undead that held a bloody sword leap a few steps back as it extended its hand towards the corpse of the goblin it had just killed.

It stopped by the corpse of the other goblin with an arrow in its head, and extended did the same.

"Be on guard!" the goblin with the staff cried, and its kin instantly drew their weapons while keeping an eye on their surroundings.

Skullius who was absorbing the Null Life Essence from the goblin corpse couldn't help but curse in his mind, not at the prospect of the enemies he had to face, but at the fact that a certain boar was hogging most of the experience and would likely continue to do so.

'Well, for someone with atrocious luck, I sure got a good opportunity to get a headstart that I didn't see coming,' Skullius thought, greedily relishing in thought of the experience he was about to earn.

The short battles with the goblins he had killed had allowed him to harvest crucial battle experience, and he would be using it with the plan he had forged to pick up a bountiful gain!