

## God level 31

### Chapter 31: Drifting After the Storm

The howling wind and towering waves cast the world into darkness.

The low-hanging dark clouds burned like cyan flames over the ocean. The sea grasped the gleam of lightning arrows, extinguishing them into the bottomless abyss. Giant waves roared with angry foam, viciously hurling the sailboat to the crest of the waves, then smashing it heavily into the trough.

Thunder, the sailors' anthem! Gale, the sailors' spirit! Our lives are in the waves and wind; let us sail through the stormy seas!

All right, I was being poetic. Dare to sail in a storm, it's courting death!

Just after Da Fei's sailboat successfully broke free from the shallows, it rode the waves like an F1 motorboat. Suddenly, the wind changed, and the ship tilted violently, almost capsizing. Alone on the boat, Da Fei couldn't control the sails in time. He had to pull out the fire axe to cut the sail ropes and force the sails down, then quickly ran to the second-floor cockpit to steer, avoiding giant waves. But it wasn't over yet.

—System Prompt: The third deck of the ship is leaking, please immediately use materials to repair the leak and use emergency buckets to bail water.

—System Prompt: The right aft side timber of the ship has cracked, ship durability -55, please immediately use materials to repair.

—System Prompt: The canvas on mast number 2 was blown away by the storm, please replenish the canvas in time.

—System Prompt: The additional armor rivets on the left side of the ship have fallen out, armor plate fallen off, left side ship defense -48.

For God's sake! Is this damn ship trying to kill this lone captain? For a moment, Da Fei stumbled around, running everywhere to make emergency repairs in the pitching and shaking. This ship really couldn't be handled by one person.

At this moment, Da Fei's Storm Navigation talent icon was flickering—this was the indication of a player's talent specialty being activated. And while the talent was glowing, Da Fei's experience kept rising!

—System Prompt: You struggled against the storm and gained 1000 experience points.

—System Prompt: You struggled against the storm and gained 1000 experience points.

Gain! It must gain! Fighting monsters isn't real skill; taking one's entire fortune to battle the sky and sea—that's on a different level. If no experience is gained, it's against heaven's will!

—System Prompt: You repaired the leak in the hull, gaining 600 experience points!

—System Prompt: You reinforced the broken hull, gaining 500 experience points!

Nice, even without killing monsters, experience can increase. Sailing isn't so boring after all.

At that moment, a loud bang signaled another colossal wave approaching. Underneath Da Fei, the floor plunged; then his body suddenly felt light, flying-like!

—Boom! The hull landed heavily, debris inside the cabin flying around. Da Fei lost his balance and slammed into the wall, “-25!”

Damn! It could kill someone!

—System Prompt: Warning! The ship's helm was destroyed by a giant wave and cannot control direction, ship durability cap -300.

—System Prompt: The left front side timber of the ship cracked, ship durability -130, please immediately use materials to repair.

For crying out loud! The helm is broken—how to repair it? It's under the water at the back of the ship!

No choice, this talent only said the ship's safety would improve in a storm, not that it wouldn't sink. Now, the only option was to hope it wouldn't sink. Save what could be saved.

Time ticked by, and Da Fei's ship, like a duckweed in the storm, rose and fell, tossed about dangerously. The sea was scarier than any boss; in front of it, mortal power seemed tiny and insignificant.

A golden flash, with stamina exhausted and health plunging, Da Fei leveled up!

—System Prompt: Congratulations! You've leveled up to level 16! Gained 1 free attribute point, 1 skill point, +2 life value, +1 command power.

Great timing! Full life, full stamina, I can battle for another half-hour!

Finally, the wind stopped, the clouds dispersed, and the storm was over. The sky was a washed blue, with a rainbow bridging the heaven and sea.

—System Prompt: The deck's drainage trough collected 1 unit of fresh water.

—System Prompt: The ship is severely damaged and cannot sail normally, it is in a drifting state.

Da Fei breathed a long sigh of relief and checked the ship's status.

Original Name: Saint Anthony (Can be renamed once)

Captain: Da Fei

Ship's Special Skill: Divine's Blessing (Crew's luck +2)

Ship Cargo Capacity: 1000 units

Ship Usage Time: 10 years

Minimum Sailor Capacity: 30 people

Ship Durability 857/1690

Ship Speed: 10

Ship Armor Defense: Left Side 32, Right Side 80.

Sea God Insurance Level: 0 (The ship is not under Sea God's shelter, once in accident, it will sink forever)

Current Ship Status: Helm destroyed, unable to control direction, sails damaged, left side additional armor fallen off, cursed by Misfortune (crew's luck -3).

Da Fei sighed deeply; it was an old ship already, and now with so much durability cap lost, it wouldn't last long. It seemed the system wouldn't just give a newcomer such a big ship generously, right? But could Sea God Insurance extend the ship's life? It's expensive, unless it's an exceptional ship; otherwise, the money's better spent on a new ship, right? But I can't even afford to repair the ship now, what to do?

Forget it, don't overthink. After all, I managed to get through this one, time to give the ship a new name; let's call it Flying Brother Fei? Fei's Flying? Fei's Soar? Whatever, Flying it is, for the literary touch.

—System Prompt: You renamed the Saint Anthony to Flying.

Now what? Better rehang the sails. And then, where's the collected freshwater? 1 unit is 100 portions, enough for me to drink for 100 days, no problem with water. And then? Where am I now? Da Fei took out his telescope, all he saw was blue water, coordinates (???, ???)!

Damn, no coordinates!

Right, navigation needs a compass, sextant, and other measuring tools; without them, it's as good as blind. Where's the compass? Captain's cabin? Yes! I've checked all the rooms except the captain's cabin, being the captain, I can enter there, of course.

Da Fei went to the captain's cabin behind the second-floor cockpit but found another room aside, with a door long since damaged. Whose room was this?

Inside, the room was strewn with debris. This is? Could it be Juan's room? Da Fei, with interest, started cleaning up the scattered debris and faded paper pieces. Yes, indeed, it's Juan, the handwriting matches the diary.

They say, after giving away one strategic treasure telescope, he shouldn't have more. No, no, he has a 15-year-old daughter named Selvia! These trinkets are her father's relics, I must collect them carefully, then show them to her—she'll be moved to recognize me as her godfather! Wahahaha, Uncle Hu, rest assured, I've got this.

Da Fei packed up all the little things from the floor, table, and drawers—huh? What's this? A flute with no attributes? This flute's shape, these carvings, so ancient, so literary, something different. Well, different is good, a little girl will surely recognize it at once. Okay, I'll choose this as the representative relic.

After searching through the Sailing Captain's room without further discoveries, Da Fei returned to the captain's cabin, trying the doorknob.

—System Prompt: Would you like to enter the captain's cabin?

Look, the system prompt indicates the captain's cabin's special status, doesn't it? No more words, enter.

The scene shifted, and Da Fei appeared in a small room. This captain's cabin was an instance, making infiltration by any top-tier thief impossible.

The captain's cabin wasn't much more luxurious than other officer's rooms, yet the table conspicuously displayed a large globe, a telescope, and a big compass, with a neatly hanging black and white captain's uniform in the wardrobe.

Haha! No wonder he's the captain, always has goods. Now, I have two telescopes! Well, if a player normally did this trial, they'd unlikely find the Sailing Captain's telescope. Compensation is needed here since a telescope is essential for sailing. It works, at least a C-level treasure, selling it could fund the ship repairs and early trading capital, considering I'm broke.

Da Fei examined the remaining two items.

—New World Star Chart: An instrument that records the New World's star formation. It can pinpoint the ship's sea coordinates when sailing the New World. Requirement: Learn the sub-skill Measuring Skill under Sailing Skill.

Oh! It's high-end, a New World locator, no wonder he's the captain!

—Compass: Can pinpoint the ship's sea coordinates. Requirement: Learn the sub-skill Measuring Skill under Sailing Skill.

Found the compass, but Da Fei was beginning to feel a headache.

Measuring Skill this, it should be for the NPC Deputy Officer, really. Practically every harbor's Sailor's Home or tavern can hire an NPC sailor for Measuring Skill. As a respectable captain, should I spend a precious skill point on this tedious Measuring Skill? Though I've saved up 7 skill points leveling from 9 to 16, wasting them like this is a no-no! I can bet this Measuring Skill is the trashiest sub-skill ever, I sincerely don't want to learn it.

What's more, the ship's in such a state, drifting aimlessly. Knowing the coordinates won't help, even now.

In the end, Da Fei managed to find a reason not to learn it. So, drift it shall. Drift to a place with people, then figure something out. Best if the Bright Alliance's navy finds and rescues us, then all problems are solved.

For now, I must continue exploring the captain's room. Unsurprisingly, a golden book on the bookshelf—Sailing Skill! Hey, I already have one with me, only sell it.

—System Prompt: You obtained Renior's Sailing Skill Book!

—Renior's Sailing Skill Book: Spend 1 skill point to learn Basic Navigation Skill.

—System Prompt: You already learned the Sailing Skill, cannot use this book.

Da Fei was suddenly astonished! Another special version Skill Book! The greatest reward from this trial task wasn't this old broken ship after all, but these materials containing the experience of past masters. Anyway, since I'm drifting anyway, let's delve into Divine Skills first.

And yet Da Fei had no idea that at this moment, the largest hero forum in China was ablaze with a post titled, "Trash Player Da Fei Maliciously Ambushed God-level Hero Player Blood Sea Wave to Level 0, with Video, Death Record, and Truth," had become immensely popular. Blood Sea Wave, this God-level player who had been on TV, was once again a celebrity in the China Region. Thanks to him, Da Fei also gained some fame.

(Note: Unlike modern liners with high superstructures, sailboats typically have superstructures at the bow and stern, rarely exceeding three stories. Otherwise, a sailboat's center of gravity gets too high, making it easy to capsize in the wind and difficult to sail against the wind.)

## Chapter 32: Dragon Slayer Guild

The video of the Sea Battle God-level Hero Blood Sea Wave from the China Region being killed to level 0 by an ordinary gunner shocked thousands of players on the forum.

Although exposing one's shortcomings wasn't Blood Sea Wave's style, in this day and age, if you want to become famous, especially internationally, the fastest and most effective way is to expose flaws. Good deeds may remain unknown while bad ones spread far and wide. Fame is beneficial to the newly established Blood Sea Studio for quickly becoming well-known and also for striking back at enemies.

After learning about Blood Sea Wave's ordeal, the three loyal brothers who had just bought accounts and joined the game realized that so much had happened in just one day yesterday. What expression should they use to face it?

In any case, even the Hero News program responded quickly to this sensational event, as Hero News always stands on the cutting edge of fashion.

Host, "Hello, dear players. We're broadcasting a quick news update for you in real-time about a regrettable PK incident that occurred in the China Region, which has also negatively impacted the international image of Chinese players. Here, we'll again connect by phone with Star Team's Captain Jiang to address the paralysis poison that players are interested in—hello! Captain Jiang, how are you?"

Captain Jiang, "Hello, host. Hello, dear players."

Host, "From the video footage provided by the parties involved and the battle records, this paralysis poison has the ability to interrupt the opponent's actions. Doesn't this mean that those slow-attack enemies can never even strike?"

Captain Jiang, "Taking Da Fei's gunner as an example, the gunner's attack speed was 10. Theoretically, as long as the enemy's attack speed is below 5 points, they wouldn't be fast enough to strike even after being shot twice. In such a case, they indeed can never make a move. This is certainly a very bizarre weapon enchantment. However, zombies in the game have an attack speed of 6 points, and it's already tough to find a unit more sluggish than zombies. So the situation where someone can't strike at all is extremely rare."

Host, "But in any battle, interrupting the opponent even once can often determine the outcome, right?"

Captain Jiang nodded, "Indeed. However, it's certain that this paralysis poison is an extraordinarily rare weapon enchantment and can't be equipped on a large scale within troops. So its impact on large-scale battles is still minimal. But players need not worry. Whether it's the zombies' corpse poison or other

poison damage, as long as players equip themselves with poison resistance gear, they can effectively prevent the poison's special effects. Poison resistance equipment can be obtained by enchantment at the Main City's Alchemy Guild..."

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Dragon Slayer Network Entertainment Company, one of China's three major esports clubs and one of China's top three online game guilds, the Dragon Slayer Guild headquarters.

At this moment, the company's chairman, Ma Yinglong, watched this episode of Hero News with a frown, looking rather depressed.

"Star! Star! They ask Star even for the smallest things! Every day, it's just Star!" His assistant, Chang Liang, dismissed, "The server's been open for only four days. It's uncertain if they'll even be the first to form a guild in the game. No need to panic, brother; if we train hard, we'll definitely claim the title of China Region's number one guild."

Ma Yinglong nodded, "Indeed, which is why we must go all out to be the first to establish a guild. This game is different from previous games; it's a world-class game. Being the first to form a guild represents international image and is crucial for the interests of the company's guild. We must give it our all this time."

Chang Liang nodded, "Don't worry, brother. By the way, this Blood Sea Wave seems promising. Should we find a way to bring him over?"

Ma Yinglong casually replied, "If he's willing, that would be great, at least maintain a cooperative relationship."

Chang Liang immediately said, "Got it, I'll immediately instruct below—no, it's better if I contact him personally."

Ma Yinglong smiled, "Then it'll be trouble for you."

Ma Yinglong, President of the Dragon Slayer Guild, game ID, Dragon Scale, had been focusing on the company's operations and hadn't played games in years. Chang Liang, Ma Yinglong's successor, top expert of the Dragon Slayer Guild, game ID, Dragon Teeth, was a famous professional competitor in China.

This episode of Hero News stirred up unpleasant, or more accurately, painful memories for him.

Da Fei! Someone who made him grit his teeth in anger! There were many with the same name online, but whether this Da Fei was the one from before was unimportant. However, it was precisely this scum who destabilized the Dragon Slayer Guild's once number-one position, allowing Star and Ninth Heaven to rise and form the current tripartite situation among China's three giant online game guilds. And now, Star had surpassed Dragon Slayer in many aspects, faintly becoming the China Region's top player guild.

Many years ago, Ma Yinglong was just a young man skipping classes to spend nights in internet cafes. He was passionate about online games, not only having exceptional skills but also keen tactical insight and voice command ability, which gathered his first batch of loyal followers. At that time, they made gold groups, hitting equipment and selling it for money, thriving splendidly.

Where could you find such good fortune as playing favorite games and earning several times more than others working regular jobs? The answer was joining Brother Long's team!

Thus, Ma Yinglong's offline elite team, the Dragon Slayer Guild website, was officially established. Whatever game was fun and had business opportunities, their team would enter it. The guild's scale kept growing, with more offline branches popping up, to the point where the Dragon Slayer Guild's presence became a game's popularity indicator, even deciding a game's fate!

Reaching such a level in gaming brought tremendous benefits along. The Dragon Slayer Guild became an object of flattery for major game companies, no longer comparable to simple gold farming and selling items.

Then that year, a game named "Dynasty" was launched, and the Dragon Slayer Guild was invited into the game with handsome remuneration from the game company.

In that same year, the Dragon Slayer Guild encountered a scumbag named Da Fei. Initially, he stole Guild Leader Dragon Scale's BOSS-level pet tiger in Newbie Village, then acted arrogantly using the tiger's

power. The Dragon Slayer Guild sent some lower-level members to besiege him, but this scumbag was relentless.

Afterward, to be the first to establish a guild in the game, the Dragon Slayer Guild forced a BOSS kill despite members lacking adequate levels, attempting to explode a guild token. At the critical moment of the battle, that scumbag named Da Fei suddenly rushed in, causing a team wipe and snatching the half-dead BOSS and the guild token. The worst part was this scumbag even registered the Dragon Slayer Guild name!

Having their trademark hijacked, this incident caused a significant reputational hit for the Dragon Slayer Guild.

To recover their reputation, Dragon Scale suffered in silence, sending someone to negotiate privately with this Da Fei, offering money to buy back the guild. But Da Fei was impossible to communicate with! He didn't trust Dragon Slayer Guild's sincerity! Not only that, he intensified his actions, recruiting rogue low-life players from the entire server into the guild to PK everywhere, tarnishing the Dragon Slayer Guild's reputation under the guise of curing internet addiction and spoiling the gaming environment.

Ultimately, the game Dynasty ended without a sound, and the Dragon Slayer Guild declined from victory. Star and Ninth Heaven rose, forming the existing tripartite situation.

Running a business isn't like playing a game, after all. A failed BOSS push merely meant respawning and trying again, but a business misstep was one marred journey.

Since that incident, Ma Yinglong became more cautious and mature; mistakes allow growth.

And now, Heroic Creation Era, this international game, was even more significant. This time, the Dragon Slayer Guild must unite every possible alliance and strive to reach the pinnacle once more!

While pondering, the secretary appeared, whispering in his ear, "Boss, President Igarashi wants to meet and have a chat with you personally."

Ma Yinglong frowned, then sighed, "Alright, arrange a time. I'm free anytime. Note, confidentiality is paramount; even Chang Liang must not know."

“Understood.”

### Chapter 33: Epic Quest Guide

A notable sailor must not only master all combat and exploration skills. The ocean is a domain unknown to mankind, and in front of it, we are so insignificant, our knowledge and skills are never enough.

– For sailors, every day and every moment is the same scenery, dull and boring. But only the finest sailors can make significant discoveries from these ordinary environments, and the truth often lies hidden within the commonplace things we take for granted.

Da Fei flipped through the pages of Renior’s Sailing Skill Book, but apart from the inspirational sayings on the first and last pages, there was no other annotation, it was no different from his own regular Sailing Skill Book.

Da Fei was confused. Did Renior just add his name before the title of the Skill Book to make it a special edition, like a primary school student writing their name on their textbook to make it theirs? Isn’t that a bit unreliable? Aren’t game item settings supposed to be precise, staying true to what they are supposed to be or potentially have some hidden meaning?

Da Fei took out Makar’s Skill Book for comparison; both books had names on them, but Makar’s was filled with numerous scribbles and notations! Look, just flipping through, there’s another line:

– The closer I get to divine, the more I realize how insignificant I am.

Holy shit! He’s approaching God? Indeed, launching a Fireball that blows away the level 8 creature Leviathan, and being a formidable figure just beneath the Death God in the Undead Realm. Mighty and exceptional in capabilities, his strength near godlike and renown outstanding. He’s also a cunning hypocrite plotting slyly. Are my epic quests really about contending against such a guy? But then again, these two remarkable personas appear quite humble? It’s not the proud opponents who are frightening; it’s the humble ones. Guess I stand even less of a chance?

Continuing to flip through, then there were lots of magical symbols that no gamer could understand. Until he finished flipping through Makar's doodled book, the system did not prompt any acquisition of Divine Skills or the like.

This is clearly not right!

As for Juan's book, which records Divine Skills, a common person wouldn't discover its content, and that's fine, but at least the Artillery Commander, who is a must-defeat gatekeeper BOSS, his journal contains information about the Divine Cannon. How could someone of Renior Makar's caliber not provide any information? Didn't Makar mention trying to experiment with artificially mass-producing BOSSes earlier in the text?

Da Fei was even more confused.

Wait a minute! Most people probably wouldn't find Juan's remains, right? Meaning, under normal circumstances, players wouldn't discover that Makar is a grand schemer, would they? So what would the following normal task be?

Of course, it would be to fulfill the unfinished dream of the Artillery Commander by asking Makar for the Phantom Crossbow Cannon, right? This Black Magic Skill Book is also Makar's thing, so naturally, after obtaining it, players would return it to its rightful owner for a reward, right? And what about the Soul Crystal obtained after killing the Misfortune Ghost? Surely, it must relate to Makar in some way? Perhaps it should be given to him to see any reward?

So, be it friend or foe, this Makar is an essential character to confront.

Suddenly, Da Fei had a stroke of insight! Brother, I've figured it out!

Makar, whether in terms of power, abilities, cunning, or personality, is an unbeatable character, and players definitely can't win against him. And the Epic Quest's task hint has that phrase, "Presenting the diary to the Emperor might result in being ignored by the Emperor for certain considerations," suggesting that even the Lionheart Empire's Emperor must consider Makar substantially, meaning even NPC forces might not be his match. In fact, given his renown, who would dare to touch him?

So, Makar is literally designed to be an unbeatable entity?

Then, there's only one way to defeat such a person: gain his trust and then find an opportunity to betray him! Throughout history, how many heroes have fallen by the hands of those they trusted most? Under normal circumstances, after completing this trial, players would definitely befriend him and rely on him, maybe even follow him thereafter, right?

So, there's only one way to complete the Epic Quest—by taking a roundabout route!

That's why I'll return the Artillery Commander's diary filled with enthusiastic flattery, along with his Black Magic Book and Soul Crystal to Makar, boosting the NPC's favorability, gaining his trust, and then slowly infiltrating his confidential inner circle. Who knows, I might even get my hands on Mithril Island?

When I'm fully prepared, I'll present the Sailing Captain's diary to the Emperor, demonstrating utmost loyalty as an insider. The Emperor will surely regard me as a fiercely loyal subject. By then, I'll be playing both sides, reaping the benefits from both!

Haha! Wahahaha! I'm so cunning! Of course, it's not my fault. I'm inherently innocent; it's just this game that's corrupted me. This game really does harm the youth! Wahaha!

But after all, it's just a game, and all of this has a huge prerequisite. I've already taken on the Epic Quest to oppose him. How will the story progress? What will happen when I meet Makar? Will he kill me instantly? Or will it be like Infernal Affairs, where he knows nothing?

Damn, since I've already taken on the quest and become his enemy, I don't care if he kills me instantly. In any case, I must try; otherwise, I can't complete the quest. As soon as I can return to the city, the first thing is to find Makar. As long as I deceive him for the bounty, I'll have my initial capital for trading and ship repairs.

Having figured it out, Da Fei suddenly saw the light—the future has a clear direction for me.

However, I've figured out Makar's issue but not the Captain's. Do I really have to wait until the soul residing in the sword wakes up to ask him? Damn, when will that be?

Da Fei flipped through other books on the Captain's bookshelf, mostly poems and geography atlases. The sailing log was also filled with records of daily safety management.

After flipping for a long time, Da Fei had no gains, and having stayed up all night and fought until this noon, he was becoming increasingly confused and couldn't hold on any longer. It's time to log off and sleep.

—System Prompt: Player Attention! You are currently in the high seas, once you log off, your ship may be subjected to various unknown threats. To avoid unnecessary losses, we suggest you purchase the Divine Sanctuary item from the store. (Note: Players cannot log off in enemy camp territory)

—Divine Sanctuary: When a player hero logs off in the wilderness, Divine Sanctuary can protect the player's troops from any attacks. During the protection period, Time Stops. Item price: 20 points. (Note: The more troops the hero has, the more expensive the item)

Apologies! Logging off costs 20 bucks! Damn, they're money-crazy! Is my ship really that valuable?

In Heroic Creation Era, logging off is an annoying design. Individual players can log off any time, but players with troops have to be more careful. After all, the troops won't log off with the player; otherwise, logging off could be considered a Divine Skill in ambushes. So, players with troops can only log off after reaching a town, storing their troops at the town's barracks. If in the wilderness with no towns, either entrust the troops to a Vice Hero, or purchase this Divine Sanctuary store item. The longer the log-off time, the more troops are protected, and the more expensive the item gets. Thus, war with troops is a game only rich people can afford.

Cut it out, I'm a professional player here to make money, not to give my money away. I won't fall for their tricks, I'll just AFK and sleep! I set the system prompt as an alarm ringtone. Let the ship continue to drift! Best if when I wake up, the ship has drifted to land and is saved. I don't believe the vast, boundless sea could pop up a Leviathan to swallow my ship, right? Besides, in the current state of the ship, whatever comes, as a bare-bone Captain, I've only got dying left. Ultimately, I'll leave it up to fate.

And so, Da Fei, wrapped in his helmet, soundly fell asleep.

(New week has started, please support and promote in all ways possible)

## Chapter 34: Giant Golden Spearfish

When Da Fei woke up, it was already 6 PM, and three days had passed in the game; the boat had been drifting aimlessly at sea for three days without knowing where it had ended up. Da Fei's character, having been idling for three days, was already extremely weak from hunger and thirst, with Stamina reduced to zero.

Anyway, it's good that nothing bad happened. Da Fei hurried downstairs to eat a plate of fried rice, then came back to continue playing the game, and continued to stare blankly at the sea.

The ocean was calm, and the sky was clear. Generally, when you're near an island or land, there are more seabirds, but the absence of even a single feather now clearly indicated that they were in the center of the ocean. Although the in-game sea wasn't exaggeratedly vast, considering the current snail-paced drifting, it was absolutely terrifying. How long would this aimless drifting last?

Da Fei now had 7 Skill Points. Should he max out the Sailing Skill? That would increase the speed by 100% and make the drifting a bit more bearable... No, no! Given the current situation, it's highly likely that after reaching land, he'll need to fight monsters and take on quests slowly to earn repair costs, so he must save the Skill Points for battle.

Ah, what a dilemma. Finishing this trial task won't make life any easier. Forget it, being so weak isn't helping; I need to eat something. Although the newbie's seven days' worth of food had run out, Da Fei had still managed to gather some seafood on the island, which could help him scrape by.

Da Fei opened his inventory, only to be stunned.

— Rotten Ingredients: Ingredients that have expired. Eating them might cause poisoning and disease symptoms.

Dammit! There's even an expiration date! This is too frustrating! What to do? Can't just drink water, can I?

Pff! Not a problem for Da Fei.

Da Fei, dragging his weak body, slowly groped his way to the Gun Cabin on the lower deck and dug out more than a dozen fishing rods. Hmph, those were what he found in the dark in the Gun Cabin. A sailor definitely can't be without a fishing rod. And this slow drift is perfect for fishing. As for bait, of course, it's these rotten ingredients.

The tails of the sailor's fishing rods were equipped with special hooks, so Da Fei then lined up the rods along the ship's side, flipping through the unhelpful navigation logs with immense frustration while waiting for a bite.

The system didn't disappoint Da Fei; throughout one day, he managed to catch quite a variety of small fish. There was no choice but to eat them raw. People say sailors see fleas as sesame seeds. Anyway, even though eating raw fish caused a negative state of reduced Basic Damage from weakness, at least the problem of food and drink was solved, and his Stamina was restored after drinking some water.

Then, Da Fei became frustrated again. All he could do was continue fishing. He really didn't like fishing, but catching a drifting bottle that could fulfill three wishes, or even a Mermaid, was another matter.

This time, Da Fei's bait was more upscale—those small fish. Then, the system didn't leave Da Fei in loneliness for long—the fishing rod trembled; he had a catch!

— System Prompt: You have caught a large flagfish, gaining Experience +135!

Whoa! A fish that gives Experience! It's a big one! Back when Da Fei was alone on the island, he couldn't even defeat a fish of this size in the sea.

Da Fei finally found some fun. If he could use scraps to catch small fish, and small fish to catch medium fish, then medium fish should surely be able to catch big fish, right? Might as well carry this frustration to the end.

Da Fei exerted a lot of effort and almost broke the fishing rod before managing to pull up this human-sized fish. He then tried combining the lines of more than a dozen rods into one bundle and cruelly stuffed the hooks into the fish's body.

Since he was fishing for a big one, the fishing line had to be reliable, and there needed to be more hooks. However, if a big fish really did take the bait, these fishing rods and lines might not hold up, right?

After some thought, Da Fei found a large bundle of spare thick ropes used for sail control, tied the fish into a huge zongzi (rice dumpling), and secured the other end to the mast. This should work. Then he tossed the fish back into the sea.

Just wondering, would the system actually recognize this harebrained scheme as fishing? If it doesn't recognize this as fishing, then wouldn't this be considered monster fighting?

Fighting monsters, you say? Da Fei loved that most, and his Crossbow Cannon was itching for action!

So, Da Fei returned to the Gun Cabin and spent ten minutes reassembling the Crossbow Cannon, which only had 8 HP left. But no worries, the situation was completely different now; to destroy this 8 HP Crossbow Cannon, the Gun Cabin itself would have to be blown up first. Da Fei believed that a mere fish absolutely didn't have the capability to create such havoc.

Time passed slowly, with the sun rising and setting from east to west. Two hours in reality and a day in the game just frustratingly passed like this. It seemed that encountering a predator in the sea that could eat such a big bait wasn't so easy. Maybe, indeed, the system doesn't recognize this method of twisting several fishing rods together and reinforcing them with rope as fishing, so no fish were biting?

Whatever, just drift slowly.

Those ordinary sailors' routine diaries are indeed unbearable for Da Fei to look at, they're just plain inventory checks, nothing much really happening in their scripts. The Captain's diary is even more dull and preachy, rambling on about how a great navigator should be resolute, focused, and always vigilant—what is this, a Political Commissar? Far less interesting than the Artillery Commander. It seems like that's all the information provided in diaries.

Night passed, and a new day began, Da Fei blankly watched the magnificent dawn and the sunrise at sea. Maybe just one or two days out at sea, one would find this scenery beautiful and grand, but given more time, it's probably mind-numbingly boring. Like the sailors in the Artillery Commander's diary who spent their days playing cards. The sailor job really isn't for just anyone, it would be somewhat better if

there were a woman on board. Damn, does having a woman even count as being at sea? That's more like a billionaire's yacht equipped with a bikini-clad girl, right? Truly enviable.

If I ever make it big, I'm definitely hiring the most beautiful Female Hero at the tavern, and then bring them onto the ship, getting them the sexiest bikinis to wear, letting sailors crank one out till they bleed every night! Hahahaha!

No idea how long I was daydreaming when suddenly, the fishing rod hung on the railing trembled and squeaked fiercely, and the cable tied to the fish also stretched taut.

Da Fei's heart skipped a beat, a big fish hooked? He quickly peeked out, and the sea roiled with waves! Damn, it was really a big fish! Forget about pulling this kind of fish up, a fish that can swallow something half the size of a human can definitely give lots of experience!

Da Fei immediately ran to the Gun Cabin, the Crossbow Cannon was already loaded—Aim! Fire!

Bang! Two sounds! Two Crossbow Arrows fired, sparking huge splashes—"Missed!" "Missed!"

Damn! Even got the painful misses! Well, the Artillery Commander had also complained about this in his diary, so nothing more to say, continue loading! Must aim clearly this time and wait for it to jump above the surface!

— Bang! "-33!" "-21!"

— System Prompt: You've obtained partial information on the Giant Golden Spearfish.

Da Fei felt a surge of adrenaline, Giant Golden Spearfish? A BOSS? No time to ponder, keep firing. But this variance in damage is too wide, it's indeed disadvantageous using crossbow cannons against underwater creatures. Luckily, its throat was stuck swallowing dozens of fish hooks, the more it struggled, the more it automatically bled with "-2" "-3" "-2" "-3"—That's good!

The battle went on for over half an hour, amidst splashing blood and thundering crossbow cannons, an over ten-meter-long huge Golden Spearfish finally belly up floated on the surface.

— System Prompt: You have killed the Giant Golden Spearfish, gained experience +20000, obtained the specialty product “Golden Spearfish Eggs”

— System Prompt: You have single-handedly killed 10 Leader-level BOSS, completed the achievement , received a reward of life +15, gained Basic Damage +1. Next achievement , requires the hero to kill 100 higher-level BOSS alone without any troops.

— System Prompt: You further perfected the information on the Giant Golden Spearfish.

Da Fei laughed out loud! Finally achieved it! Sailing isn't really that boring, what information and all, seeing a sea BOSS once in this life is already great. Let's see what these eggs are.

— Golden Spearfish Eggs: Seafood. Can be bred in fish farms within territories close to the sea. Golden Spearfish are very delicious large sea fish, hard to catch, very popular in the market.

So it's a territory specialty! This is some good stuff! It's not easy being a Lord; training troops, building cities all require money, and there aren't many ways to earn money; having one more specialty means one more cash tree. Just hang it online and sell it, at least a few hundred thousand, I'm rich, hahaha! Sailing is really great!

No, no, no, encountering a big BOSS in the vast sea is not easy? Even if encountering a BOSS, killing it is even harder, not everyone is as brilliant and brave as me. Why should I sell it to someone else? I'll just occupy an island in the sea, build a city and a fish farm, isn't that just a giant money printer? But building my own city isn't easy either, the initial investment is quite significant. Anyway, keep it on hand first, wait and see the market situation.

Just then,

— System Prompt: Reconnaissance Skill warning! A large number of enemies are approaching you, please be on alert.

Da Fei suddenly got startled! A large number of enemies! Immediately pulled out the binoculars and looked, indeed saw a large group of dark blue fish's backs breaking the waves far away—A school of sharks!

Damn! Golden Spearfish followed by sharks? Old Man and the Sea!

#### Chapter 35: Da Fei and the Sea

Once upon a time, there was a fishing village, and in the village lived an old man known as the greatest fishing master. But for over twenty years, he had not caught a big fish. The villagers began to doubt his reputation as the number one master, and finally, unable to stand their taunts, he set out to sea alone in his small boat, defying his advanced age. This might have been his last voyage.

On the vast sea, the old man waited many days, relying on his knowledge of fish behavior. Finally, a huge Golden Spearfish took the bait—a fish nearly as large as his boat, with enormous strength, capable of breaking free or even capsizing his vessel at any time. The old man leveraged his years of experience to combat the Golden Spearfish and prevent its escape. The Golden Spearfish dragged the old man's boat across the ocean for days and nights, a test of strength and will on both sides. In the end, the old man prevailed, exhausting the Golden Spearfish, then triumphantly tied it to the side of his boat and headed home. However, on the return journey, the bloody scent of the fish attracted hordes of sharks. To preserve his catch, the utterly drained old man picked up his harpoon and fought valiantly, but ultimately could not prevent the shark pack from leaving the giant Golden Spearfish reduced to a huge skeleton. The old man returned to the fishing village with this skeleton.

Seeing the old man gone for days, the villagers were astounded, having thought he had died at sea. Anyway, the old man successfully defended his title of the greatest master in his old age!

This is the world-famous classic, Hemingway's "Old Man and the Sea," that even Da Fei knows well.

Now, facing the swarm of sharks, Da Fei recalls the passionate plot from the classic that once set his youthful blood ablaze. His long-cooled passion erupts, and with a snort and a raised middle finger, he declares, "I too shall become a classic. I'm going to write my autobiography, 'Da Fei and the Sea'!"

Well, just replace the 'old man' in "Old Man and the Sea" with Da Fei.

Sharks, being the apex predators of the sea, are no easy prey and are as tough to eliminate as tier six soldiers on land. Without hesitation, Da Fei pulls out the War Machine Study Skill Book, and it flashes with golden light!

—System Prompt: You spent one Skill Point, and you have learned Advanced War Machine Technology!

—System Prompt: You spent one Skill Point, and you have learned Expert-level War Machine Technology!

—System Prompt: You spent one Skill Point, and you have learned Master War Machine Science!

Oh yeah! I've graduated!

Now, the Crossbow Carriage attributes supported by Master War Machine Science are as follows:

—Attack: 30, Defense: 30, Life Value: 8/600 points, Basic Killing 6-7, Attack Speed: 5, Move Speed: 1, special skill: Knockback, Piercing.

And the total damage of the Crossbow Cannon = Basic Killing × the total value of the hero's strategic attribute points. Now Da Fei is level 16 with 15 total attribute points, so the total damage of the Crossbow Cannon is 90-105!

Holy crap! The attack and defense are like that of an Angel, but the damage is twice that of an Angel, and it's a double shot! I am the BOSS now! Wahahaha!

The swarm of sharks quickly closes in on the Golden Spearfish in the sea. Da Fei, already prepared, aims two shots at the shark's dorsal fins on the sea surface! “—148!” “—132!” This damage, compared to the two-digit damage dealt to the Golden Spearfish jumping above, is like night and day! This is the power of leveling up skills by three full levels!

—System Prompt: You have killed a shark and gained Experience +2550!

—System Prompt: You have obtained complete information on the shark.

Da Fei's eyelids twitch! This experience! Truly high enough to make one's hair stand on end, nearly matching the low-level Soldiers' small BOSS in style!

—Shark: Large size creature, Attack 35, Defense 18, Damage 25-55, Life Value: 280, Attack Speed: 7, Move Speed: 12, Experience: 2550. Special skills: Bloody Tracking, Bloody Frenzy, Disabling Bite, Dazing Strike, Wound Tear, Ocean Creatures.

The information about the shark, a famous apex predator of the sea, is of course no secret. The Crossbow Cannon has an attack and defense difference of 12 points against it, which increases damage by 60%, so the final damage the Crossbow Cannon deals is 144-168. As long as the shark's dorsal fin dares to surface, it's a one-shot kill.

Looking at the data, the shark's attack, defense, and damage indices are between those of tier six and tier seven Soldiers, but the experience is exceedingly high. Besides the numerous and ferocious special skills contributing to the difficulty factor, what's more important is that it is an "Ocean Creature."

—Ocean Creature: Ocean Creatures are adept at underwater combat and have abundant Life Value.

While land creatures suffer decreased stats across the board in water, this give-and-take means that it's almost impossible for land creatures to defeat sharks in the water. In fact, this was also the main reason why back then, Da Fei couldn't defeat any monsters on the island. Taking this difficulty into account, it's no wonder that the experience from killing sharks is beyond imagination. To put it differently, grinding Sea Monsters for Experience is much more fruitful than grinding land creatures, though more experience doesn't necessarily mean faster leveling.

To Da Fei, the sharks are now basically delivering Experience on a silver platter! Normally, sharks would swim far away from a large ship; trying to kill them is near impossible. But with the Golden Spearfish as a motionless bait, Da Fei doesn't even need to aim. He just needs to keep loading and firing!

—System Prompt: You have killed a shark and gained Experience +2550!

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Da Fei burst into a hearty laugh, how much do sharks love Golden Spearfish? The plot of the novel didn't deceive me at all! What is joy? This is joy! You've absolutely got to enjoy it! I've drifted at sea for four or five days and couldn't accomplish anything; if they don't compensate me for these days of lost experience, it's simply intolerable!

A golden light descends from the sky!

—System Prompt: Congratulations! You have leveled up to Level 17! You have gained 1 free attribute point, 1 Skill Point, Life Value +2, Command Power +1.

Hahaha! Leveled up! Necessary indeed! One for 2500, ten for 25000, there are still dozens more, I can level up again! Haha! Wahahaha!

After reloading his weapon, Da Fei excitedly stepped on the trigger, and just at that moment, a rainbow light suddenly flashed above his head, and then with a snap, a Black Light dispersed the rainbow!

—System Prompt: You have encountered the state of Misfortune, causing your next attack to deal the effect of halving the lowest possible damage!

Da Fei's laughter came to an abrupt halt, Misfortune!?

At this point, the Crossbow Arrows flew out—"—72!" "—72!" Damn! Didn't one-shot the creature!

Damn, my ship is under the state of "Curse of Misfortune," -3 Luck, but the ship itself comes with the trait of being blessed by the gods +2 Luck, which still ends up with -1 Luck, that is a 2% chance to suffer Misfortune! A 2% chance and it still happened to me, I'm just too unlucky!

And at this moment, the attacked shark gives up on competing for the Golden Spearfish and starts rushing toward Da Fei's ship, the Flying!

Da Fei's eyes nearly popped out of his head! No way! It's ramming the ship! Yes, I've been happily blasting away, how did I not consider that the enemy might retaliate? Was it because sitting high atop the big ship gave me a sense of superiority? Or did the Golden Spearfish's surrender lull me into a false sense of security?

No choice, after all, it is just a game, where in the game world riflemen can blow up tanks with shot after shot, so sharks ramming ships isn't strange. But my ship is already riddled with holes; how can I let it be rammed? Most importantly, this is no ordinary land battle; beneath the ship lies a blind spot for the Crossbow Cannon! If it gets too close, the consequences are unimaginable!

Da Fei hurriedly reloaded, and at this time, the shark was speeding through water, its pace as fast as humans sprinting on land!

—Aim! Da Fei eagerly adjusted the direction of the Crossbow Cannon, sweat beginning to pool in his palms. At such a speed, and with a layer of water affecting the targeting of the Crossbow Cannon, it was a real challenge.

I must hit it! I must hit it! If I miss, there won't be another chance; I can only watch it rush to the ship's bottom and dismantle it! Wait a second! What if it's another cursed Misfortune strike? When bad luck begins, misfortunes come multiple times, and once luck runs out, anything can happen! I've had these kinds of experiences too many times over the years!

Deciding on the spot, Da Fei quickly took out a Luck Skill Skill Book and clicked to learn it! Just to correct that -1 Misfortune to 0. I don't wish for good luck, nor any misfortune; neutrality will suffice!

—System Prompt: You have spent 1 Skill Point and learned Basic Leadership Skill!

—Basic Leadership Skill: The hero's Command Power is increased by 10%, and both the hero and hero's troops' Morale +1.

—Ah! Pfft! Da Fei spat out a mouthful of blood! I grabbed the wrong book, damn it! When hit by misfortune, bad things keep coming; I even made such a low-level error at the most critical moment! As a pro, my mental game isn't strong enough!

Now, with the shark nearby, Da Fei could already see its blood-red eyes on either side of its head underwater! There was no more time for small actions; he had to fire the cannon!

So close, there's no reason to miss! I've been unlucky for two consecutive times; there's no reason for a third—things don't happen thrice!

—Boom! Two shots fired forcefully! Da Fei nervously closed his eyes!

—System Prompt: You have killed a shark and gained +2550 Experience!

Hearing the system prompt, Da Fei was like hearing celestial music; he immediately relaxed, his back drenched in sweat.

Bro, I really do care about this ship, the next time I log off, I'm definitely buying an item from the mall! It's just the price of two stir-fried rice dinners, I won't take risks anymore!