

God level 481

Chapter 481: The Pool of Radiance Officially Goes to War

At 1 AM, under the escort of a large number of Bloodrose Guild players and NPC armies, Junxiang's alt's troops and NPC workers safely arrived at the Pioneer Farm on the outskirts of the Western Wilderness.

Gazing upon the dilapidated walls of the farm, the waist-high weeds scattered across the land, and the roaming groups of wild boars in the forests outside the farm, Da Fei knew that the situation with the farm was probably not just "severely understaffed." It was indeed completely abandoned, wasn't it?

However, the more abandoned it was, the more reliable the rewards. In any case, with so many players accompanying the escort, things like fixing walls, digging trenches, and renovating houses were not a problem at all. Moreover, some logistics players specifically brought a few trucks of materials and workers along, ready to start construction of Arrow Towers on the spot.

It has to be said that the organizational capabilities and energy of the Bloodrose Guild were truly astonishing! Being an enemy of such an organization was indeed unwise, and Da Fei couldn't help but be moved. However, sometimes it was just frustrating; it's not that I wanted to be their enemy, but I offended them, and they regarded me as an enemy!

In any case, let's talk about future things in the future. Now that Ouling has been sent to a high-end hotel in the city, I don't need to worry about the farm anymore. Actually, given the presence of players helping out, the Bloodrose Guild probably didn't intend for a level 4 newbie like myself to worry, did they?

Meanwhile, the Habbit villagers from my main account have quickly built several stilted houses over the lake at the Vortex Space Gate, and the raft transportation team continuously moved food and living utensils over. In short, things here have also gotten on the right track, and we've started to get down to the long haul.

In short, both sides are settled. Da Fei couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

At this moment, Little Fang also called out through the loudspeaker, "Big brother, it's 1 o'clock, it's late, remember to rest!"

Little Li also called out, "Yes, big brother, you have work tomorrow."

Da Fei chuckled and said, "Okay, okay, that's right, I do have to work tomorrow, everyone needs to get some rest."

That's right, there are new challenges tomorrow, and I need to conserve my energy and take care of my "dragon" body. With no more concerns, Da Fei logged off, washed up, and went to bed peacefully.

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At 3 AM, at the Demon Camp near the Pool of Radiance, the level 2 city wall surrounding the Pool of Radiance was completed without alarming the Elf Kingdom, thanks to the full-scale work of two hundred thousand Demon Race workers and technicians, assisted by various Special Soldiers!

— Level 2 City Wall: Defense 150, Durability 20,000. Special skill: Recoil, Damage Reduction against Light Weapons.

Having stayed up around the clock for three days and nights, with bloodshot eyes, Lei Huolong had not yet finished reporting the situation to the boss when the NPC side immediately took action.

The new Execution Officer Nakasha summoned Lei Huolong at once and ordered, "Adventurer, the level 2 city wall is completed. Such a massive project is comparable to the construction of any Miracle Building. This is the power of our Demon Race; this is the will of our Great Demon King! Now, Lord Demon King is impatient to see the results of our tactics, attack, let the moment come for the proud and foolish Elves to tremble in panic! The Pool of Radiance they pride themselves on will become the Pool of Despair that drains their last bit of strength!"

— System Prompt: You have completed the third phase of the Epic Quest "Attack Pool of Radiance" titled "Secret Preparation," and have received rewards: Experience points +1,000,000, Skill Points +3, Command Power +100, Personal Life +20.

System Prompt: Your Epic Quest "Attack Pool of Radiance" has entered Phase 4 "Pool of Despair"!

Task Hint: Your Pool of Radiance strategy has taken the Demon King by surprise. Now, it's time to show the power of your tactics; achieve the greatest returns with the smallest casualties and lowest investment!

I've been waiting for one day, and it's felt like three days and nights!

Lei Huolong excitedly said, "Yes, my lord. Our Lava Refining Plant has been ready for a long time, and now we can finally pollute! Facing our long-accumulated dark molten sludge, the only thing they can do is to engage us in front of the city walls! We'll make them taste the meat grinder of our siege engines!"

Nakasha laughed heartily, "Open the gates of all the Lava Refining Plants!!!"

—BOOM BOOM BOOM!!! Amidst the earth-shaking roar of machinery, dozens of waste outlets, each the height of a man, burst open beneath the city walls. Streams of scorching black lava, like black dragons roaring up from the abyssal mire, spewed forth. Black steam rose, and the waters around the lake turned pitch black in an instant. Like a dark curtain, the blackness spread and swallowed the surrounding area, and in less than a minute, all that could be seen was a black sea!

"We've succeeded!!!" The entire team from Thunder Fire Dragon Studio cheered and leaped with joy!

Nakasha laughed even louder, "Pollution is always more effective than cleanup! Perhaps, we should look further ahead. When the elves no longer have the power to counter our pollution offensive, we should completely corrupt the World Tree into the Dark Tree. Then, the only choice for the elves will be to cut down their divine World Tree with their own hands!"

Lei Huolong excitedly said, "Lord, you are wise and far-sighted! Our next step indeed focuses on the Refining Plant. If we really have the ability to transform the World Tree, then of course, we cannot let them cut it down!"

Nakasha laughed wildly, "Exactly, but by then, this will be our base for transforming the World Tree. My Spider Demon Army will surge to the surface and leave them at their wit's end. This place will become the bridgehead for our Demon Army's invasion of the world above!"

That's right! Once the Pool of Radiance is taken, this area with its great walls will become the super-perimeter of the stronghold city. This super-city will surely belong to the Dragon Slayer Guild. This is Thunder Fire Dragon's strategy; this is the hellish strategy of the Dragon Slayer Guild!

Now, Ma Yinglong, who is watching the front-line broadcast live, has finally let out a long sigh of relief: "The battle has finally begun. It's 3 a.m. now—"

Ma Yinglong browsed through his friend list with interest. Eternal Star, Bu Feiyan, Old Jiang, and other star players all showed as offline with grayed-out names. Ma Yinglong chuckled to himself in surprise, "You guys are sleeping so soundly. Fine! I won't be the one to miss out. Let's see who sleeps most soundly tonight and who gets up earliest in the morning!"

Ma Yinglong then messaged Lei Huolong, "You've worked hard these past few days, but it's necessary. We, of the Dragon Slayer Guild, all come from pulling all-nighters in internet cafés. Not staying up for a few days and nights would be embarrassing to call ourselves professional gamers. Now you can rest. Tomorrow is the real fight!"

Lei Huolong responded with enthusiasm, "Boss, rest assured, even without rest, I can still fight a couple of all-nighters! We still have unfinished business. I need to upgrade the walls near the waste outlets to level three. That place will definitely be the main battlefield later, and I won't leave the enemy any opportunity!"

Ma Yinglong praised, "That's right, youth is your best asset!"

Chapter 482: The Conspiracy to Oust the Star

At 3:30 in the morning, Eternal Star was woken up by an emergency call; a high-ranking member on duty was reporting the urgent situation of the Kingdom's NPC summons. In a moment, Old Jiang and Bu Feyian were also woken up.

The three hurriedly logged in and gathered at World Tree Square, where they were led by the guards to the long-unvisited Elf Kingdom Staff Department to meet once again with Mapharion, the Chief of Staff of the Kingdom Military Department.

At this moment, the entire Staff Department was solemn, and the congregation of officers around the sand table on the map table looked even more grim. Eternal Star glanced at the map table, and saw that

the terrain on the sand table was none other than the long-unvisited Pool of Radiance, with a model of a miniature town on the island in the pool!

Seeing that miniature town, Eternal Star's brow suddenly twitched.

"Young warriors, we meet again!" Mapharion's tone was exceedingly heavy.

The three hurriedly said, "Ready to respond to the Great Elder's summons at any time!"

Mapharion pointed to the edge of the sand table, "The Demon Race has built a ring of city walls around the entire perimeter of the Pool of Radiance without alerting us and gathered a large army to besiege us. Their refining workshop is pouring a large amount of improved Dark Matter into the Pool of Radiance, polluting it at a rapid pace. The World Tree, which is in dormancy, is completely unable to withstand, and our situation is extremely passive!"

The trio of Star were shocked, looking at each other, then instantly formed a plan!

Eternal Star hastily said, "Great Elder, it takes more than one cold day for the river to freeze three feet deep! How could the Demon Race finish such a big project without any sign?"

Old Jiang also pointed to the city model on the island, "Didn't our army have a garrison here? How could such a big event occur right under our noses without any sign?"

The Great Elder's face darkened, his tone angry, "Dereliction of duty! Severe dereliction of duty from the garrison!"

Bu Feiyan immediately said, "Is the garrison the Super Hero from the last battle at the Pool of Radiance?"

Upon Bu Feiyan's words, Eternal Star and Old Jiang both intently focused on the elder's expression.

The elder sighed deeply, "Although it's indeed a bit inappropriate for a human to garrison such a strategic location of the Elf Kingdom, his Merit was simply too dazzling, and he was indeed the only choice for garrison at the time. Furthermore, he had the strong support of Mayor Elorin and President of the Druid Guild. We really could not find a reason not to let him garrison..."

In that instant, the Trio of Star suddenly realized – some things they could only vaguely guess at before were now clear! In the last National War at the Pool of Radiance, the final result was a draw. Both the participating Star and the opposing Dragon Slayer only received their respective faction's Merit and reputation rewards which were not substantial. But what about the Superhero Da Fei, who was leading in style on the warship? What were his rewards? He definitely didn't only get Merit and reputation, right? And after the war, he immediately appeared in the Nasir Ancient Tree Space, his quest level was quite high too!

After the National War ended, without triggering any high-level quests, even if the Trio of Star had the money, they could no longer enter the door of the General Staff. Even if they wanted to inquire, they had nowhere to start, so they could only put the matter aside. Now, everyone finally understood that this Da Fei was sneakily awarded a city! What does it mean to be awarded a city in the early game?

The elder continued, "The situation is so urgent, so I summoned the warriors here in the hopes that everyone could unite to overcome this difficulty. You are the kingdom's finest warriors, I can only place my hope for saving the World Tree on you, I hope you won't let me down!"

—System Prompt: You have received the quest "Defend the Pool of Radiance", you have been given the apprenticeship Military Rank of apprentice Major by the General Staff.

—Task Hint: The war for the Pool of Radiance is about to start, you have been granted the temporary rank of Major and the authority to conscript level 5 troops from Farolan City. Should you successfully complete the task, you will be officially bestowed the rank of Major.

Eternal Star immediately asked, "Can we go see this city now?"

The elder shook his head, "Not at the moment, the city is still under construction, and the Teleportation Array has not been opened to the public. Also, its opening still requires the City Lord's permission. However, it doesn't matter, once the Kingdom's War Order has been officially issued, the kingdom will automatically open the city's Teleportation Array, not just to you, but the kingdom's army will also be forced to mobilize the reserve power of the World Tree for warfare, so please be prepared for the

battle! This war came too suddenly; the kingdom also needs time to prepare. However, if this Super Hero can turn the tide, that would be the best!"

The kingdom would automatically open the Teleportation Array? That's right, the cities that could be built in the old world are ultimately joint ventures with the kingdom, and this so-called City Lord is nothing more than the CEO of a state enterprise, who must step down when they make big mistakes! That is the dissatisfaction with building cities in the old world. But the dissatisfaction is due to the incompetence of the City Lord. How capable could you, Da Fei, a mere individual player, be in building a city? Don't hog the latrine if you're not going to defecate!

Eternal Star immediately gave Old Jiang a meaningful glance, and Old Jiang instantly understood.

Old Jiang cleared his throat and said, "Chief of Staff, I think that the Super Hero has shown such a grave dereliction of duty that he no longer deserves to continue as the City Lord, and besides, everyone is uneasy about a human being the City Lord. Why don't we take this opportunity to remove him?"

That's right! This was blatantly sowing discord! It came with risks and costs, and speaking out would definitely diminish NPC attitudes towards oneself, so Eternal Star found it inconvenient to say and unfortunately had to let Old Jiang handle it.

Now, the three anxiously watched the Great Elder's reaction.

The Great Elder's eyebrows twitched, but he remained composed and said, "I've said, we are on the brink of warfare. I hope everyone will unite and share the burden. The appointment or dismissal of the City Lord is not something we soldiers should be considering! Alright, everyone prepare to leave now; I'll notify you if there's anything."

The three immediately saluted and said, "Yes, Chief of Staff."

Leaving the Staff Department, Eternal Star couldn't help but burst into laughter.

Old Jiang grumbled, "Guild Leader, damn it's really tricky, making me cannon fodder, luckily the old man didn't say anything."

Bu Feiyan chuckled: "That means your slander worked! Look how happy the president is!"

Eternal Star laughed: "I'm laughing at Ma Yinglong! I always wondered what he needed so many stones for with such a big setup, really grand moves. I've started to admire him for the first time in my life!"

Old Jiang laughed heartily: "Guys, did the map on the sand table earlier look like a huge cake?"

Eternal Star said with a smile: "Indeed, Ma Yinglong made a big cake. Once we devour this piece of cake—I can't even imagine how grandiose the city will become!"

Old Jiang chuckled: "Yeah, and when that happens, Da Fei is going to make a fortune!"

Eternal Star sneered: "As if such good fortune could happen. He's just a nouveau riche; he should just chill wherever it's cool."

Bu Feiyan smiled: "Maybe Da Fei is pretending he didn't see it, just waiting for the Dragon Slayer cake to be ready?"

Eternal Star coldly replied: "If he's really that awesome, then we have even less reason to tolerate him! Anyway, we need to call a secret meeting of strategists right away, and the first order of business is to squeeze out Da Fei!"

Old Jiang nodded: "Actually, squeezing him out is simple. As long as his merits are far behind ours during the war, he will most likely be replaced. Although the elder only called the three of us for now, we can't rule out the possibility of the war expanding later, in which the entire guild will have to participate. We have more people, so we simply won't give him a chance to make merits. I suggest our guild's group immediately start gathering the troops stockpiled around the kingdom towards the capital, and I suspect the NPCs are doing the same."

Eternal Star nodded: "Let's do it! First, call up all the main force team members. Plus, Da Fei's backer is Mayor Elorin. If we can use this opportunity to squeeze Da Fei out, it will be even more advantageous to take down Mayor Elorin!"

Old Jiang laughed: "You truly are the president, killing several birds with one stone."

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At 6 a.m., Ma Yinglong woke up with a laugh from his dream, too excited to sleep, so he logged in again. At this time, the early March dawn had not yet broken.

The first order of business upon logging in was, of course, to inquire about the contamination of the Pool of Radiance, since a day had passed in the game. Naturally, he opened his friends list as well, and chuckled in surprise to see that Star and his gang of Birdmen were all online.

Ma Yinglong amusedly sent Eternal Star a message: "Oh? Brother Long, up so early?"

Tch! Is this a provocation? He really thinks his shabby wall can secure a win over me? Pfft, it's not certain who will lose or win! Eternal Star also chuckled: "Brother Ma, you're not up late either. Working out?"

Ma Yinglong said with a laugh: "Yeah, as someone who plays games long-term, I should really take care of my body, so exercising is a must. Shennong recently released a new satellite glass headphone-style device, it's freaking sci-fi and badass, letting you play games while running, looks just like wearing a Walkman. How about I send you one?"

Eternal Star snorted: "Badass my ass, wearing it makes you look like a fool!"

"F*ck!"

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At 8 a.m., Da Fei was woken up by Little Li's doorbell.

"Bro, it's time for breakfast and then off to work."

Right! Off to "work" indeed! Brother has never slept so soundly while playing games as he has this month. Da Fei sprang up, quickly went through his morning routine, and sat down energetically at the breakfast table.

A bowl of warm porridge, a small plate of fried peanuts, a plate of pickled vegetables, and a fried egg. This was the breakfast combo Brother loved the most!

Da Fei was moved! Working away from home for ten years, he couldn't remember the last time he had a breakfast made by his sister! Ah, the regret! In the future, which darn lucky guy will have this blessing!

Da Fei asked in surprise: "Where's Little Fang?"

Little Li retorted: "She's still sleeping, leave her be, she's having milk and bread. Bro, hurry up and eat, otherwise the roads will get jammed soon."

"Right, right, a traffic jam would be bad news!" Da Fei gobbled up the bowl of porridge and wiped his mouth, saying: "I'm off, might have to work overnight, make sure you stay safe!"

Little Li retorted: "This neighborhood is very safe. Be careful on the road yourself, Bro."

"Got it!"

Ah, as a bodyguard, Brother feels ashamed. Anyway, once Brother concentrates and finishes his tasks in an all-nighter, I'll come and take care of you!

Chapter 483: Preventing the War from Starting

At 9 a.m., Da Fei took a cab back to his rental apartment. I have to say, the traffic in Shendong City was truly frustrating; you just couldn't get out during rush hour. In any case, the more frustrating it was to go out, the more necessary it was to quickly handle the troubles in the game.

The moment Da Fei logged in, a string of system prompt messages popped up!

—System Prompt: Warning! Your city under construction, Radiant City, has entered full combat readiness! If the city falls into a critical state of defeat, your city-building mission, "Lake Fortress Construction," will fail, and the Kingdom will revoke your appointment as Lord!

Da Fei was shocked! Damn! The war really started!

No need to say more, time to die back quickly! Da Fei jumped into the lake, dove to the bottom, and then waited until his breath bar ran out, and everything went black!

—System Prompt: You have died; you lost Experience -230,000, and you lost Gold Coins -2,312. You will resurrect in the nearest city...

Then in the next scene, Da Fei resurrected at the Teleportation Array of Radiant City. He was back; this was the simple yet not so simple Town Recall Scroll that players carried!

"Lord! Lord is back!" As soon as Da Fei appeared, a group of advisors frantically surrounded him.

Hey, hey! If you guys are panicking, it makes me panic too! Da Fei urgently asked, "What's the situation on the battlefield?"

The military advisor hurriedly said, "The battle hasn't started yet. It was my dereliction of duty that I didn't detect the Demons' movements around the Pool of Radiance. Demons secretly gathered a large army and have already built a circle of walls at the edge of the Pool of Radiance to surround us. Their factories behind the walls are discharging pollution into the Pool of Radiance, and the entire pool has been polluted!"

Building a big circle of walls! Da Fei's eyes narrowed with shock; damn it! Surely NPCs couldn't have done this, right? There must be a player working against me, right? Could it be Dragon Slayer? Only Dragon Slayer could pull off something like this, right?

At this moment, a high-pitched, unfamiliar voice from behind the crowd coldly questioned, "Are you the City Lord of Radiant City?"

The advisory group immediately parted to make way, revealing an elf officer in a high-rank military uniform with a cold, arrogant expression. Da Fei was dumbstruck, "Who is this?"

The military advisor quickly introduced, "This is a Military Observer sent by the Kingdom Military Department. This lord will assess Lord City Lord's war progress on the front lines; he has the power to directly dismiss you, um, to directly propose the dismissal of your position as City Lord!"

Directly dismiss!!! Directly propose dismissal???

Da Fei was flabbergasted! Although he didn't know the difference between the two, and even though he knew he could be dismissed if he screwed up the mission, hearing the word "dismissal" before the battle even started was enough to make Da Fei furious!

Are you kidding me! I've painstakingly expanded and managed this city to its current size by running maritime trade, and you're already talking about dismissing me before the battle even begins? During the public test, even if the city got trashed, as long as it was ultimately defended, the player would still be the City Lord!

Fine, since it's a collaboration mode city-building, if we break up, we'll have to split. The construction blueprints are private; if you dare to dismiss me, I'll leave the project unfinished and take the blueprints with me. The Fishmen only recognize me, not your kingdom; I'll take them all, too. You won't take advantage of me! Oh, and there's the Vine Demon Village; those beauties haven't officially pledged allegiance to anyone, and I'll use my god-like reputation among their tribe to win them over! As for the money invested, I'll just consider it a donation! I can afford it, damn it!

While stunned, the Military Observer coldly said, "Lord City Lord, given your past merits, the Kingdom won't pursue your dereliction of duty for now. The Demon Army is pressing in, and under the pollution and corrosion of Dark Energy, the World Tree is in a precarious state. Do you have any countermeasures?"

The military advisor immediately said, "Observer Sir, in my view, the Demons do not have the capability to siege underwater; they built the walls because they fear our counterattack, so their main tactic is pollution. As you can see, the City Lord had a plan in mind: the Holy Vine planted on the walls, the sewers we are building, and the Leviathan's Egg placed by the City Lord are all purifying and absorbing the Dark Energy in the pollutants. The Demons won't succeed so easily, especially once the Leviathan hatches, they will have no chance of attacking underwater..."

Da Fei's eyebrows twitched. He knew Leviathan could absorb Dark Energy, and the sewers had purification functions too, but he didn't expect the Holy Vine could absorb Dark Energy as well. Wouldn't that make it a Demon Vine? It makes sense since the Holy Vine's attribute description says it can grow anywhere except for lava and icy places, which means it can absorb Dark Energy! Not bad, truly a parasitic plant that's not picky! But then, what will happen to the Flying ship that's fused with the Holy Vine?

The Military Observer waved a hand to stop the military advisor's rambling, "I want to hear the City Lord's opinion."

Damn it! The advisor already said everything I knew and didn't know; what more can I say?

Da Fei quickly laughed and placated, "Observer Sir, please rest assured, the Pool of Radiance, which the Demons couldn't take in the past, they won't take now, and they will never take it in the future!"

The Observer impatiently retorted, "I'm not thinking about that! Lord City Lord, you should understand your predicament. This was a war that could have been prevented, but due to your oversight in defense, it has developed into such a serious situation. What does it mean if the Kingdom joins the war? It means Lord City Lord is incapable of managing the situation, which means the Kingdom will pay a huge price—if the war goes on brutally, all the grievances and distrust will focus on you. Even as an Observer, it will become extremely difficult for me to objectively evaluate your military achievements in the war!"

Da Fei suddenly understood! In the end, it was because he was a human, a grain of sand in the eyes of the always proud and xenophobic Elf Clan!

Da Fei immediately said, "Observer Sir, what if I can control the situation so this war doesn't even happen?"

The Observer blandly replied, "You finally understand! The World Tree is in a dormant state; the Kingdom is neither willing nor capable of fighting a large-scale war deep underground! But the war machine has been set in motion, and the military forces from all over the Kingdom will gather here in 3 days, 3 days! You have only 3 days; if you can't control the situation within 3 days, the war will inevitably erupt, and then the achievements of your position as City Lord can only depend on the people's judgment! That's all, I am returning to the Military Department to report on the situation. I hope Lord City Lord can renew the glory of past accomplishments!"

With that, he headed straight for the Teleportation Gate and disappeared.

Oh my god! So you want me to prevent the war from happening? I'll see if Dragon Slayer's Boss Ma has anything to say! Damn it! What am I even talking about! Let's not even discuss whether players can influence the situation at this point; at the very least, with those massive walls they built, why would they stop? Maybe they are targeting me because I'm the City Lord here! Large guilds don't care about personal friendships once they start moving, and let's be real, my relationship with Hemorrhoid Ointment is just business, not a deep friendship.

The military advisor hastily said, "Lord City Lord, our only strategy now is to control the pollution situation in 3 days. As long as the Lord continues to plant Holy Vines and mass cultivate Slime Monsters, we may not necessarily lose. After all, refining this new type of Dark Matter is extremely costly to them, and once they can't sustain it, we will naturally gain the upper hand!"

Da Fei replied seriously, "Makes sense!"

Da Fei quickly opened the city panel to assess the current situation:

—Radiant City: Level 27 city. (Each time a city building is constructed or upgraded, the city level increases by 1. The higher the city level, the more it attracts population and talent growth.)

—Territory radiation range: Entire Pool of Radiance.

—City Population: 3,539 Flower Demons, 36 Fishmen, 3 Elves.

—City Military: 200 Forest Goddess, 50 Druids, 3,539 Flower Demons, 44 Artillery Emperor, 131 Banshees, 1,105 Slime Monsters.

—City Diplomacy: Habbit Village (Warm), Lumang Tribe (Military Alliance).

—City Supplies: 1,316 units of food, 72 units of Concentrated Mercury, 51 units of Refined Crystal Gem...

—City Facilities: Level 10 city outer wall, Level 10 fortress, Level 2 Military Teleportation Array, Level 1 administrative hall, Level 1 supply warehouse, Level 1 clinic, Level 1 school, Level 1 hospital. 124 Flower Demon Barracks (Outside city structure).

—City In-Construction Facilities: Netherworld Treasury, Death Bell Tower, Sewer system.

—City Officials: 13 part-time advisors (Resource collecting advisor stationed outside).

—City Employees: 3 Elf circus teachers, 36 circus class Fishman students, 100 medical class Flower Demon students.

—City Sanitation Rating: 51 points. (Harsh environment, please note the negative effects of the Necromancer Calamity, please recruit more medical staff.)

—City Safety Rating: 0 points. (Warning: Large numbers of enemies are present outside the territory, the territory has entered full combat readiness.)

—City Culture Rating: -36 points. (Warning: More cultural facilities need to be built, or cultural literacy of the Fishmen needs to be improved.)

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The Netherworld Treasury and Death Bell Tower were still under construction; the hospital and school were already built and operational. Of course, now was not the time to focus on these. The key point was that in just one night, more than 1,100 Slime Monsters had appeared! What a staggering production rate! Sure enough, the heavier the pollution, the higher the production? Even so, the city's environmental situation remained grim.

Accompanied by the advisors, Da Fei climbed the city wall to look around. Apart from a small ring of water near Radiant City that was a relatively clear grayish-black, everything else as far as the eye could see was pitch black! What an exaggerated undertaking, and it's no wonder the Elf Kingdom was scared out of its wits!

Where the Leviathan's Egg was placed outside the city, there was a massive black vortex forming with a strange, impressive momentum—was it about to hatch? In such conditions, would the egg hatch as an ordinary level 8 Leviathan? Or an elite-level Leviathan? Alright, now wasn't the time to be amazed at the Leviathan.

The first step now was to stabilize the city's footing! Da Fei sighed and said, "The city's sanitation rating is severe; we must remove the Necromancer Calamity."

The military advisor quickly said, "Lord, you cannot. Slime Monsters are also casting creatures, and benefit from the 20% increase in casting creature production due to the Necromancer Calamity. With the urgency of managing the pollution, we need to prioritize Slime Monster production!"

Da Fei was taken aback; Slime Monsters count as casting creatures? Da Fei asked the sanitation advisor, "What's your opinion?"

The sanitation advisor said solemnly, "Everything for the greater good; once there's an outbreak of an epidemic, I'll do my utmost to treat it!"

Da Fei chuckled bitterly, "It's rare that everyone is in agreement."

The military advisor sighed, "Our fates are tied to the success of the Lord; if Radiant City falls, we will be deemed to have failed as advisors and likely won't be entrusted with any significant roles, only managing small tasks or running shops."

Everyone sighed in unison.

So that's how it is! Even NPCs know how to fight for survival; what reason do I have not to fight? Since even the Necromancer Calamity enhances Slime Monsters, I should indeed fully develop them! The current 1,000 weak Slime Monsters barely suffice for self-defense, and can't be relied upon to fully remediate pollution in 3 days. I need Slime Monsters on par with the boss-level one I encountered during the tournament, and these require an Alchemy Divine Artifact at their core, so I must obtain such an artifact!

Where can I find an Alchemy Divine Artifact? Makar! As a God-level Mage, he must also be an excellent Alchemist! Great Duke Mentor, you must fully assist your student this time; if the student falls, your grand ambition for controlling the mines will come to nothing!

Chapter 484: Giant Slime Monster Experiment

At the Star Guild Headquarters, Eternal Star personally oversaw the coordination of forces from all sides. Troops from towns across the Kingdom were gathering en masse toward the capital, Farolan, courtesy of the coaching transport system. Although this war was going to be extremely difficult, with the Dragon Slayer Guild painting such a tempting big picture, Star was willing to risk all the forces accumulated since the server's start!

Of course, losing all forces was clearly not the work of Elf Clan's experts. The Star Wisdom Group had already formulated a response strategy: the Dragon Slayer's wall defense lines were too extended. Would the Demon Race pile up massive forces on each section of the wall? In the Pool of Radiance, the Elves could still employ the guerrilla advantages of the Tree Leaf Boat to harass various points, then concentrate on a fierce breakthrough. Moreover, with player skill levels generally rising, even if a single Druid threw one lightning, it would be more than enough for the Demon Race to handle.

In short, Star wasn't concerned with how polluted the World Tree became; all Star cared about was Da Fei getting lost, then breaching the city walls and ultimately occupying the entire Pool of Radiance.

Just then, someone reported, "Da Fei has appeared at the World Tree Square teleportation array!"

Eternal Star smiled in surprise, "Continue to monitor and track him, see where he's going."

Shortly after, another report came, "Da Fei appeared at the Saint Paul teleportation array, rushing on the road."

Eternal Star laughed heartily! Now you know to panic? Weren't you showing off in a big way last night, bombarding the royal family, leading the Sea Monster, and stealing treasure chests? Now you understand that being a City Lord isn't that easy? I wonder which backup you're calling for this time! It better be strong, so they can be perfect cannon fodder on the front line!

"Keep tracking him!"

"Understood!"

At that moment, Eternal Star's message tone sounded, and upon looking, it was Ma Yinglong again! Eternal Star frowned. Don't you realize you're talking excessively today? Are we that close? Well, indeed we are!

Ma Yinglong chuckled, "Oh dear, Brother Long, how come you didn't mention such a big event to me?"

Eternal Star replied irritably, "Big event? No, not at all! What big event?"

Ma Yinglong laughed slyly, "Take a look! Take a look, after all these years of rivalry, isn't it possible for us to talk directly?"

Ha, showing off this morning like you had me pegged, now realizing the situation isn't that simple, huh? Eternal Star laughed, "Don't ask me, I'm just doing quests for merit, you should talk to that Brother Fei, he's the key figure in the task—"

Then someone reported, "Da Fei entered the Duke Mansion!"

Eternal Star laughed in return, "Latest news, Brother Fei entered the Duke Mansion, Boss Ma, you should tremble!"

Ma Yinglong smiled and shook his head, "I just realized it's Brother Fei lurking beneath, this is rather difficult to deal with!"

Eternal Star chuckled, "Just admit defeat, no one above or below can save you!"

Ma Yinglong chuckled before turning serious, "Brother Long, I'll be straightforward, just one question, will you help him?"

Eternal Star retorted irritably, "That's still nonsense!"

Ma Yinglong burst into laughter, "Fine! Old rules, let's have a good fight!"

"Hah! Prepare yourself, this time I'll make you bleed!"

...

At Duke Makar's Mansion, Da Fei waited anxiously in the library hall. Naturally, beneath his anxiety, there was a hint of expectation, because this time he was admitted directly without any task, indicating that an incident indeed triggered over at the Pool of Radiance, and since an event had been triggered, he had no reason not to help!

Makar appeared, and his expression was severe, a far cry from his usual amiable Santa Claus demeanor.

Da Fei's heart tightened, he hurriedly saluted, "Student greets the teacher!"

Makar coldly said, "You have let me down greatly! Do you realize your 'great achievements' in the Pool of Radiance have become a laughingstock of the entire alliance? What kind of foolish Lord allows such major events to unfold right under his nose? I have repeatedly assigned tasks asking you to scout the surrounding environments, and yet what have you been doing?"

Da Fei listened, feeling a surge of anxiety! Could you not mention it anymore? I've already been called an idiot twice by NPCs! Now that the whole alliance knows, and every NPC in the alliance thinks I'm an idiot, how can I even go on? Fine, I admit, this time I was indeed careless, but aren't I trying to fix it now? I'll just let you scold, I don't believe you won't help me!

Finally, after his scolding, Makar coldly said, "I know why you have come to me, so give me a reason to help you! And don't mention the gemstone mine; I have no reason to take such a huge risk to cooperate on such an important matter with such a fool of a Lord!"

Da Fei's brow twitched! What? Even the mine couldn't sway him? I just had a momentary lapse, but I'm not really an idiot! So, you want me to prove I'm not an idiot, right? Well, that's something inherent, isn't it? Damn!

Da Fei frowned, his mind racing, desperately trying to prove he wasn't an idiot! Truth be told, what made the other side formidable was building a huge city wall along the edges of my territory, right? Although I haven't had the chance to personally scout it yet, anyone who doesn't look closely at the map might initially be shocked, thinking I constructed such a large wall along my territory, correct?

If—at that moment, Da Fei suddenly got a jolt in his mind! If I eliminated the other party's city wall, what would that mean? It would mean gaining a Great Wall outside my territory! According to the game city rules, any land encircled by a wall becomes part of the city, once it's a city, it starts calculating the city's level! Plus, the Pool of Radiance harbored 124 dispersed Flower Demon barracks. If they got encircled by the wall, my city would instantly level up to 124! Such vast city area combined with lofty levels, how many Kingdom NPCs would that attract to settle here?

Da Fei got excited, he instantly found the reason for seeking help!

Da Fei took a deep breath, coughed slightly, and said, "Teacher, it's not that the student shirked duty nor is the student an idiot. In fact, the student had long noticed the Demon Race's movements, but felt they were the true idiots, thinking they are spending vast resources to provide me with protective city walls for my territory's outskirts? So I let it be, planning to seize their walls for my use once they're done!"

Makar's eyebrow twitched, "That's your reason?"

Da Fei hurriedly said, "Yes, teacher! Also, another reason is, the student was genuinely impressed by the ambition of the Demon Race! I couldn't bear to interrupt such a grand and magnificent project!"

Makar sneered, "Seize the city wall? Then I'd like to hear your plan for seizing the wall, just don't tell me that asking for my help is an integral part of your plan!"

Da Fei promptly shook his head, "How dare the student bother the teacher lightly? The student has already laid an ambush using the Sea Monster Leviathan in the Pool of Radiance, and prepared the Holy Vine Seeds for siege!" After speaking, he quickly pulled out a handful of Holy Vine Seeds, saying earnestly, "These are the legendary Holy Vine Seeds, obtained by the student in the Vine Space at the entrance to Hell. I have great faith in the seeds' abilities!"

Seeing Da Fei produce the Holy Vine Seeds, Makar's expression couldn't help but change!

Hahaha, here comes the high-end goods! There's hope! Da Fei quickly shifted his tone, "However, I never expected the other side's project to progress so swiftly and their pollution offensive to be so sharp. The student faces a large Demon conglomerate, yet remains utterly alone, not only can't I get help from the Elf Kingdom, but also am doubly doubted and sidelined due to my human identity, given the current situation, the student can only turn to the teacher for help—but rest assured, teacher, student won't bother you for any troops, only seeks to obtain a large quantity of advanced alchemy tools from you to enhance the slime monsters in my city's sewers to resist and purify their pollution! Once their pollution offensive becomes ineffective, even if there were a million of them, they wouldn't be the student's match!"

Makar's curiosity was piqued, and he exclaimed in surprise, "You have slime monsters? You actually know how to use alchemy tools to augment slime monsters?"

Hahaha! Originally, I didn't know or have them, but thanks to a battle, now I do and I do know! Since you broached the topic yourself, I won't be shy and will directly ask for a divine artifact!

Da Fei nodded eagerly, showcasing his knowledge further to prove he wasn't an idiot, "Yes, slime monsters excellently resist the Demon Race's pollution, but it's still insufficient, I need giant slime monsters! Based on my research, some giant slime monsters were born in abandoned labs using divine artifact alchemy tools as their life core, I urgently need such tools, and I believe a great mage like you wouldn't be lacking them!"

Makar's grave expression finally softened, he stroked his beard and chuckled, "Ah, indeed, based on your track record, you shouldn't commit such a basic error, I'm impressed by your audacity and do share one of your views, that is, the Demon Race are bigger fools! They keep repeatedly tripping over the same dung heap! So let's accommodate them!"

I knew you wouldn't part with those two pieces of ore! Da Fei was overjoyed, "Thank you, teacher! Thank you, teacher!" However, my Pool of Radiance isn't a dung heap, alright? But to this Death Lord, it probably indeed is a dung heap!

Makar nodded, "I highly appreciate your approach with the slime monsters, but the birth of giant slime monsters may not be as straightforward as you imagine, actually, I'm also quite interested in how exactly giant slime monsters come to be, so let's take this opportunity, and I'll commission you for a small experiment—"

With that, he waved his hand, and a space gate appeared beside him. Shortly after, more than a dozen little demon servants carrying boxes emerged from the space gate.

Da Fei's eyebrow twitched, delighted, "Are these all alchemical divine artifact tools?"

Makar chuckled heartily, "Every affluent mage enjoys developing and crafting small creations in their spare time, myself included. These tools are all scrap produced from divine artifact crafting failures, with some residual God-level materials left unharvested, so I'll give them all to you for experimentation!"

—System Prompt: You have accepted Duke Makar's experiment task "Giant Slime Monster Development Experiment," and you have received Duke Makar's gifts of "Scrap Alchemy Tools," "Magic Energy Data Recorder," "Gathering Spirit Device".....

Chapter 485: Birth of the Dual Core Giant Slime Monster

Seeing Makar shove a big pack of materials and tools into his arms, Da Fei becomes so delighted he's almost dumbfounded!

Da Fei excitedly says, "Teacher, how should your student proceed with the experiment?"

Makar replies indifferently, "It's quite simple, you just need to turn on all the equipment and place it in your sewer system, these discarded alchemy tools should be piled around the Gathering Spirit Device. Normally, the creation of a giant slime monster is full of unpredictable variables, greatly related to the Life Core's properties and the composition of the filthy substances, making it difficult to find the recipe. But this time the Demon Race has used a very high concentration of special Dark Matter, which has significantly increased the chances of producing a giant slime monster, very favorable for our experiments. In short, each successful creation of a giant slime monster will be recorded by the Magic Energy Data Recorder, then you bring the recorder to me. At that time, I can analyze which tools and substances can give birth to a giant slime monster and obtain the production recipe, which will of course also be your reward!"

Da Fei's eyebrows twitch wildly! It turns out to be a reward for the recipe of a giant slime monster! Is that considered a BOSS? If so, does that mean breaking the game rule that BOSS units can't be produced from barracks? Wahaha, breaking rules is what I like best!

Speaking of which, the Ghost Crystal he picked up from the shipwreck at Newbie Island was also Makar's BOSS-level ghost research project, right? Makar is indeed a genius dedicated to developing BOSS units! In any case, I must take advantage of this opportunity to infiltrate his core circle and gain his trust! Even if I can never really earn his trust, it's also a good choice to make mutually beneficial use of each other.

Da Fei quickly says, "Thank you for the guidance, teacher. Your student will do his best to complete the experiment!"

Makar nods and says, "The military situation is urgent, go back and start arranging immediately! As soon as you complete a sample, you can come back immediately with the recorder and report to me, and I can develop an incomplete formula, and then find ways to mass-produce it to cope with this war!"

Da Fei is ecstatic, "Yes, Teacher!"

Da Fei leaves the Duke Mansion and rushes to the Teleportation Array. His heart is filled with gratitude! Oh Makar, what a good man! How wonderful it would be if I hadn't received a mission to oppose him! Considering he's the hidden Death Lord, is it really okay for him to help me, his demon ally? Probably fine though, demons are always an inspiring example of resilience, they never give up and keep coming back. If you can't kill them, why not take advantage of them?

Of course, Da Fei walking through the streets catches Star Dragon Slayer Guild's attention. What aid could he be bringing from the Duke Mansion? It's well-known that Da Fei could enter the Duke Mansion quite early on—a high-end path that no one can afford to take lightly. Certainly, that might also be the capital for Da Fei to proudly take shots at the Royal Family and shine across the server.

To Ma Yinglong, when he suddenly learned that Da Fei was the City Lord defending Lake Island, his reaction was of course the same as Eternal Star, both surprised and seeming inevitable. He really wanted to say something to Da Fei, but didn't know where to begin. After all, Da Fei was not Eternal Star; Eternal Star was an opponent for many years, and understood each other even more than understanding friends, to the extent that their relationship from a certain angle seemed even closer than friends.

Da Fei, on the other hand, was an individual player that he didn't really understand. Individual players typically just have their own little corner; once defeated, they lose everything and then turn to insulting, seeking revenge to the end, and denouncing the large guilds on the forums. Ma Yinglong had seen too many such players; he didn't like conflicts with individual players. He was also prepared for Da Fei to come and inquire.

However, until now, Da Fei hadn't sent him any message, which Ma Yinglong found very surprising. Does he not understand his situation? Or does he naively think that Star will help him defend the city? Or is he really so powerful that he thinks he can take on the Demon King's army? For a player with a divine artifact, anything is possible! Ma Yinglong felt somewhat uneasy. Anyway, what Dragon Slayer could do now was one thing, to fully support the war at the Pool of Radiance!

Now, Da Fei is facing the real titans of the China Region's large guilds, and the real top teams. As an individual player, is he just a little stone in the way between two giants, or a titan who can sway the war? Those involved could only wait and see. There are still 3 gaming days left—7 hours in real life—and all answers will be unveiled this afternoon.

...

Teleporting all the way, Da Fei returns to Radiant City. No more talking, he heads straight to the sewer to set up the experiment. Surrounded by advisors who don't know what Da Fei intends to do, they follow along without question.

The sewer is no longer smelling fresh as a newly built toilet; a thick black gas spread throughout the sewer.

Da Fei frowns—can Fishmen live in such an environment? Of course, they can. Fishmen can also show you how to live in dark, stinky swamps. But if this continues, what attribute will the next generation of Fishmen have? Dark Fishmen? Whatever the attribute, I'll welcome all comers.

Ahead in the sewer lies a black mire as viscous as asphalt, countless small slime monsters the size of footballs wriggling everywhere.

The Sanitation Consultant immediately says, "My lord, we can't go any further. The walls and ceilings ahead are covered with this dark mud, which can be lethal to living beings."

The Cultural Consultant adds, "The Fishmen have been relocated to schools for learning, so my lord doesn't have to worry about their safety for now."

Having advisors around sure is worry-free! They can handle a lot of things that many players wouldn't think of. Da Fei nods with satisfaction, "Good. Now we are going to create giant slime monsters, which will be key to our victory in this battle!"

While speaking, Da Fei pulls out the Alchemy Materials Space Bag given by Makar, and all kinds of equipment are scattered on the ground.

—System Prompt: has started. Please activate the Magic Energy Data Recorder, the Gathering Spirit Device, and scatter the discarded equipment around the Gathering Spirit Device...

—System Prompt: Experimental equipment is in place, please have all experimenters stay over 10 meters away from the testing area...

With the activation of the Gathering Spirit Device, those soccer-ball-sized Slime Monsters in the sewer began to wriggle and gather towards the device. The old equipment scattered around the Gathering Spirit Device caught their attention and after a moment of hesitation, one small Slime Monster swallowed something resembling a stirring rod while another devoured something akin to a filtering funnel. Subsequently, nearby Slime Monsters continued to congregate around these two, fusing to form two wheel-sized Slime Monsters!

—System Prompt: Congratulations! You have successfully developed 2 giant Slime Monsters! The Magic Energy Data Recorder is recording the data, please do not manually direct the movement of the Slime Monsters!

"Success!" Da Fei and a group of consultants burst into victorious cheers!

The Military Advisor was even more excited: "My Lord, by moving these two Slime Monsters towards the outflow, they will gather even more Slime Monsters along the way just like a snowball gathering snow. Then, dispatching them to the Pool of Radiance will allow for mass purification of pollution!"

Da Fei laughed heartily: "Of course! But this is just the beginning. Our goal is to refine the recipe for mass production! I want to see whether the Demon Race's pollution is more formidable, or my Slime Monsters are more badass!"

The consultants were energized: "My Lord is wise!"

—System Prompt: The Magic Energy Data Recorder has completed recording data, finishing sample data collection. You have completed the first phase of the Giant Slime Monster Development Experiment.

Haha! Just like that, the task is completed! It's even more straightforward than the dialogue quests in Newbie Village; I've never had such a smooth experience completing a quest!

Just then, a collective exclamation of surprise from the consultants: "My goodness, the two giant Slime Monsters are fusing again!"

Da Fei raised his eyebrow to see the two Slime Monsters moving closer and merging into an even larger Slime Monster!

—System Prompt: Congratulations! You have successfully developed a Dual Life Core Giant Slime Monster! The Magic Energy Data Recorder is recording the data, please do not manually direct the movement of the Slime Monsters!

What? Dual Life Core? The name alone sounds awesome! The BOSS Slime Monsters I encountered in the competition were so ferocious with just a single core, does this Dual Core mean my Slime Monster has two lives? Does it mean more badass functionality?

Da Fei quickly checked the monster's attributes:

—Dual Life Core Giant Slime Monster (Under Development): Giant Spiritual Creature, Attack 0, Defense 0, Life Value 20, Damage 0-1, Attack Speed 1, Move Speed 2, Special Skills: Aggregation, Devouring, Dirt Absorption, Dark Energy Absorption, Dual Core.

—Aggregation: The giant Slime Monster can gather smaller Slime Monsters to increase its own size and enhance functionality. The Life Value of the giant Slime Monster is the sum of smaller Slime Monsters' Life Values. Additionally, when attacked, the giant Slime Monster can split into smaller Slime Monsters.

—Devouring: The slimey body of the Slime Monster can devour its prey.

—Dirt Absorption: Slime Monsters need to absorb polluted substances to grow, which can serve as city sanitation.

—Dark Energy Absorption: The giant Slime Monster can absorb Dark Energy to grow, converting Dark Energy into Mana stored within itself.

—Dual Core: The effects of all special skills of a Dual Core Slime Monster are increased by 100%, and it is difficult to defeat.

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Da Fei's eyebrows twitched wildly! These are the Basic Attributes of the giant Slime Monster? If measured by the concept of conventional troops, that's like a puny farmer! But of course, Da Fei, who has witnessed the fighting methods of Slime Monsters, knows their badassery! Of course, Da Fei now doesn't need its combat power; he only needs its special skills!

And its special skills did not disappoint Da Fei! The 100% enhancement of Dual Core special skills is really badass! It's not as simple as $1+1=2$! Moreover, there's an additional special skill specifically for absorbing Dark Energy, capable of both pollution treatment and Mana production, doesn't this special skill resemble that of a Level 1 Demon Child from the Demon Race? Eating grass and producing milk, isn't it?

Da Fei burst into triumphant laughter! Brother is going to mass-produce!

Chapter 486: Makar's Debt

—System Prompt: The Magic Energy Data Recorder has finished recording data and completed the sample data collection. You have completed the second phase of the Giant Slime Monster Development Experiment.

Da Fei laughed heartily, and a round of applause erupted from the advisors!

The military advisor couldn't wait: "My lord, please send it out immediately to clean up! As long as its activity is within the territory, it doesn't count as an expedition, and it doesn't need a hero to lead, so it can clean up on its own!"

Da Fei laughed heartily: "Alright, I'll leave the task of commanding it to you. I need to go submit the report. We need to mass-produce Dual Core Slime Monsters within 3 days!"

The advisors were excited: "Take care, my lord! Leave this to us!"

...

A flash of white light from the Teleportation Array, and under the watchful eyes of the Star Dragon Slayer monitors, Da Fei reappeared in World Tree Square, then in Saint Paul City, and entered the Duke Mansion. Even Star was unsettled for a moment! Was the Duke Mansion like a garden gate, where you can come and go as you please?

Duke Mansion, Library Reception Hall.

Da Fei's quick return was reassuring to Makar: "Did you succeed so quickly?"

Da Fei couldn't help but exclaim excitedly: "Yes, but only two discarded tools succeeded in creating two slime monsters, and these two slime monsters fused into one Dual Core Slime Monster!"

"Dual Core?" Makar was startled and moved: "Hurry and give me the data instrument for analysis!"

Da Fei quickly handed over the task item. Makar took the item without talking and immediately began casting, magic light flickering, and magic energy debris filled the hall once more.

Soon, Makar's face showed surprise, then he laughed heartily, and the magic energy debris in the hall instantly wove into a brilliant flower wreath in his laughter!

It's a success! Da Fei couldn't help but let out a long sigh of relief!

Makar laughed with inhibition: "So that's how it is! These two discarded tools, one filled with a large amount of Light Attribute Divine Artifact Material, and the other equally filled with Dark Attribute Divine Artifact Material, these energies, which could both repel and cancel each other, fused together in an unexpected miracle! As for why other tools failed, one reason is that the tool's attribute didn't fit the slime monster's attribute, and another is that the tool's energy was insufficient—I finally understand!"

Da Fei joyfully said: "So, Master, did our experiment succeed?"

Makar nodded with a smile: "I am very satisfied with the current results; let's consider it a success for now! Here's your reward!"

—System Prompt: You have completed the Giant Slime Monster Development Experiment, gained 300,000 experience points, received 30,000 Gold Coins, and obtained the Giant Slime Monster Production Formula and the Dual Life Core Giant Slime Monster Production Formula!

Haha! Finally got the formula!

Makar laughed again: "However, although you have the formula, these formulas require specially crafted material cores, which you currently can't obtain. I can help you with a quick custom order from the Seven Cities Alliance in Mage City, but these cores are not cheap. You must fund them personally. Even if you can't afford it now, it's alright; I'll advance the money for now, but you must repay me in the future."

Darn it! Debt! I love doing grand things by borrowing money the most! The saddest thing is wanting to owe money but nobody willing to lend to you!

Da Fei nodded repeatedly: "Thank you, Master! As long as I get through the current difficulties, money is not a problem!"

Makar laughed: "Very well, to get through the current difficulties, I estimate you will need 100 Dual Core Slime Monsters, so I'll prepare materials for 100. Also, the Dual Core Slime Monster can produce Mana, and your city doesn't have equipment to store Mana. Should I order 10 sets of Magic Recharge Devices for you? These devices can be installed on your Saint Anthony, and can be used to charge the

Teleportation Array and Magic Sail of your ship, saving you a significant amount of Magic Energy Material costs!"

Really? Such a benefit? I was just planning to use the Flying to teleport and transport lumber! Such a good thing, I can't hold myself back any longer!

Da Fei excitedly nodded repeatedly: "Good, good, good! Thank you, Master, for being so considerate—" Wait a minute! Da Fei's heart suddenly skipped a beat. Is this old guy trying to scam me? Darn it! It must be! He is a Death Lord! Though I love doing grand things by borrowing money, I can't bear too much debt! Each core of a Dual Core Slime Monster requires two pieces of equipment with a lot of God-level materials. What is the cost of these 100 sets of tools plus these 10 sets of Recharge Devices? Wouldn't it also be like Mayor Elorin directly asking for a billion? Even now, a billion is hard for me to manage!

Da Fei broke out in a cold sweat, hurriedly asking: "But Master, how much will all this cost?"

Makar gestured dismissively, laughing heartily: "You said it yourself, money's not the issue! A problem that can't be solved with money is the big problem. I believe in your ability to repay! Alright, I will personally set off to handle this for you, and with the Seven Cities Alliance's efficiency, your order will be delivered to your city by tonight at the latest. You just need to prepare for mass production!"

It's definitely a scam! Darn it!

Da Fei nodded woodenly: "It is an honor for the Master to personally get involved, I'm ashamed to be unworthy."

Makar's whole body flickered with light and shadow: "No worries, there will be times when you must personally get involved as well!" With hearty laughter, Makar disappeared.

Oh dear! I wonder if the total value of my city is enough to cover Makar's massive debt? But on the bright side, the debt relationship is the closest relationship in the world. The one who worries about you most is often your creditor. Only by incurring debt can you take the first step into his core circle, right?

The so-called Seven Cities Alliance is a neutral power Mage Academy that players cannot directly join. It is a joint force composed of seven wizard cities, situated in the vast desert continent in the southern

part of the world. If the Human Elf Kingdom is equivalent to Europe on the real-world map, then the Seven Cities Alliance is in Africa. It is a terrifying laboratory for all sorts of experiments by God-level Mages and a breeding ground for all kinds of bizarre creatures produced by mages. It is simply not a place where current players can survive in the wild.

The Seven Cities Alliance has no faith, they are atheists who consider themselves gods. Precisely because of their obstinance and arrogance, typical secular forces find it hard to get on their good side or deal with them. Hence, a double identity of Great Duke and Grand Mage like Makar must personally come forward for this transaction, right?

Thinking of Makar's appearance fees, Da Fei couldn't help but feel uneasy. In any case, I might have to mine gemstones for him for free for a few years, right? But if he can truly procure a gemstone mine, what's wrong with mining for free for a few years?

Leaving the Duke Mansion, there was still time.

Da Fei remembered the research task at Elorin Shipyard, something that needed sneak in time to accomplish. This time, when I went to Swamp Village, I just happened to bring various wood samples with me. I refuse to believe that out of so many rare types of wood, none can be used to build ships! Not knowing how much debt I'm in now, this shipyard might turn out to be my mainstay to repay the debt.

A flash of white light from the Teleportation Array, Da Fei returned to Elorin.

As Da Fei appeared, the whole street of players turned their gaze towards Da Fei, understandable. But what's up with such an irritating look? Did everyone know my city was attacked? No way, how could ordinary players possibly know this so quickly?

And just then, Da Fei saw someone in the city channel cursing him, while One Sword Eastward and various livestock were retorting back fiercely! At a glance, the whole city channel was filled with One Sword Eastward in a verbal battle with a crowd, the entire channel filled with various blocked characters!

Da Fei frowned, were those angry merchants? Da Fei asked in the guild channel: "What's going on in the city channel?"

Da Bing immediately said: "Brother Fei, you're here! Brother Fei, someone hired some trolls to curse you. Reportedly, they've been cursing non-stop from last night until now! Little Sword is engaged in a curse battle with them!"

Da Fei was stunned! Specially hired just to curse? Affected merchants? Or the Royal Family? Or Blood Sea? The key is how long do they plan to curse? If they're professional trolls, then it means they plan to blacken me to death! But this isn't blackmail; everything they're saying is true!

Darn it! You're tough! But I already have a wealth of 20 million, even reputation is trivial so why fear your curses?

Da Fei calmly said: "Little Sword, forget it, don't bother with them!"

One Sword Eastward angrily said: "Got it, Brother Fei. This has to be someone from the Royal Family, they're so despicable!"

Da Fei laughed: "Doesn't matter, if I dared to do it, I'm not afraid of them cursing!"

While speaking, a dozen or so players of varying levels from 0 to 20 ran over and surrounded Da Fei, cursing: "Da Fei, you garbage!" "Da Fei, wherever you go, we'll follow and curse you!" "Da Fei, here or not, we're cursing you!" "Da Fei, get ready, we're starting to curse you now!"

Players watching laughed uproariously!

Da Fei was dumbfounded! There are even onsite services now! What the heck is this? Truly, the internet is vast, and all kinds of birds exist! I need to complain; I need to sue these Birdmen for polluting the gaming environment; I need to defend my lawful rights! Just wait!

So as Da Fei walked, this group of trolls continued cursing, with some onlookers laughing and following him to the shipyard.

Watching as the gatekeeper at the shipyard saluted Da Fei and let him in through the side door, players watching were astonished: "Da Fei can enter through the back door!"

Da Fei snorted! Isn't it obvious? I can enter and exit the City Mayor's and Duke's doors at will, what's a mere factory?

Meanwhile, still dressed in work clothes, the shipyard owner, Comelon, came forward to greet him, his tone still calm: "Welcome, Chairman, for a tour."

Da Fei chuckled: "Time is tight; I'll just show you some samples of rare wood!" With that, he dumped a heap of lumber from his resource Space Bag.

Comelon and the technicians on site jumped in surprise, unanimously stooping to examine it, their expressions changing: "This is?"

Seeing their reaction, Da Fei sighed with relief! Done! I said with so many types of rare wood, it was impossible not to find any that could build ships!

Chapter 487: This is the Timber We Need!

At this moment, Comelon and a group of accompanying technicians eagerly pulled a piece of withered black wood from the pile, exclaiming in shock, "Mr. Chairman, what is this wood?"

Da Fei's eyelid twitched, then he was ecstatic! What they picked wasn't anything else but his abundant supply of Mercury Wood! Whole swathes of it! Who knows how many giant ships it could build, who knows how many years it could keep them busy!

Finally, it was Da Fei's turn to show off!

Da Fei said casually, "This wood must be unprecedented, right? Mr. Comelon, how does this wood perform?"

Comelon casually pulled out a small hammer and tapped on the wood, creating a thumping sound, and couldn't help but exclaim, "It possesses both the hardness of metal and the resilience and flexibility of wood. Even the genuine Iron-Wrapped Wood of warships might not have such good attributes!"

Da Fei asked in surprise, "Iron-Wrapped Wood?"

Comelon excitedly nodded, "The ship materials for giant ships must be wrapped in a layer of iron and copper before use, and the material before wrapping is just raw wood! Mr. Chairman, I think this is very suitable for giant ship materials, and the strength of this raw wood itself already exceeds the standard of normal ship materials, so there is no need to wrap it heavily with iron sheets. Therefore, the speed and maneuverability of the warship will improve accordingly, and this is just the physical attribute of the wood. Its magic attribute needs to be further tested—"

With that, Comelon excitedly grabbed Da Fei's shoulder, speaking solemnly, "In short, Mr. Chairman! This is the wood we need. With this wood, we can develop a completely different type of new giant ship from the usual ones! At that time, our Elorin Shipyard can possibly replace the Tarolan Shipyard and become the First Shipyard of the Kingdom, no, the Alliance, and the profit return Mr. Chairman will receive is simply unimaginable—so, Mr. Chairman, we need more, please!"

Da Fei's eyebrows danced! To become the First Shipyard of the Alliance! Haha, wow, hahaha! This Mercury Wood Forest is truly a treasure! It's just a pity that this forest can't be regenerated and is a one-time resource, so we must use it sparingly! Moreover, the key is, you don't know how much I have, so, that means we just have to play it as precious!

Da Fei sighed long, "This wood is extremely rare, and the harvesting environment is very harsh, but to build one or two giant ships—by the way, how much wood is needed to build a giant ship? What's the cost?"

Comelon said in a deep voice, "As far as I know, it should be no less than 3000 units of wood! The value of each unit of wood is about 4000 Gold Coins. Of course, this is the internal reference price; outsiders can't buy it even if they have money! Then there's the Iron-Wrapping process, which is an indeterminate cost belonging to the military commercial secret of the big shipyard, needing our own research. In short, based on the factory price of a giant ship at 1 to 2 billion, the material cost for a giant ship is roughly in the range of twenty to thirty million."

Da Fei nodded repeatedly, that is to say, as long as the research phase is passed, Da Fei, serving as the wood supplier, can first earn two or thirty million. If the transportation difficulty is exaggerated a bit, it might sell for thirty million, and then the shareholder's dividend can return 7% profit to the Chamber of Commerce. This business is worth doing!

Da Fei then said, "Understood, I'll do my best to find ways to overcome all difficulties, and won't hesitate to suffer significant casualties to deliver more wood."

Comelon was elated, "You truly are a chairman trusted by the mayor! We've heard you encountered some trouble at the Pool of Radiance; we don't know if we can help you with something. How about this, I'll give you this blueprint as a token of appreciation!"

—System Prompt: You received "Shipyard Blueprint" and "Standard Ship Type Manufacturing Recipe" given by Comelon, the owner of Elorin Shipyard!

Da Fei's eyebrow shot up! A shipyard blueprint! And it includes the entire store's formulas! Damn! This is fantastic! Habit Village has always used rafts, and it pains me to see it!

A shipyard is not one of the city's basic functional buildings, so a player must find the blueprints themselves to acquire one. This type of commercial building can provide an industry for the player's city and increase its prosperity. Of course, if a player's shipyard wants to continuously receive orders and substantial profits like an NPC's large city shipyard, there's only one way: to constantly upgrade the shipyard, complete shipbuilding tasks to enhance the enterprise's reputation, and develop new shipbuilding recipes.

Theoretically, it's not impossible for a player's shipyard to upgrade to the scale of Elorin Shipyard, and by then, Da Fei sharing shipbuilding technology with Elorin Shipyard wouldn't be impossible either; the precondition being that the shipyard must have thousands of Advanced Shipworkers, hundreds of Master-level mechanics, and several Grandmaster-level chief engineers, even a God-level mechanic. Otherwise, it simply couldn't operate. It's safe to say, concentrating on developing a single shipyard is as challenging as being a City Lord.

In short, this kind of tedious and far-fetched thing is not something Da Fei can think about now. What Da Fei hopes for now is probably to make some decent small ships to replace the rafts.

Da Fei said joyously, "Thank you for your generous gift, sir. Time is tight, so I must take my leave. When we meet next time, I'll surely surprise you!"

Comelon said excitedly, "Please rest assured, Chairman. We will also use this time to fully commit to the research and development of giant ship designs and iron-wrapping processes, striving for breakthroughs in the short term!"

Just as Da Fei was leaving the factory with the boss and a group of technicians accompanying him, he saw someone waving to him at the door—it was Spielberg, whom he hadn't seen for many days!

Spielberg laughed heartily, "Chairman, you came too!"

Huh! That's right, it's been a month in game time since returning from the sea. This month in the game really makes Da Fei feel like a month in reality!

Da Fei laughed and asked, "Mr. Spielberg, how's the modification of your ship going?"

Spielberg sighed and shook his head, "Progress isn't ideal. Many ideas become complicated when put into practice. However, the bottom of the ship has been repaired, and it's ready to set sail anytime."

Damn! Indeed! When an NPC proposes modifications, it's an in-game plot event triggered that requires player participation to progress. Counting on the NPC alone to research was too naive; he emphatically found a blank sheet to show me! Darn it, how can this burly NPC possibly develop things?

Comelon asked in surprise, "Is this gentleman perhaps—?"

Da Fei laughed, "This is the head of our Chamber's fishing division, who's been here modifying the whaling ship for over a month. Our goal is to turn the whaling ship into a Sea Monster Slayer."

Comelon made an "oh," then solemnly saluted, "So it's the man's guild member, my apologies for the neglect! How about this, I'll immediately assign a technical team to assist Mr. Spielberg!"

Spielberg celebrated with delight, "Great! However, the following modifications are quite costly! My funds might—"

Comelon waved his hand decisively, "No need to discuss money!"

Da Fei's eyebrow twitched! I understand. Perhaps Spielberg, as a human, feels restricted here, but now I'm a major shareholder and wood supplier, so you all have to treat me with importance and respect.

Da Fei laughed, "How can I trouble everyone?"

Comelon coughed and smiled, "Honestly, our shipyard usually supplies merchant and fishing vessels, so we're not very skilled with special ships like whaling ships, causing Mr. Spielberg's progress to be less than ideal. I again apologize, so we should indeed concentrate some technical resources to assist him. This not only strengthens our development in specialty ships but might also provide inspiration for giant ship development!"

Darn! Not proficient with whaling ships? Who built the whaling ships provided by the Fishing Guild? Never mind, what's done cannot be undone!

Before Da Fei could speak, Spielberg was already brimming with tears of joy, thanking repeatedly, "Thanks to the factory manager for the care, thanks to the chairman for the concern! I will definitely strive to fulfill the aspiration!"

Ah, this kid has been wronged! Now I'm personally stepping in with high stature, participating in the in-game event research myself; some results should finally appear, right? But the outcome should be targeted; I'll assign you another mission, and this time, you can't show me a blank paper!

Da Fei laughed, "Good! Now that the factory manager has spoken, there's no worry the thing won't be accomplished. A month ago, I received a task from the Dwarf Prince Aleron to clear crocodiles at the abandoned fishery of Black Ice Castle. Mr. Spielberg is also a Level 1 Sea Monster Hunter granted by the Fishing Guild, is this okay?"

Spielberg laughed heartily, "Crocodiles, huh, the simplest of tasks, no problem!"

Simple, my foot! Have you seen a Demigod-level crocodile?

Speaking of which, the one-month promise has expired, and I have to meet the Dwarf Prince by noon today. Damn it, I'm still in a war, will I make it in time? Annoying!

In any case, let's stabilize the battle first. Once stable, I'll have time; I have faith in the Slime Monster's abilities.

Da Fei left the shipyard; the group of hecklers had been waiting for a long time, and upon seeing Da Fei, each of them started cursing maniacally as if injected with adrenaline! Darn it! You annoying flies! Wait, once I have everything settled, I'll deal with you all!

No need to say, with the escort from the hecklers, Da Fei entered the street district again and continued being joked about and laughed at by passersby. Well, watch if you must, have a go at attacking me if you dare!

Wait, speaking of an attack, Da Fei remembered the Chamber of Commerce's NPC. A whole evening has passed, which is a few days in game time, and Coltner hasn't handled the matter of inviting his grandfather into the Guild yet? Damn! It's probably like the Spielberg thing, needs the player to take a personal three-courtesy visit.

Fine, not joining now is also good; their safety isn't something I can guarantee.

Teleporting all the way, with a flash of light, Da Fei returned to the Pool of Radiance. Just then, Anlicia waved at him from afar, "Chairman, your sweetheart Miss Catherine has returned!"

—Ah boo! Whose sweetheart!

At that moment, Da Fei was overjoyed and teary-eyed; his sweetheart had finally returned! Yet at the same time, it was too much to take in, what was supposed to come had finally come, but I'm still in the middle of a battle! How can I attend to your matters now?

Chapter 488: Catherine Returns

After days apart, Katelina now wears a blue cap with a white brim, dressed in blue clothes, white pants, and high boots, actually in the full dress of an Imperial Navy Officer of the Lionheart Empire! Of course, the aura under her feet is also her innate talent, "Noble Temperament," disguised as a Knight Aura.

Da Fei's eyes widen in disbelief, full of surprise. Where did she get this uniform? What has she been up to? Masquerading as a female navy officer? Isn't that a little too conspicuous?

Katelina gracefully steps forward, pats Da Fei on the shoulder, and sighs deeply, "Sorry, something came up at home, and I left without saying goodbye. I heard you ran into big trouble, so I came to check on you."

Check on me!!!

The pain Da Fei felt from that pat seemed to penetrate to his very core! I'm in such a big crisis, and all you do is "check on me"? If there were no issues, who knows when you would have come back?

At this moment, Da Fei's Vice Hero pane flashes again, which reminds him of the time they had just eloped from Desolate Island, united after the storm!

Da Fei hastily checks the Vice Hero status:

— Katelina: Pirate Leader Rock once plundered a noblewoman to be his wife and gave birth to his daughter, Katelina. Under her mother's influence, Katelina yearned for a life of noblewoman-like luxury from a young age, but her father Rock wanted to train her to be his successor. Among the mountainous loot plundered by the pirates, she always managed to find the most valuable treasures.

Personality: Cautious and suspicious, fond of luxury.

Loyalty: 69 (Warning: Your Vice Heroine, Katelina, has undergone a major family change and is no longer in the mood to adventure with you. Her loyalty will decrease by 1 point per day. Please immediately inquire about the related issues. When the Vice Hero's loyalty falls below 10, they will leave you.)

.....

— Apu! Da Fei spits out a mouthful of blood!

Her personality is actually cautious and suspicious! Wasn't she enthusiastic and unrestrained before? Loyalty 69! It has always been 100 in the past! Damn it! How do those successful men's wives run off? Men too busy with their careers don't take care of their families, and then the wives run off! Is it my fault then?

Loyalty decreases by 1 point each day! This means, since the day we passed by Desolate Island and discovered the changes there, she has been disinterested in adventuring, and loyalty has been decreasing daily. Counting up to today, that's exactly 31 days, which means a decrease of 31 points! And I've been oblivious, busy rushing about with my own concerns, leading to this current situation! Damn it, this is the trouble with Epic Heroes; nothing like those carefree tavern heroes!

But it's not a problem, I still have 59 days, right? Besides, she knows I've run into big trouble, so she came back to check, which is marital loyalty! I must do my utmost to make amends!

Da Fei speaks with seriousness, "I'm sorry as well. I only recently learned about your father's situation, but rest assured, as soon as my issues are settled here, I will immediately go find him."

Katelina's eyebrows twitch, her tone annoyed, "It's my dad, not yours, what's it to you—How did you come to know about my dad, anyway?"

Da Fei feels as if his heart has shattered. Isn't your father our father too? How could it not concern me?

Da Fei sighs with a wry smile, shaking his head. He pulls out the black leather book from the Security Bureau and says, "The last page is where the information is."

Katelina takes the book from him, flips through it, and her expression changes. She looks straight into Da Fei's eyes and demands, "Are you searching for him because of this?"

Da Fei responds urgently, "How could that be possible! How could I harm him! He's your father!"

Damn, I've messed up. Now that she's become suspicious, why did I even show her this?

Katelina snorts, "As I said, he's my dad, not yours. And besides, he's a great Pirate Leader; who wouldn't want to kick a man when he's down!"

Hey, hey, hey, how can you describe your father as a man down on his luck? Da Fei sighs, "You and I have been through trials and tribulations together; if you can't trust me, who can you trust?"

Katelina coldly huffs, "My dad and Barak used to be as close as brothers, facing storms side by side, united in life and death. But in the end, wasn't there betrayal?"

Da Fei's heart breaks! Dammit! I know you've triggered a drama, and I know that as an NPC, you can only turn to me for this, but could you not cause me such pain? My fiery hot heroine has turned into a doubting, grieving woman! If a hero's personality doesn't match well, it's certainly leading to them leaving!

As Da Fei is in distress, Anlicia laughs heartily, "Miss Catherine, rest assured, if he's ungrateful and opportunist, I'll turn on him immediately and help you take him down!"

Katelina laughs back, "Thanks!"

Da Fei is both amused and exasperated, "What are you adding to the chaos?"

Anlicia's expression suddenly turns stern and she speaks coldly, "Humans cannot stand the arrogance of us Elves, just as we Elves cannot stand the treachery of humans. Humans are fickle and untrustworthy, always swayed by their own interests!"

Da Fei was stunned on the spot! He had never seen Anlicia this serious before. So this was her real thought, huh? Indeed, when compared to the loyalty of Elves, humans were somewhat lacking in that department. In that moment, Da Fei finally understood another reason why Anlicia didn't have the loyalty attribute! Well, if an Epic Hero wasn't troubled, they wouldn't be an Epic Hero!

At that moment, Katelina simply smiled lightly, "Captain, my father is trapped on some islands in the Eastern World, where even a hero of his caliber struggles to cope. How can you help me?"

Oh! Finally, we're talking business instead of agonizing! But—

Da Fei frowned and asked, "How do you know where your father is?"

Katelina replied indifferently, "Many people want to know where he's hiding."

Da Fei quickly waved his hands, insisting, "Don't get me wrong! That's not what I meant. I believe that the Eastern World, no matter how perilous, can't be much tougher than the North Sea Nether Sea, right? If we've made it through the North Sea Nether Sea, why should we fear traversing the Eastern World?"

Katelina said coolly, "That's because we had the help of Coltner and Spielberg last time! This time, I don't trust any outsiders; any of them could betray my father!"

Da Fei was shocked once more, "So you mean, this time we can only rely on our own strength? We can't call for anyone else's help?"

Katelina stated plainly, "Exactly! My father has been a dominant pirate for decades and possesses wealth and secrets enough to tempt anyone! That might very well be why even his most trusted brothers betrayed him!"

Da Fei was left speechless!

This was a big problem! My initial plan was to follow the same model as last time, leveraging the Mayor's or Makar's connections to lead a grandiose fleet to New Oriental and then, incidentally, carve out a huge territory there. Now, it seems that's all out of the question.

Da Fei could only sigh, "I will help you, but can you give me some time?"

Katelina nodded, "Yes, because I need time as well. However, my father isn't in a good situation and won't last long. Once my time is up, I must leave no matter what—Alright, it seems there's nothing left for me here, I need to preview my lessons for the exam."

Da Fei was taken aback. She was really leaving! But he couldn't help but wonder, "Exams? What lessons do you need to preview?"

Katelina shook her head and pulled out several thick books, sighing helplessly, "'Essence of Imperial Navy Tactics,' 'Ship Management and Maintenance,' 'Officers' Self-cultivation,' 'World Geography,' and 'Hero Continent Dictionary.' You know, I can't read much. Culture lessons are really tough for me!"

Da Fei was so surprised his jaw dropped, "Why... Why are you taking exams? What are you testing for?"

Katelina smiled proudly, "Of course, I'm testing to become an Imperial Navy Officer! What do you think I've been doing recently? As long as I pass, I can sail my own warship to the East! Considering my full marks in the practical exams, I'll get through the culture exams by exception as long as I'm not too bad!"

Da Fei exclaimed, "So your uniform is the real deal!"

Katelina replied irritably, "What do you think! Alright, I need to memorize this material. Don't bother me with anything other than combat!"

Da Fei suddenly understood!

This was her way of rescuing her father! In other words, she could operate entirely without me, and had been prepared to do so from the start! Come to think of it, she hadn't assigned any mission either, clearly showing her distrust in me, right? Was this the same carefree female pirate who used to hang out on the island, play with arts, and then elope with a newbie player the moment something troubled her? Da Fei's heart was filled with mixed emotions.

Hold on! It suddenly dawned on Da Fei; a pirate who managed to disguise herself well enough to sit the navy officer exams? How did she know Rock's location when even the Security Bureau had no clue, and how did she know about Rock's current situation? Were they still able to get in touch?

Sure enough, an Epic Hero lived up to their name with a profound background! Could it be—in that instant, Da Fei suddenly thought of her mother! Right, there's nothing like a mother's love, and there was no mention in her background that her mother had died. Considering her mother was a lady from the Kingdom—Damn! Could it be that this navy exam was just a way of pulling strings?

Exactly! It must be so! A night of union bears a hundred days of grace, not to mention they had a child! With Rock in dire straits, the only savior could only be her mother; hence messaging by homing pigeons or calling for help with a Magic Power phone, etc., so Katelina knew her father's whereabouts!

The more Da Fei thought about it, the more plausible it seemed, and the more he marveled at his own ability to fill in the blanks! At this point, Da Fei's view of Katelina had changed—She was a true beauty with brains and wealth!

Damn, I must go all out to succeed in this! Can't find NPC help from the Kingdom to join the cause? Fine! Whoever is in power likes to pull the strings, and if we get help and then carve out a territory, they'll want to kick me out over minor issues, which is really annoying!

No Sealing Order? No problem! Her father is a pirate, and pirates become outlaws to crown themselves—what would they need a Sealing Order for? I'll simply help her father claim a spot there first! I refuse to believe that my body full of Divine Artifacts can't help a Leader-level Hero? Judging by how the plot usually goes, her father might just pass away as soon as she arrives, and then she will inherit her father's territory and secrets—Damn, then it would be my territory and secrets!

Yes, that's the plan! In no time, under Da Fei's brainstorming, the rough outline of the strategy for the voyage to the East sketched itself out.

Chapter 489: Preparing for Battle

Now Da Fei was just waiting for the Mage City to ship him the goods, and he finally had time to summon the Blood Eagle to do a round of reconnaissance along the coast. Speaking of which, if he had occasionally done some reconnaissance around the area back then, he wouldn't have ended up in such a predicament today. But sometimes mistakes lead to opportunities; let's see who eats whom!

The Blood Eagle flew invisibly in the Otherworld, its vision revealing a sea of black, with black mist bubbling and churning. On the tree roots that seemed to touch the sky, countless red dots wandered about. These were tens of thousands of small spiders spinning webs.

Da Fei furrowed his brow. Spider demons again! Spider demons could weave webs that are immune to pollen and swarm magic, making them the ultimate nemesis of Flower Demons! His main force was three thousand Flower Demons. If tens of thousands of spider demons descended from the sky to

forcefully siege, it would be a massive threat! It seemed that this battle was more than just pollution management.

Now, the Blood Eagle reached the lakeside. From afar, surely there stood a not-too-high stone wall. Its level was clearly low, but its seemingly endless and imposing aura was indeed impressive! Moreover, the wall was teeming with a massive number of Demon Child Generals, an ocean of fiery red skin. The scale of their low-level soldiers still retained the characteristic of the Demon Race.

Thinking about how magnificent this engineering project would be if he could swallow it whole, Da Fei couldn't help but feel his heart surge with excitement! But even if he captured it, what would he use to defend it? Ask the Kingdom to send troops? Who would pay for that? This was indeed a problem.

Then Da Fei saw the root of all evil: dozens of sewage outlets sputtering torrents at the base of the wall. And standing on that segment of the wall were dozens of players pointing and gesturing, the leader being none other than Lei Huolong, with his blazing fire armor!

Damn! It was indeed Dragon Slayer messing with me! Look at him, so pleased with himself, without a sense of guilt! Damn it!

And just behind that wall section, Da Fei saw a giant spider as large as a car, standing conspicuously in a blood-red aura. It was a hero!

Da Fei's eyebrow twitched. Wasn't this the hero he blasted with a round of crossbow cannons back in the Ancient Tree Space? Talk about a narrow path with an old enemy, and he was the NPC commander here? His spider demon army was the main attackers?

At that moment, the Blood Eagle's screen flashed red!

—System Prompt: Reconnaissance Skill warning! You have entered the Plane Surveillance Magic Eye's alert range. Approaching further will initiate combat!

Damn! There's even anti-invisibility magic eyes! This is high-end stuff!

Da Fei immediately controlled the Blood Eagle to retreat, feeling even more shaken. A large guild was worthy indeed, they had quite the resources, even deploying a magic eye; who knew how many powerful troop types they could employ.

Thus, the Blood Eagle had to do a wide loop along the lakeshore. Every section of the wall was heavily guarded by masses of low-level soldiers, each turret housed unidentified high-end demon soldiers, and beyond the walls were densely packed mobile reinforcements, their numbers indiscernible!

As expected of the Demon Race! The scale was always grand, always impressive, this wall wasn't something he could easily conquer with just a few vines and three thousand Flower Demons, only—

After the initial shock, Da Fei suddenly thought of a question: Are you attacking or defending?

I get it! This is called using defense as offense! A war of attrition, assuming pollution could force my hand, causing the Pool of Radiance to crumble without attack. But what if pollution fails to defeat me? Then I exhaust you instead!

In ancient wars, there were often jokes like these: hundreds of thousands of troops besieged a city of ten thousand, surrounding it for days without capture, ending up retreating due to lack of supplies because logistics weren't advanced then, and a protracted front meant no food supplies.

And in this game, to make warfare realistic, they had also set rations for expeditionary forces, consuming one unit of water and food for a level-one soldier per day, with high-level soldiers consuming even more resources. The consumption of tens of thousands of enemy troops daily would be astronomical! Moreover, the Demon Race loved warfare; their soldiers were like the capital in a capitalist's hands, needing constant operation and battles. If they couldn't succeed after prolonged assault, it would wear down their patience and morale. After all, the Demon Race's aim is the Star Sea, with many important strategic goals awaiting them!

Ultimately, the most reliable and stable strategy for this battle was an attrition war!

As for this wall, even if taken, I had no troops to defend it. If I didn't take it, I exhausted you! If I did, you exhausted me! So, the wall, I wasn't in a hurry. My goal was to stabilize the situation to prevent the battle from occurring, but if you insisted, then I had no objections.

The main issue now was figuring out how to deal with those giant spiders that posed the greatest threat.

Da Fei recalled the reconnaissance eagle and asked the military advisor behind him, "The Demon Race's spider demons are weaving webs on the roots of trees above. Do we have any effective response plans?"

The military advisor solemnly said, "This must be the spider demons laying the groundwork for a larger force of giant spider demons. After all, large spider demons can't walk upside down on cliffs; once the webs become thick and sturdy, our city's situation will be precarious. Ordinarily, we should request reinforcements from the Kingdom, but—"

At this point, the military advisor frowned, saying, "But because of this incident, the Kingdom's military department is very doubtful and dissatisfied with Lord City Lord. Applying for reinforcements will hugely lower your evaluation, seen as a sign of no confidence and no capability, which will severely disadvantage you. Hence, I suggest we rely on our strength to get through this. Do you have any more Holy Vine Seeds? If we plant more seeds in the city and coordinate with the Flower Demon Army, we should be able to resist the spider demon army's attack."

Da Fei felt incredibly frustrated! So now even calling for reinforcements wasn't convenient? Would the Kingdom even partner with me?

The military advisor continued, "However, the prerequisite for the spider demons' attack should be whether their pollution tactics are effective. If we break their pollution strategies, the spider demons can't be supported by other units, potentially making them hesitant to attack solo; therefore, I believe the key is quickly managing the pollution."

Da Fei heaved a long sigh of relief, presumably so. His Holy Vine Seeds were so precious that he was counting on them to take territory in New Oriental. But better plant a few as a gesture, just in case.

Wait, why plant anew? The Holy Vine had transplantation special skills! The Demon Race didn't have ships or siege capabilities, so there was no need for Holy Vines on the outer walls; they should be transplanted inside the city. Besides, the Holy Vines on the walls had absorbed so much dark energy and had grown thicker, much stronger than the newly sprouted ones inside the city.

Wrong! Why was I in a hurry? Let the Holy Vines at the wall grow fatter in Black Water before transplantation; that'd be more lethal!

Wait! Still wrong! Transplantation requires a God-level vine gardener! Only Tamilia can transplant them! But Tamilia and the Holy Vine Heart fused and disappeared; who knew when she would reappear?

Da Fei furrowed his brow. Guess I'll head to the Flying to see how the fusion was going.

Da Fei walked to the dock, and by then, the Flying had turned entirely black, but below the ship was a pool of clear water, not a trace of black pollutants present, not even the white color of the previous Pool of Radiance!

Da Fei's eyelid twitched in astonishment, damn, this Holy Vine Heart could consume both light and dark energies! Nice! Not picky, I like it, grow quickly!

Da Fei hurriedly checked the attributes of the Flying:

Vessel Name: Flying (Quest reward bound, player cannot trade)

Ship Level: Level 3.

Captain: Da Fei

Vessel Special Skill: Divine's Blessing (Crew Luck +2), Ship of Misfortune (Both sides' luck -3)

Vessel Model: Large four-mast, three-deck high-speed sailing ship.

Ship Cargo Capacity: 500 units (temporarily unavailable)

Ship Gun Cabin: 32 gun positions (16 on port, 16 on starboard)

Minimum sailor capacity: 30

Ship Durability: 13740/13740

Ship Speed: 12

Ship Armor Defense: Port 166, Starboard 166, Bow 141, Stern 140.

Ship Room Configuration: 1 Cockpit, 1 Captain's Room...

Ship Auxiliary Equipment: White Shark Ship's Figurehead, Space Transfer Array, Wind Energy Magic Sail, 4 Landing Crafts.

Sea God Insurance Level: 0 (Ship not under Sea God's protection, permanent sinking if disaster strikes)

Ship Current Status: Evolving.

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Durability 13740!!!

Da Fei was overjoyed! When I planted the seeds before, it was just over 3800; the ship recovered 10,000 durability in less than half a month in the game! At this rate, I don't even need to wait for the World Tree to awaken; the ship could resurrect with just the Holy Vine! Oh, and it seems the armor defense increased by a few points too!

And just then, 13740 turned into 13741! Da Fei's eyebrow twitched; damn, it increased durability right under my eyes! Hahaha! This water is nutritious; I like it!

As he laughed wildly, Deirdre came out to greet him, presenting a serious expression rather than her usual charming smile, saying, "Master's back. The demon army's advance must not be underestimated, and we must deal with it with all our might!"

Da Fei's eyebrow twitched; that's right! She was once part of the Demon Race and understood their tactics better. I should ask her!

Da Fei quickly asked, "What plan do you have?"

Deirdre took out a piece of paper and said seriously, "Master, I ascended to become an Artillery Master some time ago but haven't had a chance to use my skills in actual combat. I can't miss this opportunity. This is my alchemical procurement order. It allows us to manufacture smoke bombs, incendiary bombs, and poison gas bombs. With these special shells, our ship's cannons could deal devastating blows to the encroaching enemy!"

Da Fei took the order, feeling a jolt. True, her Artillery Master was a hidden hero, with Professional Skills to create fancy shells like these. They must not go unused! Besides, she was in the gun cabin—the safest spot with minimal risk of attack—deploying her should be fine.

Alright, this was something that must be dealt with now!

Da Fei pulled out the list and asked the consultants behind him, "Where can I buy these materials?"

The economic consultant took the list, stunned: "Sir, these are... prohibited materials! Normally, they can't be purchased!"

Damn it! Don't give me this crap at a crucial moment!

Chapter 490: The Threat of the Leviathan Mother

The more forbidden the materials, the more badass the stuff you make is bound to be. Under normal circumstances, you definitely can't buy them. You have to grind through quests to build reputation and all that. The problem is, where can you find the time to grind quests right before a battle?

Da Fei couldn't help but sigh! If he had focused on developing Deirdre earlier, he might have had it all sorted by now, maybe even completed the Heroic Trial at level 50. But he was busy, so how could he manage everything?

Did he screw something up?

Looking back, before turning level 50, regular players didn't recruit Vice Heroes to avoid dragging down experience gain, aiming to hit level 50 and enter the New World directly. But he valued Female Heroes as treasures, recruiting anyone he met without a second thought. Soon enough, he'd be off to recruit another Dark Elf, not minding if it affected leveling up.

Logically, with his love for Female Heroes, he should have fully developed each one. During the open beta, if players were lucky enough to recruit a Female Hero, they'd treat her like the sun in their hand, developing her to the max out of true love!

But what about him? He barely took care of them once he got them, just leveling up a few God-level Skills and feeling satisfied. He didn't even notice when Catherine had such a big issue, and Anlicia and Selvia remained completely undeveloped! What's this called? The legendary idle wife, unused salary...

So what was he busy with? Managing territory, Divine Artifacts, and battleships? Damn! A career-oriented man, bound to drive all the women away! It's a lesson learned!

What now? What else can be done? He had to tough it out! If he couldn't get this done, Da Fei would be too embarrassed to return to the ship immediately. He might as well go and check on the Leviathan's Egg. That's the Divine Beast to counter the Demon Race's underwater approach. As long as it absorbs enough Dark Energy to hatch, there would be no worry about demon attacks by sea. No exaggeration, it's the Water Monster characteristic. On land, perhaps one could pile up a Corpse Mountain and Blood Sea to kill a God-level Boss, but that trick won't work in water.

But if the war ends, how should he deal with this Leviathan? Well, maybe he was thinking too far ahead.

Da Fei climbed the outer wall, where a black whirlpool was spiraling at the location of the egg, bubbles churning, making an impressive spectacle.

He couldn't see the bottom of the water! How big had the egg grown? He had better go underwater to check it out. At the thought, Da Fei jumped off the wall and plunged into the water. A wave of scorching heat hit him right in the face!

Crap! No wonder it's a Divine Beast; it's already so extraordinary during the incubation stage. Da Fei thought it was amazing!

Da Fei swam vigorously and suddenly saw it, clear water! Just like with Flying, all the energy in the water near the egg had been absorbed and purified! He could see the bottom now, a black egg taller than a person, covered in spikes. It really had grown quite a bit!

At that moment, Da Fei's task panel suddenly lit up! Da Fei was startled and opened the task panel to see the "Leviathan's Anger" quest, which he had received when he salvaged the egg in the North Pole, flashing a warning!

—Task Hint: Warning! You have obtained the Leviathan's Egg in an incomplete manner. The Leviathan Mother can sense the call of the hatching young. An angry Leviathan will seek out the juvenile. As the juvenile grows stronger, the call becomes more intense, and the Leviathan Mother will gradually pinpoint the juvenile's location. Be prepared for defense!

—Task Hint: Warning! Leviathan is an Ancient God-level Giant Beast. An adult Leviathan possesses abilities beyond mortal imagination.

Da Fei's eyes almost popped out of his head! That's impossible! He hid the egg underground, and it can still connect? Be prepared for defense!? This means it's coming all the way from the ends of the earth for sure?

Da Fei swam closer to the giant egg and instinctively reached out to touch it—cold! Damn! So bizarre, the water outside was scalding hot, yet the surface of the egg was icy cold? At that moment, a "thump thump" sound came from inside the egg—a heartbeat!

—System Prompt: Warning! The Leviathan juvenile senses your presence and releases hostility towards you, potentially breaking out of the shell prematurely!

Damn! Da Fei turned around and left without a second thought! Breaking out of the shell prematurely, it's similar to a dragon egg! When players attack a Dragon Cave, the mother dragon will have the dragon egg hatch prematurely to assist if it's hard to handle the assault. However, premature hatching inevitably hinders its future growth somewhat.

He couldn't subdue it, but he still relied on it to indirectly combat the Demon Race. If it hatched prematurely, it would lose its usefulness.

Da Fei swam back to the surface, where a group of advisors lowered a rope ladder to pull him back onto the wall.

Before he had even steadied himself, Da Fei urgently asked, "Does our Pool of Radiance connect to the sea?"

The advisors were momentarily taken aback, then all shook their heads, saying, "Lord City Lord, this... the Underground World is mysterious and unpredictable. There are just too many unknown secrets that we can't ascertain."

"Why do you ask, dear lord?"

Damn! Given the nature of the game, if an NPC says it can't be done, then it definitely can't be done! If an NPC says they don't know, then it's possible! This is the underground; somewhere there's got to be an underground river or lake, and who knows, it might just connect through one of those ups and downs! Not to mention, isn't there a large Blood Lake in this nearby space? Could Leviathan, as a Divine Beast, perform spatial displacement? Well, yeah, if the game lets you trigger this task, maybe it can even find its way to the desert, right?

Da Fei felt an unbearable headache all of a sudden but shook his head with a bitter smile and said, "This Leviathan's Egg is calling the mother, and I suspect the mother is on the way here!"

The advisors exploded into a clamor of surprise!

However, the military advisor quickly regained composure, cleared his throat, and said, "Given the dire situation of us being sieged by the Demon Army, Leviathan's arrival might not be entirely bad news!"

Huh! Da Fei's heart was suddenly struck with an idea!

The advisors all nodded in agreement, saying, "Indeed! Ideally, both sides will decimate each other, naturally solving our city's crisis effortlessly!"

Da Fei slapped his thigh all of a sudden! Dammit! You really aren't just any advisors, are you? You've got quite the imagination! You thought of things I couldn't even dream of accomplishing?!

Speaking of which, if this Leviathan Mother does come, these hundreds of thousands of demon troops might truly be wiped out in a flurry! Maybe I won't have to expend anything during this battle and can directly use Leviathan's power to capture the perimeter wall. Then my city would suddenly surge in level! Not only that, but I'd also earn great merit instead of just averting a disaster!

As for dealing with Leviathan afterward? Damn, who cares! My task is just to guard against the Demon Race, not the Divine Beasts! Once I drive away the Demon Race and expand the city, my mission is successful, leaving the egghead problem of handling the Divine Beast to the NPCs of the Elf Kingdom! After all, half of my city's assets belong to the NPCs, don't they?

Wahahaha! This is the benefit of a joint city-building! Yes! Let's do it! Leviathan, you better come!