

Ocean Lord 381

Chapter 381: Two New Unit Types, Four Million Gold Coins, Black Hawk Arrow Tower (2)

First and foremost, these were used to purchase various rare resources.

For him, no amount of rare resources would ever be enough.

Starting from tier five units, recruiting any of them would require a substantial amount of rare resources. Basic resources like wood and clay were no longer relevant.

For each tier five unit, even the less powerful ones, recruiting a single unit required at least a hundred units of rare resources. Take the Tyrant Azure Dragon, for example, which was considered a powerful tier five unit. Recruiting one required a staggering 2,400 units, equivalent to a minimum of a hundred thousand units when converted into regular resources. It was simply incomparable.

Apart from unit recruitment, Ji Chen's exclusive military talent tree was also a resource-consuming endeavor. Upgrading tier four units to tier five cost tens of thousands of rare resources, and advancing heroes was an even greater drain on resources.

This was why Ji Chen had refrained from investing in his military talent tree for quite some time. It wasn't that he didn't want to enhance his territorial military strength, but rather he couldn't afford it!

He withdrew three million gold coins from the four million at hand to purchase a batch of rare resources.

Of course, this quantity of rare resources wasn't something an ordinary merchant could provide. To obtain them quickly, he needed the help of a major player like the Elves, or well-connected individuals like Gilder.

However, when he sent someone to inquire, he was informed that Gilder had left Maple City a couple of days ago to deal with business elsewhere.

On the elven side, Miligas had also returned to the Elven capital a few days ago, and Commander Yasen had likewise set sail with the Elven Middle Ocean's Fifth Fleet yesterday, leaving Ji Chen with no means to ask about obtaining the qualification to sell wine in the Maple Principality.

Thankfully, there were still Elf officials remaining in Maple City, and the Military Officer, Brett, was among them. With Miligas gone, he had become the highest-ranking Elf official in Maple City. Upon hearing Ji Chen's request for help from the Elves, he readily agreed.

He immediately patted his chest and assured Ji Chen that he would take care of it. Through Elf channels, he arranged for the transfer of three million gold coins worth of rare resources.

Upon a quick calculation, the three million gold coins were exchanged for a total of three hundred thousand units of rare resources, with one hundred thousand units each of crystal, adamantite, and mithril.

Currently, Ji Chen had in his possession a total of two hundred and forty thousand units of crystal, two hundred and forty thousand units of adamantite, and two hundred and ten thousand units of mithril, amounting to a grand total of six hundred and ninety thousand units of rare resources.

With this substantial sum, the power of the Crown of the Ocean could undoubtedly reach a whole new level.

He now had one million gold coins left from the initial four million. Ji Chen considered for a moment and decided to withdraw five hundred thousand gold coins to leave with Raymond, who would be staying in the Maple Principality for an extended period. As the trade officer for the Crown of the Ocean, he occasionally required a substantial amount of funding to facilitate trade operations.

Raymond, who now had 500,000 gold coins at his disposal, was both excited and grateful.

However, he had no hint of greed in his heart.

For him, he had transformed from the merchant who once chased after profits and gold coins into a Trade Officer with grand ambitions.

His goal had evolved from mere wealth accumulation to making the Crown of the Ocean an unparalleled and mighty territory, far removed from lowly interests.

After Ji Chen's lavish spending, most of the 4 million gold coins were directly used up, but the remaining 500,000 gold coins still constituted a wealth that made every player around envious.

He hadn't yet decided how to spend the remaining 500,000 gold coins and couldn't help but sigh that even wealth could be a source of trouble.

Just as he was contemplating how to generously spend the money, someone suddenly requested a private chat.

Ji Chen casually opened the message and saw a somewhat unfamiliar name.

"Big Boss Islander, we've arrived at Maple Harbor. When can we trade for the Bone Forge?"

Reading the private message, he finally recalled that before leaving for Maple Harbor, he had made an arrangement with several players to meet here for the trade of the Bone Forge they had obtained from the Skeletons' Mystic Realm.

After so many days had passed and with all the recent events involving the Elves and the Deceiver, he had almost forgotten about this arrangement.

After a moment's thought, he replied, "You can come directly to the northwest side of Maple City. The address is..."

He provided them with the address of his estate.

Soon enough, a group of five players appeared outside the Crown of the Ocean's estate, halting their steps.

Through the elegantly crafted wrought-iron gate of the estate, they could catch a glimpse of the vast expanse of green grass, the elegant European-style gardens and courtyards, and the mansion-like buildings, each possessing exceptional aesthetic value.

"Boss, is this the place? Why does it feel like we're in a rich neighborhood?"

These are all gigantic estates."

“Yeah, it must be some kind of wealthy district. There are more patrolling soldiers here than outside, and they’re all watching us like we’re thieves.”

Among the five players, the one who appeared the most mature hesitated for a moment, then carefully reviewed the private message. He said, “That’s right, what Big Boss Islander mentioned is indeed this estate. There’s no doubt about it.”

“I can’t believe it. We’ve only been away for a few months, and he’s already obtained such a huge property. Is he aiming for the stars or something?”

“No need for pointless talk. Islander Boss is such a formidable person; anything is possible for him.”

The players chattered amongst themselves.

At this moment, the estate’s main gate in front of them swung open, revealing a well-dressed butler who stepped out. He took a brief look at the five Glory Lords in front of him and then greeted them with impeccable courtesy..

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“Greetings, the host has been waiting for you. Please follow me.”

The butler gestured for them to enter, exuding an elegant sense reminiscent of a medieval noble butler, causing them to instinctively turn their gaze toward the player who appeared seasoned.

The latter bit their lip. “Let’s go in.”

As they followed the butler to a mansion at the center of the estate, they finally met the legendary Islander inside the hall.

The first impression was that he was handsome, especially the natural aura of authority he exuded, making one feel a sense of power upon first meeting.

“You may have a seat.”

The five individuals were somewhat overwhelmed by the favor but obediently took their seats. They placed their hands on their knees, sitting up straight like well-behaved schoolchildren, not daring to move.

Ji Chen couldn’t help but find their appearance somewhat amusing.

In private chats, they seemed like casual internet friends, but in reality, they looked so well-behaved.

“I won’t waste much time. Have you brought the items?”

“We’ve brought everything.” The leading player immediately responded and then placed the items for the trade on the table—blueprints for various structures.

When negotiating with them initially, considering the sparse defensive structures of the Crown of the Ocean, the only viable defensive buildings available were the Death Alchemy Cannons and

Elemental Arrow Towers. For the Crown of the Ocean, with its extensive coastline, these were far from sufficient.

In return for giving up five basic Bone Forges and one intermediate Bone Forge, he obtained sixteen identical blueprints for defensive structures.

[Blueprint: Black Hawk Arrow Tower]

[Level]: 3-Star

[Effect]: 0 Can shoot highly penetrative crossbow arrows, dealing significant damage, @ Illuminate the area, providing enemy warnings.

[Resources Required for Construction]: 10,000 units of iron, 2,000 units of crystal, 2,000 units of mithril, 2,000 units of adamantite.

[Area]: 20x20x50

[Attack Range]: 20-1500 (meters)

These 3-star Black Hawk Arrow Towers, compared to Elemental Arrow Towers and Alchemy Death Cannons, were not as powerful.

However, their advantage lay in their quantity and decent anti-air and ground attack capabilities.

Sixteen Black Hawk Arrow Towers were enough to construct a complete coverage of firepower on one side of the coastline.

After verifying the quantity, Ji Chen took out the five basic Bone Forges and one intermediate Bone Forge.

Seeing the items for the trade, the expressions of the group showed excitement.

They were all undead players, and with these Bone Forges, they could raise a formidable undead army, showcasing the terror of an undead legion.

Before coming, they had already agreed on how to distribute the loot, so there were no issues of unfair distribution.

Ji Chen asked with genuine interest, "It seems like you all have a good relationship?"

The lead player smirked and said, "The five of us were originally friends on Earth. We are childhood buddies who grew up together. Coincidentally, when we were playing games together back then, we all ended up trapped here.

Luckily, we were born relatively close to each other, so we decided to stick together and work our way through to survive!"

Friends?

Ji Chen looked at the friendship between them and couldn't help but feel a sense of admiration.

He was mostly a lone wolf, surrounded by either subservient subordinates or emotionless units.

But he didn't really envy them.

In fact, he believed that this was the most suitable state for him.

Step by step, climbing to the top of this world was what he truly desired to accomplish..

Chapter 383: Information on the New Mystic Realm, Interlude, Something Happened to the New Moon Islands?

Ji Chen's relationship with these players was purely transactional, and he had no intention of getting closer to them.

After completing the transaction, Ji Chen planned to have the butler escort them out.

"Butler, please escort these guests for me."

The butler, who had been waiting at the door, immediately entered and greeted them.

"Guests, please follow me."

However, they exchanged glances and didn't pay much attention to the butler. Instead, they looked at Ji Chen.

The player leading the group gritted his teeth and clasped his hands together. "Big Boss Islander, we have something else we'd like to discuss with you."

Ji Chen raised an eyebrow. "What is it?"

"It's about some information we came across. We thought you might be interested."

Information?

Ji Chen pondered for a moment, then waved for the butler to leave.

The butler knew that he was fundamentally associated with the Maple Principality, and it was not appropriate for him to be privy to the confidential matters between Ji Chen and these Lord of Glory players.

He respectfully bowed, closed the door behind him, and had the maid waiting outside temporarily step away.

The player in charge felt somewhat relieved when he saw this, and he glanced at Alice and Verena, who had been standing by.

Ji Chen noticed his gaze and waved it off. "They're all my people, no need to worry."

All his people?

Their expressions changed.

They had already spotted these two stunning women, one with an ethereal beauty like a fairy who seemed to have come down from heaven, and the other a captivating, voluptuous mature woman, both radiating an exceptional allure. They initially thought they were native NPC characters!

Never would they have imagined that they were associated with the Big Boss Islander.

Indeed, he lived up to his name of being called a big boss. In just a few months, he had won the affection of such gorgeous women.

Since Ji Chen had spoken so casually about it, they put their worries to rest.

“Well, it’s like this. After we confirmed the location of the transaction with you, we set out for Maple Harbor immediately, right?”

On the way here, we unexpectedly stumbled upon a briefly open Mystic Realm Gate in the ocean!”

A Mystic Realm Gate?

A hint of interest appeared on Ji Chen’s face, and he signaled for them to continue.

Seeing this, their spirits lifted, and they continued.

“The entrance to that realm is still in an expanding state, but quite a few monsters have already emerged from it. Among them, there’s one called the Deep Sea Shrimp Soldier. It starts at Tier 4, 9-star, and the lowest level is around 40. They’re quite formidable.

We only took a brief look from a distance and were scared off immediately.

With our strength, even with more time, we might not be able to handle these terrifying monsters. But if it’s you, Big Boss, maybe you could explore this realm...”

The player leading the group spoke somewhat nervously. They had indeed encountered a Mystic Realm Gate on their way here, but did that player not understand the concept of these realms?

A Mystic Realm Gate represented a treasure trove waiting to be unearthed, containing benefits that could make all players covet.

Just like the Blood Sea Mystic Realm that appeared near the Silver Islands, it had a unique resource, the Golden Tree, which could stably produce rare crystal resources, making it highly sought after.

At that time, they had been excited about the extraordinary luck of stumbling upon a Mystic Realm Gate. However, when they saw the monsters emerging from it, their excitement turned into sheer fright, almost causing them to wet themselves.

Monsters starting at Tier 4, 9-star at the lowest level.

What a nightmare!

Although the allure of this Mystic Realm was undeniable, they possessed a significant strength—self-awareness.

Discovering it didn’t mean they could defeat its inhabitants.

Even with five more years of preparation, they might not be able to handle such powerful monsters. Moreover, the Mystic Realm Gate was only temporarily open; who knew when it might close?

So, instead of keeping this information to themselves, they decided to treat it as valuable intelligence and sell it, hoping to gain a substantial profit in the short term and soar to greater heights.

Subconsciously, they thought of the best potential buyer for this information Big Boss Islander.

As one of the renowned strong players with considerable wealth, he could certainly afford the price of this information. Moreover, strong players usually had the demeanor to handle such transactions without resorting to pressuring for information without payment.

But since they had only seen him in chat channels and forums and never met him in person, they still felt a bit anxious.

At this moment, Ji Chen's interest had been piqued. He had explored two realms in the past, each yielding significant returns.

Particularly in the Skeleton Realm, he not only obtained a 7-star treasure by defeating the Skeleton King Solin Horton but also opened up Krieg Theredell's Laboratory, rescuing Elin Apocalis and Thotmudo. This directly or indirectly resulted in substantial gains.

No one understood better than Ji Chen how much profit could be gained from these realms.

Without hesitation, Ji Chen took out five wooden boxes, each containing ten thousand gold coins.

He casually threw them onto the table, and a small handful of gleaming coins spilled out.

The dull thud as they hit the table immediately sent a shiver down their spines, and the sight of those shiny gold coins made their eyes light up with eagerness.

There was definitely a substantial amount of gold inside those boxes!

"This is the upfront payment. If you provide all the information about this Mystic Realm Gate, including its location, the number of monsters, and everything else, these coins are yours.

After 1 confirm the details and it checks out, there will be another sum of gold." Oh my!

Ten thousand gold coins? And this is just the upfront payment?

The Big Boss Islander was exceptionally generous!

The five of them exchanged glances, and the excitement in each other's eyes was palpable.

This time, they had hit the jackpot.

They quickly spoke, "The location of the temporarily opened Mystic Realm is right here, on the sea surface not far from Maple Harbor...."

Chapter 384: Information on the New Mystic Realm, Interlude, Something Happened to the New Moon Islands? (2)

"The appearing monsters, we only saw three types: one was the Shrimp Soldier, another was the Crab Soldier, and there was also a Giant Turtle Sorcerer, starting at Tier 4, 9-star..

In addition to this, we also saw a Blue Excellent-Tier monster leading them..."

The group revealed all the information they knew without holding back.

For them, since they had already disclosed this information, there was no point in keeping anything hidden now.

“When we saw the Mystic Realm Gate, it still had a month of activation time left. Big Boss, if you go now, you’ll definitely make it.”

Based on the location they mentioned, Ji Chen marked a small area on the map.

The Mystic Realm Gate was located in the sea to the south-west of A/Iaple Harbor, quite a distance away, but not too far from the Crown of the Ocean, about a three-day journey.

A month’s activation time would be enough for him to return to the New Moon Islands and then head there.

After collecting his thought, as agreed, Ji Chen handed over the initial fee of 50,000 gold coins and, after confirmation, he took out a box containing 100,000 gold coins, pushing it all toward them.

Seeing this pile of gold coins in front of them, the five individuals’ eyes turned green, and their hearts were filled with excitement.

At first, they thought this piece of information might be worth tens of thousands of gold coins at most, but he didn’t expect the Islander to be so generous, throwing out 150,000 gold coins without batting an eye.

He was truly a good person!

After some consideration, the group’s leader carefully stated, “Big Boss Islander, according to our guess, it’s highly likely that the inside of this realm is submerged underwater. You see, the creatures we’ve encountered, like shrimp, crabs, and turtles, are all seafood, like a mixed seafood platter, you could say.”

Having received this piece of information, Ji Chen’s mood remained quite good. He smiled and said, “I understand. Who knows, there might be something inside, like the Prime Minister Turtle, the Dragon Prince, or even a dragon named Little White Dragon.”

The group was momentarily stunned, but being from the same cultural background, they quickly caught on and chuckled, “So, this realm might be a side dungeon of the East Sea Dragon Palace? Maybe there’s really a treasure trove inside with a Divine Sea Needle.

Hopefully, Big Boss, you can explore this realm safely and return with a bountiful haul!”

Before leaving, each of them offered blessings to Ji Chen. After all, there was no harm in offering good wishes, and it would be even better if they could establish a good relationship with the Big Boss.

Watching their figures disappear at the entrance of the estate, Ji Chen looked thoughtful.

In his mental perception, the five light points representing them were slowly moving.

He had considered whether these five individuals might be infiltrators from the Deceivers, and whether this so-called realm was a trap. However, after careful consideration, he dismissed this possibility.

These five individuals had contacted him before he entered the Northern Continent, which was before the Deceivers noticed him. The timing doesn’t match up.

After all, the Deceivers can’t exactly sense him through the void, right?

With the previous possibilities ruled out, there was no reason for these five individuals to deceive him.

After all, nobody wanted to have a falling out over money, and they knew the consequences of deceiving him.

Therefore, there was no motive for them to provide false information.

But precautions were still necessary. Ji Chen left a mental marker on them, allowing him to locate them at any time within a certain range.

After some thought, Ji Chen called for Benbo.

“Benbo, I want you to take the Dragon Blood Murlocs and head to the location of this realm immediately for reconnaissance, confirming its existence and any changes.

After completing the reconnaissance, return directly to the Crown of the Ocean, no need to go back to Maple Harbor.”

“Yes, following your great will.”

Benbo, accompanied by the Dragon Blood Murlocs, set off immediately. As Murlocs, they had extremely high mobility, with speeds several times faster than ordinary ships, making them the ideal choice for this reconnaissance mission.

Today, most tasks had been completed, and it seemed like it was time to return to his territory.

Ji Chen first instructed Raymond and Luo Yang to handle their respective affairs. One was in the spotlight, and the other operated in the shadows, ensuring the safety of the Crown of the Ocean’s commercial interests.

Then, he bid farewell to Brett and Kris. This time, the two elves from the Maple Principality had been a great help to him, and they had successfully established a good rapport between the Crown of the Ocean and the elves.

The next day, on a clear and sunny morning, Ji Chen and his group set out on their return journey.

Ji Chen didn’t intend to leisurely sail back. He, along with Alice, Verena, and other high-level heroes, directly rode the Tyrant Azure Dragon back.

The rest of the troops and lower-tier heroes accompanied the fleet of ships carrying thousands of refugees, safeguarding their journey back to the Crown of the Ocean.

However, at this moment, an unexpected event occurred.

Verena, who had been imprisoned in a cage for hundreds of years and had no fear of burning souls, showed a look of fear the moment she stepped onto the back of the Tyrant Azure Dragon and set sail on the sea.

“My Lord, are we really going to ride these Azure Dragons back?”

Verena knelt halfway on the broad back of the Tyrant Azure Dragon, her voice trembling.

“Are you sure we won’t be thrown off or swept away by the waves?”

Ji Chen looked at the slightly trembling Verena with some curiosity and suddenly asked, “Don’t you know how to swim?”

It was as if he had struck a nerve, and she froze, her neck turning like it was on a gear.

She opened her mouth as if to say something but couldn’t find the words, eventually nodding in defeat, a look of frustration on her face.

As a devout believer, Verena found it embarrassing to admit that she couldn’t swim and had a fear of deep water.

But Ji Chen’s expression became even stranger. The protective blessing of the Crown of the Ocean was supposed to significantly improve the water skills and sense of direction of its citizens. In other words, everyone under the Crown of the Ocean was good at swimming.

Verena had signed a contract with her, so she should also enjoy the effects of the protective blessing.

It seemed that she had never tested it by going into the water.

With this thought in mind, Ji Chen smiled, “Why don’t you try swimming now? I’ll be watching you.”

Verena resisted with all her might, but in the face of the words of loyalty, she couldn’t refuse.

A look of resigned determination appeared on her face.

She stood at the edge, closed her eyes, and took a leap, plunging into the water like the hilarious Filipino Olympics diver. After a moment, she started splashing around on the surface.

Ji Chen watched her helplessly as she splashed around and cried for help.

“See if you can swim now.”

Verena, who had been crying for help, suddenly froze. She looked at herself, effortlessly floating on the sea, and started paddling with her limbs as if they had muscle memory.

The look of fear on her face turned into astonishment and joy. “Huh? How did I suddenly learn how to swim?” She then happily started paddling around in the water.

Ji Chen’s mouth twitched, and he sighed.

On the other side, Alice stared at her as if she were a fool, wondering why her colleagues always seemed a bit abnormal in some way.

This was a little side story.

Ji Chen quickly had the still-enjoying herself Verena come up, and the group immediately set off.

Without the delays of a ship, the Tyrant Azure Dragon was able to move at full speed, cutting through the waves.

The Tyrant Azure Dragon seemed tireless, traveling day and night, and it took only half the expected time to reach the edge of the Stormy Sea.

Looking at the dark sky in the distance, the turbulent sea on the horizon, Ji Chen felt a sense of belonging.

Inside this sea, he was back in the long-absent Crown of the Ocean.

Without wasting any time, he waved his hand, and the Tyrant Azure Dragon continued forward, breaking through the waves.

After passing through the slightly undulating edge of the sea, the waves gradually subsided, and the sky cleared.

In the distance, they saw the crescent-shaped New Moon Islands.

But the faces of everyone suddenly changed.

They saw on the New Moon Islands in the distance, towering columns of smoke rising into the sky, and the island was faintly lit by fires burning everywhere.

Thousands of wrecked ships were floating on the sea, and the bodies of lizardmen warriors bobbed along with the waves.

Ji Chen's expression darkened.

Motherfuckers! Isn't it robbery?!

Chapter 385: Robbed! Attack and Defense, the Dangerous Man

Without time for further thought, Ji Chen swiftly headed towards the New Moon Islands.

The closer they got to the New Moon Islands, the more wreckage of ships floated on the sea, and hundreds of Lizardmen warrior corpses bobbed amidst the waves.

This time, on their journey to the Maple Principality, the Crown of the Ocean only had a dozen or so warships left to guard it, with most of the sailors and soldiers on board being Lizardmen warriors.

Seeing so many shipwrecks and corpses in such a dire condition, it was imaginable that the enemy had almost instantly destroyed the defending warships when they attacked.

Looking at this scene, Ji Chen's expression grew even more solemn.

The enemy that had launched this assault was not to be underestimated.

The Tyrant Azure Dragon carried them swiftly past the northeastern sub-islands and entered from the east side.

Just as they rounded the island chain, they saw a blazing harbor and water fort. Thick ink-like smoke billowed into the sky.

Two steel warships were anchored near the sea, their hefty cannons slightly raised. Flames burst forth suddenly, and from the flames, a volley of cannonballs shot out, landing on the island and igniting towering flames.

An unfamiliar flag fluttered atop the warship's bridge, one they had never seen before.

However, Ji Chen's anger was far from subsiding. The Crown of the Ocean had been his passion project, the result of endless hard work and unwavering commitment. Now, it was being callously manipulated by an unidentified enemy. How could he not be furious?

The mana within his body surged like boiling hot oil, and the surrounding seawater roiled as if in the grip of a Category 12 typhoon. Countless bodies of water defied gravity, lifting Ji Chen's form into the sky.

The Tidal Dominion.

This display quickly caught the attention of the soldiers on the two steel warships, and they turned to look, witnessing an awe-inspiring sight.

Countless spiraling bodies of seawater floated in the air, and the mana had taken on substantial form, resembling threads of silk encircling the surroundings. Suspended within the seawater was a figure.

The soldiers' pupils contracted sharply as they felt pressure akin to mountains and sharpness like sword blades.

This person was extremely dangerous!

Years of training compelled them to react instinctively.

"Enemy spotted!!!"

"Rotate the cannons! Fire!!"

The cannons, originally pointed towards the island, quickly rotated and elevated. In no time, they were aimed at the figure, and after a brief delay, flames erupted, sending dozens of alchemical cannonballs straight towards their target.

Ji Chen raised his right hand, and a crystalline water shield appeared before him. The next moment, the cannonballs collided and violently exploded.

Boom!

The explosion sent up a large cloud of smoke, obstructing the view of all the soldiers.

Seeing this scene, the soldiers on the warships couldn't help but show a hint of satisfaction. In their eyes, no one could withstand the bombardment of cannonballs, and the fate of being hit by so many cannonballs was undoubtedly death.

This was the kind of thinking ingrained in them through years of warfare; any flesh and blood creature would be torn apart amidst cannonballs and explosions.

But their smiles quickly froze.

Because the seawater floating in the air had not fallen but remained suspended. This could only mean that the person...

Suddenly, they looked up.

As the smoke gradually dissipated, it revealed the figure behind, completely unscathed.

How was this possible? How could someone emerge unscathed in the face of cannonballs!?

Ji Chen stared coldly at them from above, his eyes revealing a chilling intent, like icy points.

With a mighty wave of his hand, two colossal waves formed on either side, carrying an overwhelming force as they swept forward.

The two steel warships, each tens of meters long, seemed minuscule beneath these towering waves. The soldiers watched in terror as the approaching waves overwhelmed them. They were so terrified that they forgot to cry out for help, only able to stare helplessly as the waves bore down on them.

From the sky, the two waves merged like two colossal palms, colliding with terrifying force.

Boom!

A heavy explosion resounded through the heavens.

The waves collided, and seawater shot into the sky.

The splashing water droplets created a splendid rainbow in mid-air, exuding a breathtaking beauty.

As the seawater gradually subsided, it revealed two steel warships, both heavily damaged.

The stout cannons were bent, the towering smokestacks broken in two, and the glass of the bridge shattered. The deck was in disarray.

Fortunately, these were ships constructed of steel, so they didn't shatter like wooden ships with a single impact.

There were a few soldiers on the deck who had miraculously survived the waves, and they managed to stand up despite their wobbling bodies.

As they gazed at the figure in the sky, fear had completely filled their hearts.

To create such a natural disaster barehanded, wasn't this a power possessed only by deities?

At this moment, they were overwhelmed with regret for coming here. But it was too late to turn back. They watched as the figure in the sky casually waved a hand, and two more waves surged forth, engulfing them entirely.

The two steel warships were once again submerged, but this time, they couldn't maintain their balance and slowly sank beneath the waves.

Whew...

Ji Chen took a deep breath, and the anger in his heart subsided, gradually stabilizing his emotions.

Looking toward the island, faint sounds of battle emanated from the direction of the Lord's Castle, indicating that the enemy had successfully landed and had already reached the Lord's Castle.

If the Lord's Castle were destroyed or occupied, according to the system's rules, the territory would fall, and he would lose everything in the territory.

This was something Ji Chen couldn't accept.

In the heat of the moment, he swiftly led Alice and Verena onto the harbor.

What met their eyes was a scene of chaos and destruction. The relentless artillery fire had wreaked havoc, reducing nearly everything in its path to ruins. Fires raged, buildings crumbled, and strewn across the ground were the lifeless forms of various beings – Lizardman warriors, Murloc raiders, Half-Orc warriors, and even the remnants of alchemical creations like Ruins Guardians. Strangely absent were the bodies of any innocent civilians..

Chapter 386: Robbed! Attack and Defense, the Dangerous Man (2)

Ji Chen's heart slightly eased at this piece of good news. It seemed that Wilus and the others had followed the emergency plan and successfully evacuated the residents when they sensed the enemy's attack.

Without wasting a moment, accompanied by the two high-tier heroes, he traversed the ruins of the harbor and made his way directly toward the Lord's Castle.

The bodies of numerous Crown of the Ocean champions stretched from the harbor all the way to the square. Not only were the ordinary residences along the way set ablaze, but the military recruitment camps also suffered substantial damage. Most of the ordinary arrow towers and watchtowers, along with the five-star defense building, the Elemental Arrow Tower, perched on the southeast cliff, had been destroyed. They collapsed from the middle section, leaving only a lonely tower segment standing.

It appeared that the enemy had prioritized destroying these structures when attacking the harbor.

Passing through the charred and withered woods, they arrived at the stone square, and the scene before them became clear.

More than two thousand unidentified enemy soldiers were gathered on the open space of the Lord's Castle, deploying various devices and launching a fierce assault.

Field cannons fired shells, pockmarking the Lord's Castle, while boxy crossbow carts unleashed a rain of arrows, causing casualties among the resilient Crown of the Ocean's army who were still holding out by the Lord's Manor.

On top of the castle, Lady Irona directed the remaining troops in a counterattack.

Facing the onslaught of arrows, the bold Lady Irona wielded her greatsword to deflect them like raindrops. Then, she casually picked up a thick crossbow arrow and hurled it as if it were a javelin.

In the blink of an eye, the arrow pierced through the enemy ranks, impaling four enemy soldiers together.

Amidst the enemy ranks, Ferode's face darkened with frustration. He couldn't help but curse silently, wondering why this castle was proving to be such a tough nut to crack.

He had previously volunteered to come to the Stormy Sea to eliminate the Lord of Glory here and occupy this place on behalf of the king.

After arriving in this area, they spent several days searching for this island group. Out of caution and safety concerns, they chose to conduct reconnaissance before launching an attack.

The reconnaissance revealed that the defense force of this territory was not strong. Apart from a few somewhat threatening defensive structures, there were only a dozen or so wooden warships, one ironclad merchant ship of unknown origin, and some third and a few fourth-tier soldiers.

For a fleet equipped with six heavily armed steel warships and a specialized naval marine force of over three thousand, this was no significant threat at all.

Once they were certain that there was nothing to pose a threat to them, Ferode decisively gave the order to attack.

However, contrary to his expectations, those seemingly weak soldiers did not choose to flee but instead charged towards them in extremely outdated wooden warships. They didn't even have a chance to fire their antiquated cannons before they were all shattered by a round of long-range artillery fire.

Despite this, they continued to charge forward, relentlessly, until all the wooden warships had become floating wrecks on the sea surface.

It was only after they successfully landed and discovered that all the residents had disappeared that they understood the intentions of those soldiers. They had sacrificed their lives to buy time for the residents to evacuate.

When Ferode learned of this, he felt not admiration but anger.

Damn it, these weaklings dared to play him like this! They could have just stood there and let him cut off their heads!

In a fit of rage, he personally set the harbor and the water fort on fire and led the soldiers of the naval marine force in an attack.

Although the resistance on the other side was remarkably tenacious, and their soldiers were of diverse kinds, including pirates, merfolk, lizardmen, half-orcs, and even strange creatures like alchemical creations, with the support of the fleet's artillery fire, they easily broke through one defensive line after another, forcing the remaining majority of the enemy troops back to this castle.

He knew that the Lord of Glory's castle, under such an assault, would lose most. He knew that the Lord of Glory's castle, under such an assault, would lose most of its resistance, vulnerable to anyone's exploitation.

In this way, that elusive Lord of Glory, who had remained hidden from the beginning to the end, would have no choice but to come out, and he could then personally put an end to them, cleansing himself of the shame!

With this in mind, Ferod's mood grew increasingly cheerful, and he shouted fiercely.

"Continue the attack! The first person to breach the castle will be rewarded with 3,000 gold coins and promoted by three ranks!"

As soon as these words were spoken, the eyes of all the Marine Corps soldiers turned red. 3,000 gold coins were equivalent to several years' worth of their salary.

Beneath the weight of heavy gold, brave souls would emerge.

Many soldiers immediately raised their shields and ladders, braving the arrow rain pouring down from the castle, eager to become the first to breach it.

However, it seemed that they had underestimated the defensive capabilities of this Lord's castle.

Ji Chen had long considered the possibility of a break-in and had been enhancing the castle's defenses well in advance. This included, but was not limited to, digging a moat several meters deep outside the castle, filled with sharp wooden stakes, and surrounding it with caltrops. Ballistae, falling rocks, Greek fire, and more were set up at the castle's shooting ports and windows. If it weren't for size constraints and limited space, he would have even placed several cannons.

It could be said that his Lord's castle was like a hedgehog, causing harm upon contact.

Arrows flew from the castle's openings and high walls, piercing enemy archers in the distance like hitting targets at a fair. Large stones tumbled down, crushing the enemy soldiers attempting to scale improvised ladders, their heads splitting open on impact. Meanwhile, a group of Lizardmen warriors cooperatively lifted a hefty bucket of scalding oil, pouring it over the outer walls. The unfortunate ten soldiers carrying siege logs let out painful cries as they were scalded.

The determination of the soldiers of the Crown of the Ocean and the difficulty of the attack far exceeded Ferod's expectations. Watching Marine Corps soldiers falling outside the castle, his face became unusually grim.

Seeing hundreds of lives already sacrificed without any sign of capturing the castle, Ferod realized that even if they won, it would be a pyrrhic victory.

As a baron of the Kingdom of Bas, he couldn't accept such an outcome.

He made a tough decision.

"Send my orders to temporarily withdraw our forces and have the fleet bombard the castle directly from a distance!"

The chief of staff nodded in acknowledgment, picking up a peculiar alchemical device and initiating contact with the two escort ships stationed in the eastern harbor. They were the only vessels with a range covering this location.

However, soon his brow furrowed.

No matter how many times he called, there was no response from the other side.

"Commander, there's no response from that side."

Ferod began to curse angrily.

"Damn it, are those guys neglecting their duties? Is no one at their posts!?"

After the battle, we'll definitely bring them to military court!"

But the chief of staff's expression subtly changed.

In a state of wartime readiness, the soldiers on the escort ships couldn't possibly be off their posts. If that wasn't the reason, then there was a high probability that something had gone wrong!

In an instant, he thought of a possible scenario.

He quickly said, "Commander, the escort ships might be in trouble, most likely because of that previously unseen Lord of Glory!"

Ferod paused for a moment, realizing the same.

"Send two squads of soldiers back to investigate!"

"No need, I've already arrived."

The voice that suddenly appeared in their ears made them all change their expressions, scanning their surroundings until they fixed their gaze on three figures emerging from the nearby woods.

One man and two women.

The man in the center was the Lord of Glory.

“No need to contact them anymore; those two ships of yours are probably already resting at the bottom of the sea.

The soldiers on board have paid the price for their actions, and now, it’s your turn.”

The Lord of Glory’s chilling words sent shivers down their spines.

Ferod was now completely tense. Years of warfare had taught him to recognize extreme danger emanating from this man.

This Lord of Glory was a formidable adversary!

Chapter 387: Ferode, Subduing the Enemy Without Fighting, Daro Severely Wounded

When Ji Chen and his companions appeared, a look of pleasant surprise washed over Anina’s face as she stood on the top floor of the castle.

The Lord had finally returned!

A few days ago, when they had spotted these unfamiliar enemies through the warning lighthouse, she realized their malevolent intent. Immediately, she ordered the evacuation of many residents of the Crown of the Ocean to the Kobold caves and the underground Lizardmen world for refuge.

She led the remaining defending forces to withstand the enemy’s onslaught.

However, facing the formidable firepower of the enemy’s warships and the sheer number and average strength of their soldiers, even her personal strength couldn’t withstand the direct assault of the cannons. Thus, they had to retreat, step by step, back to the Lord’s castle.

Although they had temporarily held the castle, without reinforcements, it was only a matter of time before it would be breached.

But fortunately, the Lord had returned in the nick of time. At this moment, her heart, as well as the hearts of others, hung in suspense, but now they could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

As long as the Lord was here, no enemy was invincible.

This unwavering belief had supported them through many victories.

Morale surged suddenly, stabilizing the Lord’s castle.

However, Ferode had no time to pay attention to these developments. His whole body was tense, and his expression was incredibly serious because he had been completely locked onto by this Lord of Glory.

If he made even the slightest move, he would undoubtedly be subjected to a storm of attacks.

Damn it!

Ferode had seen those Lords of Glory before and naturally knew their despicable nature and feeble strength.

Up until now, he hadn't paid any attention to those guys at all.

But at this moment, he completely reconsidered.

How could there be a Lord of Glory with such immense power?

Not only did he dispatch two escort ships at lightning speed, annihilating them without a survivor, but he also prevented them from sending out a distress signal.

Among the many Lords of Glory, this was truly an exceptional and unusual occurrence!

Ferode admitted that at this moment, he felt somewhat intimidated.

The bravado and revenge-driven mindset from before had quietly disappeared.

Doubts crept into his mind.

He had just started thinking about how to escape when he quickly dismissed the idea.

He had brought his fleet into someone else's territory, and he had set a fire that had nearly destroyed half the domain, causing hundreds of casualties among their soldiers. He had even been prepared to breach the Lord's castle where they found shelter.

In essence, he had done everything to draw their hatred.

After deep contemplation, Ferode reluctantly managed to muster an awkward smile, tossing his weapon to the ground and raising his hands.

"I surrender!"

This left the chief of staff, who had been prepared to sacrifice himself for his country, dumbfounded, his eyes filled with disbelief.

His subordinates were ready to fight to the death, so why was their commanding officer surrendering first?

Even with the chief of staff's excellent qualities, he couldn't help but curse inwardly.

"What the hell happened to your earlier ambitions? Weren't you the one who said you'd take down this Lord of Glory and redeem your honor?"

How come you're surrendering before the battle even starts?

What a disgrace!"

Feeling the gaze of the Lord of Glory fixed upon him, the chief of staff took a deep breath and also cast aside his weapon. "I surrender too!"

Seeing their top two commanders surrender, the other soldiers of the Kingdom of Bass exchanged bewildered glances and began to surrender as well.

Then, under Ji Chen's threat, the four warships that had blockaded the New Moon Islands from the other three directions, following Ferode's orders, came to the harbor and were unexpectedly seized by the prepared soldiers of the Crown of the Ocean. The soldiers on board became captives.

This abrupt battle ended in a dramatic fashion.

Ferode and his companions were disarmed and placed in cages, awaiting their fate.

Inside the Lord's castle, Ji Chen sat in the main seat, listening to the report that had come from Wilus, who had returned from the Kobold caves.

At this moment, Wilus didn't look well at all. His face was marked by an unmistakable sense of discouragement.

"Lord, this time, the Crown of the Ocean has suffered the heaviest losses since its establishment.

The Bass Kingdom's army launched an attack from the east of the New Moon Islands, using long-range artillery to destroy all wooden warships and subsequently the fortress on the northeast sub-island.

After causing extensive damage to defensive structures like the Elemental Arrow Tower, they landed through the harbor... and along the way, they burned down a large number of residential houses. Preliminary estimates indicate that over seventy percent of the housing has been burned or destroyed.

Our military recruitment camps have also suffered severe damage. Two Murloc Ranger camps, one Giant Octopus recruitment camp, ten Self-Detonating Water Spider camps, and two Deep Sea Prowler camps have all been reduced to ruins due to indiscriminate artillery fire. The rest of the recruitment camps have varying degrees of damage."

As he spoke, a trace of sorrow crossed Wilus's face. "The losses among the garrisoned troops were even more devastating. All Ruins Guardians were destroyed during the harbor defense, and the Ocean Guardians are now reduced to fifty. Sky Guardians have also suffered significant losses, with less than half remaining.

Half-Orc Warriors and Lizardmen joined in the harbor defense and endured the onslaught of the second artillery bombardment. Except for His Excellency Daro's survival despite severe injuries, all other Half-Orc Warriors perished under the artillery fire. Four thousand Lizardmen Warriors saw three thousand casualties, and their formations were shattered.

All Self-Detonating Water Spiders and Murloc Rangers sacrificed themselves to buy precious time for the retreat of the remaining troops, allowing them to fall back to the Lord's castle."

Ji Chen's heart sank as he realized the extent of the losses for the Ocean's Crown. This time, the defending army had suffered nearly catastrophic casualties, with thousands of troops reduced to just a few hundred. Even Daro's Half-Orc warriors had all perished under the relentless artillery fire, leaving him as a commander without a force to lead..

Chapter 388: Ferode, Subduing the Enemy Without Fighting, Daro Severely Wounded (2)

Fifteen military recruitment camps were reduced to ruins under the relentless artillery fire, representing the loss of countless resources.

Over a dozen warships, along with their crew members, were mercilessly shattered into pieces by the bombardment.

Fortunately, it was thanks to the sacrifice of these troops that Wilus managed to evacuate all of the Ocean's Crown residents. Apart from a few unfortunate souls who accidentally broke their legs during the evacuation, not a single resident died or was injured.

This was a silver lining amidst a series of bad news.

As long as the people were safe, the losses, no matter how great, could be gradually recovered.

Moreover, the recruitment camps for several main unit types were not completely destroyed, and they could still produce formidable units like the Tyrant Azure Dragon, Naga Berserker, Dragon Blood Murlocs, Elemental Sea Pixies, and Lobster Riders. The foundation remained.

With each loss he mentioned, Wilus felt a pang of sorrow.

When it came to his feelings for the Ocean's Crown, he was one of the most passionate among all.

As one of the earliest residents to arrive in the Ocean's Crown, he had followed his Lord every step of the way, nurturing the Ocean's Crown like a child. Despite the difficulties, he had managed to bring some improvement, ensuring that the residents could eat their fill. But now, facing such a disaster, his heart bled!

Even though his temperament was usually quite mild, at this moment, he couldn't help but curse those bastards and wished he could execute them immediately to vent his hatred.

Seeing the grief-stricken expression on Wilus' face, Ji Chen offered some words of comfort.

"I won't let them get away with this... I heard that these enemies are from the Bass Kingdom, right?"

Wilus nodded. "That's right. When we captured the one leading them, a man named Ferode, he initially put up a tough front. However, after a bit of interrogation, he spilled everything.

This fleet belongs to the Bass Kingdom's Mid-Ocean Navy, and Ferode was their commander. They came all the way to the Stormy Sea with a mission to destroy the Ocean's Crown and occupy the New Moon Islands, turning this place into an overseas territory of the Bass Kingdom.

Through interrogation, we learned that they discovered the existence of the New Moon Islands and the Ocean's Crown by bribing and interrogating sailors from the Radiant Envoy ship, which had previously visited the Ocean's Crown."

At this point, Wilus paused for a moment. "Because of this, the Bass Kingdom found out that it was us who helped the Radiant Envoy and its crew return to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy.

Ferode was the one who pursued the Radiant Envoy at that time. Because he ensured their safe return to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, he was held accountable by the Bass Kingdom's king. He considered it a disgrace, so he volunteered to lead the attack."

Ji Chen's thoughts were somewhat complex. Although he had already roughly guessed that it was because of Monica and her group, and he had mentally prepared for this information to leak, he still hadn't expected it to happen so quickly.

Moreover, the timing of the attack was so precise, coinciding with his departure with the elite forces of the Ocean's Crown.

If it had happened a little earlier or later, he would have been able to deal with it in time, and his home wouldn't have come so close to being looted.

“Other than that, did the wine workshop, vineyard, wood processing plant, blacksmithy, and other buildings suffer any damage?”

“It seems that the enemy intends to use these important buildings after they occupy them, so they didn't damage them at all.”

Ji Chen nodded. If these crucial buildings had been damaged, it would undoubtedly have dealt a significant blow to the Ocean's Crown's production capabilities, especially the wine workshop and vineyard, which were essential industries for the territory's future. If they were destroyed, he would be heartbroken.

However, as he thought about the extensive damage to the residents' defenses and the port, he felt a bit frustrated. With so many homes destroyed, it would probably take some time to fully repair and rebuild them.

He immediately said, “Wilus, you should go organize a group of residents to return from the Kobold Caverns and the Underground Lizardmen World and begin post-war reconstruction work. Prioritize the repair of housing; we can't leave the residents of the Ocean's Crown homeless.

Besides that, I will expand the Ocean's Crown in the next few days, so you should consider the size and location of the territory and coordinate the reconstruction of various buildings.”

The enemy's massive fire had destroyed half of the territory, reducing countless houses and buildings to ruins. However, this also provided the Ocean's Crown with an opportunity to redesign the territory and buildings, making the layout more rational.

Wilus nodded earnestly. From Ji Chen's words, he could sense the importance of this task. Being able to independently coordinate the reconstruction of an entire territory was both a challenge and an opportunity for him.

“I will definitely complete the task and not disappoint your expectations, my Lord.”

Ji Chen nodded in satisfaction. He trusted Wilus to handle the task well. Although he was only a Rare-tier hero, his impact was greater than that of Legendary-tier heroes in some cases.

After instructing Wilus to continue with his work, Ji Chen entered a heavily guarded room. Lizardmen soldiers stationed at the door immediately saluted and greeted him with great respect, their faces showing infinite reverence.

They knew that when the enemy was on the verge of breaking through the territory, their Lord had returned in time. By using a show of strength instead of fighting, he had forced the enemy to surrender. What kind of mighty victory was this?

To them, their Lord's radiance was like that of the sun!

Ji Chen looked at the excited and enthusiastic Lizardmen warriors. This time, he had gained a newfound appreciation for the Lizardmen race.

According to Wilus and Anina's descriptions, the Lizardmen warriors had shown exceptional bravery and fearlessness during the enemy's invasion. They had actively boarded ships to confront

the enemy, buying precious time for the residents to retreat. They had followed the resistance against the enemy throughout, even enduring heavy casualties without retreating.

Such performance made Ji Chen begin to consider that perhaps he could trust the Lizardmen race more and allow them to play more significant roles in the Ocean's Crown, rather than just being cannon fodder.

They nodded slightly to him and entered the room. Inside, they saw several maids helping Daro with his wounds.

Daro, who had defended the harbor with the Half-Orc warriors during the enemy's attack, had suffered severe injuries from the bombardment of the warships. He had miraculously survived, but his condition was critical.

This Half-Orc hero, born on King Kong Island, known for his strength and valor, now lay weakly on the bed, his entire body wrapped in bandages. The blood-red stains beneath the pristine bandages were particularly conspicuous.

Only his eyes were visible through the bandages, and when he saw Ji Chen, there was a significant emotional fluctuation. He attempted to struggle and sit up, but the wounds that were just beginning to heal reopened, causing fresh blood to seep through the bandages.

Ji Chen's expression changed immediately, and he urged Daro to lie still, trying to prevent further damage.

Daro couldn't move, but his eyes were filled with self-blame. He hadn't been able to stop the enemy's attack, and he felt guilty for failing to protect his Lord's domain.

Facing Daro and the others, Ji Chen actually felt somewhat guilty. He had promised them a better life when he brought them from King Kong Island to the Ocean's Crown.

However, this promise had yet to be fulfilled, and they had gradually lost members in each battle, including the recent defense where all Half-Orc warriors were annihilated, leaving only Daro and some elderly or infirm Half-Orcs.

Daro's intense gaze made Ji Chen feel uncomfortable, and he couldn't meet it directly.

In a somewhat solemn tone, he said to the maids around him, "Summon Irona, and have her prepare healing potions for Daro. Take good care of him, and if there's anything you need, you can come to me directly."

The maids nodded in haste.

After ensuring that Daro would rest, Ji Chen walked out with a heavy heart.

Leaving the Lord's Castle, he arrived at the Shallow Sea Stone Forest on the north side, which used to be the habitat of a group of Shallow Sea Trolls. After they were cleared out, Ji Chen had utilized the terrain and shallow waters here to transform it into a water prison for detaining prisoners.

Former residents of this prison included Willow from the Hanseatic Chamber of Commerce, Gassani, and a group of Chamber of Commerce guards. Now, it was occupied by Ferode, over two thousand Marine Corps soldiers, and more than a thousand crew members.

This water prison, which originally could hold fewer than four hundred people, was now packed with over three thousand prisoners, making the conditions even worse than those on a slave ship.

However, the soldiers guarding this place showed no mercy in their eyes; all they felt was anger and hatred.

For these invaders who had nearly destroyed their homeland, such punishment was far from enough!

Chapter 389: Monica's Exquisite Manipulation, Rebuilding the Home, and Three Main Destinations

Ji Chen looked expressionlessly at the group of anxious and fearful soldiers from the Bass Kingdom. In his heart, he had already decided how to deal with them.

Simply killing them would be too merciful.

What awaited them would be the same endless, sunless toil in the mines with the members of the Hanseatic Chamber of Commerce, until every last bit of their worth had been squeezed out.

Don't label him as heartless; if the Crown of the Ocean were to fall, the people living there could be enslaved, sent back to the Bass Kingdom, and forced to work in mines. What's even more horrifying was that some might face execution, with their severed heads used to gain profit and military accolades for the enemy forces.

But before all that, he needed to interrogate Ferode.

With a command, the soldiers bound Ferode tightly and brought him up, making him kneel on the ground.

At this moment, the once proud fleet commander looked like a drenched chicken, his face pale from being soaked in water for so long.

Seeing himself brought before Ji Chen, his body couldn't stop trembling, unsure of what kind of torture and interrogation awaited him.

His head hung low in fear, unable to make eye contact.

Seeing a so-called Bass Kingdom noble act so cowardly, the soldiers nearby looked at him with disdain.

Feeling the soldiers' gaze, Ferode's face burned with shame, overwhelming his entire mind.

Ji Chen sat in the chair brought by the soldiers, his expression unchanged as he looked at them, saying calmly,

"Your next answers will determine whether you live or die.

But if I find even the slightest hint of falsehood, you can imagine the consequences."

In his calm words, there was an undeniable sense of coercion.

Hearing this, Ferode, who valued his life greatly, nodded his head frantically.

To him, what did honor and dignity matter? Only by staying alive could he have a future; if he died, he would have nothing.

Perhaps he could return alive in the future and continue to enjoy beauty and wealth.

Seeing that he was being cooperative, Ji Chen didn't waste any time and began his questioning.

"I heard you are a baron of the Bass Kingdom..."

Unlike the previous interrogations, he asked only about the size and situation of the Bass Kingdom.

Now, it's safe to say that following their encounter with the Bass Kingdom's reconnaissance fleet, relations between the Crown of the Ocean and the Bass Kingdom have irreparably soured. If the Bass Kingdom realizes that Ferode and his group haven't returned, they'll understand that they met their end here.

Whether it was because of the accumulated hatred from before or the benefits that the New Moon Islands could bring them, the Bass Kingdom would certainly find an opportunity to attack again.

It was only a matter of time.

In other words, the Crown of the Ocean would face an unprecedented challenge.

Know thyself, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories.

Ji Chen felt it necessary to gather some information from Ferode, the noble of the Bass Kingdom.

As Ferode faced question after question, he followed the principle that not being honest would lead to a beating, and answered all of them honestly.

But gradually, he began to sense that something was amiss.

Why were all the inquiries focused on the Bass Kingdom?

Questions about military strength, fleet numbers, soldier strength, port locations, and so on.

It sounded as if he was probing a target that was about to be attacked.

He suddenly thought of a possibility, his eyes filled with disbelief.

Could this Lord of Glory be planning to counterattack the Bass Kingdom!?

Was this some kind of a big joke?

Ferode's expression changed suddenly.

The Bass Kingdom was a kingdom, and in the entire Northern Continent, there were only about a dozen kingdoms and duchies of equal stature.

How could a mere Lord of Glory challenge it?

It was one of the most powerful kingdoms along the northwestern coast of the Mid-Ocean, known for its military strength.

The fleet he led was just one of the unremarkable reconnaissance fleets among several main fleets of the Bass Kingdom.

Any main fleet had multiple capital warships, dozens of escort ships, and various support vessels, numbering at least sixty or seventy ships.

The total number of all the fleets in the Mid-Ocean added up to nearly a thousand, and the firepower they carried was enough to level the entire New Moon Islands. The naval soldiers they carried could fill the entire archipelago.

Now, this Lord of Glory actually had thoughts of counterattacking; it was as if he had a death wish! Ji Chen glanced at Ferode's changing expression but didn't explain anything.

Instead, he closed his eyes.

He blended the various pieces of information Ferode had provided, the information he had learned, the power he possessed, and the resources he had, among other things.

The Crown of the Ocean, the Bass Kingdom, the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, the Elves, the Stormy Sea...

As time passed, his thoughts gradually became clearer, and the rough outline of a plan slowly took shape in his mind.

Ferode watched as Ji Chen suddenly closed his eyes, as if deep in thought, and didn't dare to interrupt. He simply knelt there obediently.

But in his heart, he was secretly sure that this Lord of Glory was definitely courting death.

But that was fine too. This way, he might be saved one day and continue to enjoy his noble life.

After a long time, when Ferode's legs had grown a bit numb from kneeling, Ji Chen slowly opened his eyes.

His eyes were sharp.

He asked, "What's the situation between the Bass Kingdom and the Lienhardt Grand Duchy?"

Ferode hesitated for a moment, thinking that no matter how much information he revealed, this Lord of Glory could only do so much. So he decided to be straightforward to avoid physical suffering.

"With the return of Monica, the daughter of the... ahem, the Grand Duke, to the Lienhardt Grand Duchy, she exposed the conspiracy behind the attack. She initiated a condemnation, which has put us in a very passive position.."

Chapter 390 - 390: Monica's Exquisite Manipulation, Rebuilding the Home, and Three Main Targets (2)

"Not only that, according to the information we've obtained, Monica initially didn't openly reveal that this was a conspiracy planned by the three kingdoms. Instead, she directed public opinion towards us.

At the same time, she used this leverage to threaten the other two kingdoms, making them also focus their public opinion on the Bass Kingdom and join in condemning and pressuring us.

The other two kingdoms were caught in a bind and had to agree to this demand. However, in reality, they were somewhat pleased to see the Bass Kingdom in a tough spot. Over the years, the Bass Kingdom has rapidly increased its military strength, showing signs of territorial expansion along the northwest coast of the Central Ocean.

So, they couldn't just sit idly by. Monica's threat conveniently aligned with their interests, and they didn't have to bear the main pressure..."

Hearing this, Ji Chen couldn't help but admire Monica's clever tactics.

When she found out about the conspiracy planned by the four nations, she didn't choose to confront them head-on but took a more indirect approach. She astutely sensed that the relationship between the Bass Kingdom and the other two nations wasn't as close as it seemed. By successfully leveraging their fear and concerns about the Bass Kingdom, she used her leverage to pressure them collectively.

This not only spared Lienhardt Grand Duchy from directly facing the pressure of all three kingdoms but also allowed them to focus on dealing with just one country, the Bass Kingdom. After this incident, it was certain that the Bass Kingdom would harbor deep resentment toward the two kingdoms that had betrayed them. Even if they were to join forces again in the future, this crack in their friendship would persist, making it difficult for them to cooperate closely.

It was a brilliant move, killing two birds with one stone.

Of course, convincing the other two kingdoms must have been a challenging process, but based on Ferode's words, it seems to have been successful.

Monica's incredibly clever maneuver completely turned the situation around. The Rheinhardt Grand Duchy, which had initially been in a passive position, now had the upper hand. As a result, the Bass Kingdom was left in an extremely awkward position, with few options available to them.

"But in my view, it won't be long before the king launches a war, using pure military force to attack the Lienhardt Grand Duchy."

Ji Chen was puzzled. "Why are you so sure about this?"

If what he had just said was true, how could the Bass Kingdom dare to face such enormous public opinion pressure and simultaneously deal with the other three nations?

"The king has always been a fervent instigator of war. He has previously initiated wars with neighboring powers and city-states, conquering and acquiring vast territories, greatly enhancing the kingdom's strength and prestige.

However, these frequent wars have also cultivated a group of nobles who are extremely enthusiastic about warfare. They crave it because only through war can they gain a plethora of spoils, land, slaves, and more wealth."

Speaking of this, Ferode glanced cautiously at Ji Chen. "If they find out that the reconnaissance fleet I led met its end here, they will definitely urge the king to send a more powerful fleet."

Ji Chen ordered the soldiers to escort Ferode back.

With a slightly heavy heart, he returned to the Crown of the Ocean.

For them, the Bass Kingdom was undoubtedly a formidable enemy. Just the thousands of steel warships represented a force that could easily overwhelm them.

However, the Crown of the Ocean was not their primary target; the main focus of the Bass Kingdom would undoubtedly be on the Lienhardt Grand Duchy. The Crown of the Ocean might still find a way to weather this storm.

Only a day after the war ended, the Crown of the Ocean came alive as usual.

Many residents of the Crown of the Ocean appeared amidst the charred ruins.

Their tasks were clearly divided, showing no signs of chaos.

Some were clearing the wreckage of buildings, while others were transporting various materials and resources from warehouses that had remained undamaged during the war. Under the direction and planning of Wilus, the chief engineer, they began rebuilding houses and structures.

In just a few months, all the residents had come to regard the Crown of the Ocean as their home. They understood that this idyllic paradise would inevitably be coveted by greedy individuals. Unlike the military, they lacked the means to wield weapons and resist the enemy, so they could only safeguard their homeland in this way.

The shadow of war did not hang over them. In their hearts, they held one belief: to rebuild their homes.

Seeing that the residents were not daunted by the war and that their morale hadn't suffered much, Ji Chen felt relieved.

However, alongside this relief, a strong desire to enhance the strength of the military and its units surged within her.

After this war, the Crown of the Ocean exposed several problems.

Firstly, when Ferode led his fleet into the Stormy Sea, although the warning lighthouse detected their arrival, the Crown of the Ocean had no resistance to offer as they breached the sea surface defenses and launched a direct amphibious assault.

This was partly due to Ji Chen taking a significant portion of the military with him, but it also revealed the Crown of the Ocean's lack of a decent naval blockade and coastal defense.

In simple terms, they lacked sufficient steel warships and coastal defense facilities to confront the enemy.

If they had dozens of coastal alchemical cannons, the enemy's fleet would not have dared to approach so recklessly, nor would they have been able to provide artillery support to the landing forces so brazenly.

Secondly, the military strength of the Crown of the Ocean was gradually falling behind the pace set by their enemies. In battles against kingdom-level foes, second and third-tier units were essentially cannon fodder, while fourth-tier units were considered the main force. Only fifth-tier units could gain a decisive advantage in battles against their enemies.

The reinforcement of unit types was imminent!

Thirdly, the a lack of powerful heroes.

Despite having several heroes who would be considered plentiful by other players, Ji Chen still felt that there weren't enough heroes at her disposal.

Currently, the main heroes of the Crown of the Ocean were:

- Anina, level 40, Red-Legacy Tier hero.
- Alice, level 39, Red-Legacy Tier hero.
- Verena, level 25 (weakened), Orange Legendary Tier.
- Benbo, level 39, Purple Rare Tier.
- Daro, level 38 (heavily injured), Blue Excellent Tier.

The rest were either ordinary blue, green, or white heroes, or non-combat heroes like Wilus, Irona, and Leysha, who were focused on domestic affairs.

Journeying through the Northern Continent had earned him Verena, a Legendary Tier hero, who had pledged thirty years of loyalty. Once her injuries were fully healed, she would become an incredibly powerful force.

Additionally, Ji Chen had unexpectedly obtained a vial of deep-sea Naga ancestral blood from Yasen's gift, which was filled with immense energy. It was believed that this could be used to create a powerful Naga hero.

Once heroes like Daro and Benbo returned and recovered, Ji Chen planned to further enhance their strength, providing some much-needed confidence to the Crown of the Ocean in their high-end combat against the Bass Kingdom.

In addition, they needed to find a way to cultivate more low-tier heroes, as this was also a method to improve the army's combat capabilities.

After contemplating for a while, Ji Chen outlined the three main directions for the future development of the Crown of the Ocean.

Shaking his head, he walked towards the formation of unit recruitment camps, which stood tall like stone forests.

During the enemy's artillery fire, some of the unit recruitment camps had been destroyed, losing their ability to recruit units.

Fortunately, the recruitment camps for several main unit types hadn't suffered irreparable damage. At Ji Chen's request, the damaged recruitment camps were prioritized for repairs, and those completely destroyed were cleared, creating a large open space.

For now, Ji Chen didn't pay much attention to the existing unit recruitment camps. Instead, she took out the twenty cores he had purchased from the street vendors in Maple City.

Ten of these cores were for Water Nymph Archers, and the other ten were for Giant Crab Guards, evenly split.

Without wasting any time, he chose to construct them directly.

With a rumbling sound, twenty recruitment camps emerged from the ground.

As he looked at these brand-new recruitment camps, Ji Chen's eyes had a subtle determination.

The reinforcement of unit types in the Crown of the Ocean would begin with these two new unit types..