

Wow 491

Chapter 491 out

"No problem."

"Yanzi is truly fantastic!"

"But even if we really do manage to get the supplies... would they be willing to work with us?" Dai Lian looked into the darkness, his gaze filled with worry.

He couldn't see anything in the darkness, but he knew countless eyes were watching this place.

The recent incident had already demonstrated the chaotic nature of this place. Even if these people were dissatisfied with the city's rules, each of them was no pushover; trying to use them as pawns, no one wanted to be played for a fool...

He was only skilled at planning combat operations for small groups. When plotting goals that a team of four or five could achieve, thousands of viable plans would instantly come to mind, and he could reasonably utilize each team member's abilities or even their personality traits.

However, when it came to large-scale battles, his past experience was insufficient to support comprehensive planning, which naturally left him feeling uneasy.

Seeing Dai Lian's somewhat confused profile, Gong Yan's eyes flickered briefly as she realized the dilemma.

...

The supplies had truly arrived.

Although there were some twists and turns, and even a few small skirmishes, thanks to the formidable strength of Kuang Xin, Dai Lian, Gu Lan, and others, the minor conflicts didn't escalate into intractable standoffs. The opponents wisely surrendered, even offering up some firearms as reparations.

The supply boxes, which were brought into the underground cave one cart after another, were showered with light from the outer world, attracting everyone's eager gazes.

They might be down on their luck, but few were fools.

The new leaders had excellent strength and had been hiding in this cave without leaving for two days.

Changes in their lives were expected, that much was foreseeable.

There were also rumors that everyone would soon have good days ahead, filling their hearts with anticipation.

And on this third day, as the sunlight graced the earth in the morning, a wonderful destiny for the first time descended upon all of them.

"Praise the leaders!"

"Is it for us to share?"

"I haven't had a full meal in many days."

Countless pairs of hungry eyes watched the boxes, and a set of hands, with nails caked in black soil, gently touched the first big box to come in, murmuring softly, "Is this for me?"

"Slap~"

The reaching hand was instantly whipped away by Wang Wenbo, who was in charge of escorting at the front. "Withdraw your dirty hands, it hasn't been distributed to you yet."

As he spoke, he turned his head and looked towards the real protagonists following behind him—Kuang Xin and his group.

It was the arrival of these four player deities from Blackwater City that had brought about all of today's events.

How to proceed was for them to announce.

"It's your turn," Gu Lan said with a chuckle, punching Dai Lian on the back.

The group's actions were always decided by Dai Lian. Although Gu Lan sometimes had her own tactical thoughts and even felt they might be slightly superior, Dai Lian's plans almost always seemed feasible; not to mention that even when she sometimes felt lost, Dai Lian could still quickly come up with a seemingly viable plan.

Over time, Gu Lan had given up on her own little deliberations about the situation; after all, sometimes it's quite normal for a woman to be a little lazy.

However, this time, the usually decisive Dai Lian was uncharacteristically hesitant and confused.

He looked around him, trying to find some consolation.

But all he found were pairs of trusting eyes.

The problem was... I couldn't even trust myself.

There were just too many people... too many people.

Too much attention was a pressure in itself.

Though he had long been accustomed to such pressure and wouldn't be knocked down by it, the torment of uncertainty in his plans still weighed heavily on him.

Because of this, he hadn't been able to get a good night's sleep for the past few days.

What should I say to unite these people?

'This stuff isn't free for you folks.'

'I need you to do something for me...'

'See this food? If you want it, exchange it with your fists!'

All sorts of opening remarks flashed through his mind, but none gave Dai Lian the confidence he needed; it seemed that no matter what he said, it would be wrong.

Not to mention the strategic planning that would follow, how should I arrange it to maximize everyone's potential contribution?

Dai Lian had long been aware of the information about the distribution of forces guarding the armory and the potential powers involved, including the topographical features of the city, which Yafei had gathered, but these various factors hadn't come together in his mind to form countless executable plans as usual.

With the number of participants being too many and the situation changing too drastically, to come up with a well-considered plan that ensures an outcome was simply beyond his current capabilities.

"It's okay, I'll do it." A voice, always gentle, spoke up from behind.

When Dai Lian turned around subconsciously, he saw only a pair of gentle yet resolute eyes, eyes filled with a determination and confidence he had never seen before.

"Yan... Yanzi?"

"If you don't know what to say, let me do it." Yanzi spoke with a gentle voice that wasn't overwhelmingly strong, yet somehow inspired trust.

"...Sigh~" The sudden sense of relief dissipated Dai Lian's anxiety instantly; the pressure he had been bearing vanished, offering him a feeling of a burden lifted, "Then go ahead..."

His lips moved, wanting to voice some of the thoughts he had mulled over, but he clamped his mouth shut in the end.

Perhaps Yanzi could do better than himself?

Soothing everyone's emotions, taking care of each person's dignity, wasn't that what Yanzi had always been doing?

Yet, this was a war...

Yanzi's lips curved into a cold smile as she stepped forward, walking to the very front of the supply vehicles.

Her gaze slowly swept across the darkness, her Spiritual Energy-augmented eyes piercing through the dim fog, and her inherent ability with Spiritual Energy made it easy for her to observe the "emotional colors" emanating from everyone, a power she had demonstrated when they encountered the two Judges from Arbitration Place lurking in the dark in the underground waterways.

Now, all the eyes watching her were tinged with visible, varying emotions.

Expectation, enthusiasm, anxiety, greed...

The complex emotions surged like an undercurrent, everyone waiting for her to speak.

In truth, she didn't know what to say to gain complete control over everyone here, nor did she know how to care for each person and make the most of everyone's unique abilities in the actions to come.

What Dai Lian didn't know, she didn't know either.

But when Dai Lian hesitated to move forward, she had to step up.

"The rules of this city are not fair, so we've come."

"Even if it were not us, someone else would eventually do what we are setting out to do."

"Because of the city's appalling rules, you had to eke out a living underground; perhaps you could spend your whole lives this way, but your children... your grandchildren... your descendants... and the endless future, I believe you wouldn't want to see them still living in the same place."

"You might want to flee, but fleeing won't solve the problem."

"For the next week, you all will get enough food to keep you healthy. But that's it."

"The food we provide is only for a week, medical supplies are ultimately limited, and I will only be here for a week."

"After a week, we will strike back against this rotten city. Whether or not you join us, we will carry out this action."

"If we fail, we'll fall right there."

"If we succeed, you can have a real future."

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As the words ended, there was silence.

Dai Lian, in the back, was growing somewhat frantic.

Not demanding anything in return and just blindly supporting them for a week?

With effort comes reward, a standard that should apply everywhere.

After feeding them for a week, Dai Lian had no doubt that these people would still end up lying here, idly waiting for death.

Perhaps a few hot-blooded ones would stand up, but a minority could not sway the overall situation, and in the end, it would still be up to the few of them to fight.

Facing the heavily guarded city armory, relying on just the four of them was undoubtedly as difficult as ascending to the heavens.

"Yanzi..." Dai Lian carefully tugged at the corner of Gong Yan's clothes from behind, attempting to remind her.

However, even without speaking, Gong Yan could easily sense the will of everyone present through the feedback from Spiritual Energy.

Doubt... confusion... fear... mixed with a terrified joy.

These people initially didn't know what they and their companions were set to do, but now that they understood their goals, their inner emotions became visibly clear.

Compared to the absolute rule the city had over them for many years, it was undeniably hard for them to truly trust a group of people who suddenly descended from the sky to overthrow the city's rule.

Perhaps they would accept food and medicine, perhaps they would act compliant and flatter them for the time being, and then turn around to report them in hopes of receiving rewards from the city's higher-ups.

So it wasn't enough!

Still not enough!

Their bodies were too weak, and their spirits too frail.

The body and spirit always influence each other, and oftentimes, a strong physique brings a firm will.

Today they could not be forced to make a decision, the harsh medicine had to be administered at the very end.

Now... now they needed something else.

They needed something... to inspiring enough to maintain a restrained trust in these people temporarily.

Belief stirred Spiritual Energy.

For the first time, Gong Yan felt the Spiritual Energy, which she had always seen as mere data, beginning to pulsate with real life within her mind.

At the same time, the panel began to display messages she had never seen before—

[Free Creation Mode: You are attempting to create a new ability by combining the skills and knowledge you have learned with your own needs. Based on your ability assessment, the current success rate is "very small." However, you can pay a certain price (battle/general experience) to assist you in this creation. (Cost: 200 experience points/attempt)]

Free creation?

The newly appeared mode made Gong Yan somewhat puzzled, able to create a completely new ability?

Is it the ability she currently needed?

Even now, she had no idea what ability was needed to make these people temporarily maintain a restrained level of trust in her and her companions.

But it didn't matter.

Novel game contents were always interesting, and she was not one who only believed in the absolute power of strength, so why not use the experience she had saved up to explore these new contents?

Let's try!

[You spent 200 battle experience for an attempt at creation, but the creation failed.]

[You spent 200 battle experience for an attempt at creation, but the creation failed.]

...

As experience was expended, countless inspirations fluttered in her mind.

The pulsating Spiritual Energy urgently needed a vessel to demonstrate its efficacy.

After numerous attempts, a brand-new ability emerged...

[You spent 200 general experience for an attempt at creation, and the creation succeeded!]

[Inspiring Banner (Spiritual Power Creation Blueprint): You can solidify your Spiritual Energy onto an object, and all individuals who are recognized by you and who can see the object within the coverage of this Spiritual Power Creation will receive a certain degree of mental inspiration as well as slight physical enhancement and regeneration abilities. All benefits are positively correlated to the level of Spiritual Energy when creating the object. Currently, you can create 1 of these Spiritual Power Creations. When

creating the next, the previous creation automatically loses its Spiritual Energy effect. Properties of the creation: Permanent, can be destroyed.]

Gong Yan's gaze swept across the room; the scene remained silent after her speech, as if everyone was waiting for her tangible action or the next statement.

"Whoosh!"

A steel rod used for securing supplies on the cart was suddenly pulled out, and Gong Yan also casually tore off her denim jacket, revealing a white belly shirt underneath.

She then tied the clothing around the steel rod with a hair tie, as the power of Spiritual Energy began to infuse into it.

[Spiritual Energy creation in progress, please remain focused on the target object.]

[...3]

[...2]

[...1]

"Whoosh!"

The steel rod was firmly planted into the not-so-hard earth; the denim fluttering like a flag without wind at the end of the rod.

A faint milky aura spread out like a tangible presence, quickly dissipating into the unseen.

[You have obtained a Spiritual Power Creation—Inspiring Banner*1.]

[Inspiring Banner: While the banner exists, all individuals within a 25-meter radius spherical space centered on the banner will be inspired by it, automatically gaining "Trait—Spiritual Inspiration," physique +0.5, and health regeneration +2/min.]

"..."

The field of Spiritual Energy was enough to cover every figure in the cave, as a faint, warm current flowed through the bodies of each person.

Unprecedented firm confidence dispelled the confusion in their hearts; even without knowing what lay ahead, they were miraculously willing to run toward the future.

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Someone waved their arm in astonishment, feeling that their strength had inexplicably increased somewhat.

Another person pinched their wounded spot, noticing that the constant pain had also lessened significantly without their knowing when it happened.

The power of Spiritual Energy rippled out like microwaves, sweeping across the entire area.

Those with panels, like Dai Lian and others, immediately noticed the information that popped up on their panels, which clearly explained the impact of this sudden buff on them.

Inspiring banner?!

When did that happen?!

Was it that steel pipe wrapped in cloth?!

Among the people in the cavern, there were other players; Yafei and her two companions were not the only player group mingling in this place.

They, like Kuang Xin and the others, had discovered the change through their panels at first, and then looked towards Gong Yan, who was holding the ordinary-looking steel pipe, with fiery eyes.

However, at this moment, no one dared to make a sound.

The strange alteration filled the natives with wonder, and the players were silently awed by this formidable power beyond their own capabilities.

Only Gong Yan's voice calmly reached every corner of the dimly lit cavern—

"We might not be the first to rebel, and certainly won't be the last."

"Your ancestors have done the same, and your descendants might have to shed blood once more for this cause."

"I believe that the future is always radiant and bright, but who knows when that future will come."

"But is it possible, for all this to end with our generation?"

"We may not be able to overturn everything right away, but at least we can fight for some 'freedom' with our attitude..."

"...the freedom to be human!"

In everyone's eyes, even those most secretive and calculating observers momentarily set aside their sordid thoughts.

When they no longer sought to report each other, that fear laced with trepidation and surprise instantaneously vanished.

Perhaps they couldn't be persuaded to take a stand immediately, but at least the plan would not be nipped in the bud from the start.

Gong Yan breathed a slight sigh of relief.

Turning back, she met her companions' eyes, wide with surprise as if seeing her for the first time.

"Distribute the supplies," said Gong Yan, waving her hand and commanding with her usual light laugh.

...

Times change.

All that had happened a week ago flashed by in an instant in Kuang Xin's eyes, as fleeting as a white steed flashing past a crack.

Everyone was willing to work out and to train with equipment.

But that was for themselves and for their future livelihoods as well.

The problem they had left unresolved still persisted until today.

But today was the day they had agreed to launch their attack!

"It's time..." Dai Lian appeared behind Kuang Xin at some point and whispered with a sigh.

He admitted that Yanzi had radiated an unimaginable brilliance that day, but whether these accustomed-to-cowardice NPCs could muster enough courage to fight vigorously was still an uncontrollable chaos for them.

"If no one joins us, should we still go ahead with the attack?"

"Don't worry, we're still here," came Yafei's crisp voice from the dark behind them.

Having known each other for almost ten days, Yafei had gradually come to understand these people during their daily interactions.

They were neither top players created by real-life mega guilds with all resources at their disposal nor the gaming lives of some elite rich kids.

These were just friends brought together by common interests... They adventured together, entertained themselves together, shared similar fates in the game, and thus came here together.

For a mission whose reward turned out not as hefty as imagined, they were resolved to commit all the efforts they had accumulated since they started playing the game.

"You are not alone."

Some ten players followed behind Yafei, emerging together from the shadows.

This was the first known challenge to the gaming world's authoritative power initiated by players, with an undeniable demon lord as their opponent, imbuing their actions with a sense of righteous conviction.

Was there any gaming experience more romantic than this? Even if what awaited them after this might be a total reset.

"Even in failure, let this city remember our names!"

Dai Lian looked around and did not have the heart to interrupt that player's ambitious zeal.

In their internal discussions, everything they talked about was really just a means to complete the mission.

If no one were willing to follow, they would most likely opt for another plan rather than a frontal assault.

To steal some repair fluid to meet obligations wasn't entirely out of the question.

Four people attacking an arsenal heavily guarded seemed always like a flight of fantasy.

Uncertain endeavors were better left undone.

"We won't fail."

Gong Yan's calm voice rose from the entrance of the cave, she who had gotten up early to handle the last bits of trivial matters had just returned.

Because she had taken the initiative to stand out, almost all the affairs within the week had to be completely carried out in person by her.

The manpower they had contacted wasn't limited to just one location; two other groups of sufferers living in underground caves were also chosen to be part of the call to action.

Days of decisiveness had bestowed upon her the aura of a superior, and even with her usual calm and warm smile, she now carried an air of authority.

The unfamiliar ten or so players even regarded her as the first "goddess" of the game!

"Failure, I have never considered it."

"To fail recklessly would be irresponsible to everyone."

Initially, they merely wanted to use these locals as pawns, as stepping stones to complete the mission.

Perhaps these people were pitiable, but in the short period of their initial contact, the players couldn't genuinely empathize with them.

The original plan was purely driven by self-interest and righteousness.

If these natives were unwilling to follow, they might not really charge forward as they had claimed they would.

However, the interactions over the past few days might not have changed others, but they definitely changed themselves...

Gong Yan's gaze was distant, calmly sweeping over the dimness.

She knew, pairs of eyes were watching her.

Everyone had long since awakened.

"Zing!"

The steel pipe that hadn't moved from its place finally left the ground for the first time, with Gong Yan holding the warm steel pipe in her hand due to Spiritual Energy.

"Have you made your decision?"

All was quiet.

No one answered.

Dai Lian and the others had a slight dimness in their eyes.

"The question I didn't ask that day, today is the last time I'll ask you... have you made your decision?"

Still, silence.

In the silent dimness, everyone had already awoken, yet no one made a statement.

Gong Yan nodded slightly, her bangs covering her brows and eyes.

She turned around and commanded softly, "Move out!"

Dai Lian sighed softly and nudged the player beside him, saying, "Move out."

"Move out." A few players swore under their breath yet still stepped out.

At least in that moment, they felt like heroes, cool beyond words!

Just as all the players turned and headed for the cave entrance at that moment...

"Whoosh!"

The synchronized rising in the silent cave seemed extremely harmonious.

Dai Lian, who was walking in the front, looked back in surprise, only to see those silent locals had at some point all grasped their weapons, standing perfectly in every corner of the cave.

The silent formation's power felt oddly orderly at that moment.

"Sir, we don't know what to say," said one of the figures at the front of the formation, clutching the rifle in his arms tightly.

His devout and fervent eyes were fixed on the back of Gong Yan, who had yet to turn around.

"Sir, there's just one thing I know—"

"When you fight, we will follow."

"We are not beasts, nor are we cowards."

"We are humans."

What they initially thought had completely changed. The real change didn't come at the beginning or at the end, but in the... every day of living together.

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...

Gong Yan did not look back as the corner of her mouth curved slightly upwards, having anticipated this scene long ago.

The words one speaks can deceive, but the devoted colors they mask cannot evade the inquiry of Spiritual Energy.

[You have completed a perfect psychological layout, Psychology +8.]

[Psychology +8: Now you can gain the trust of most NPCs more easily through your words, Charisma Performance +8; you also have additional unique advantages in force management and certain technological research.]

Another plus 8, along with the 2 points added last time, makes for a total of 10 points in Charisma enhancement.

Gong Yan's outstanding performance casts a circle of pure white aura around her silhouette in the eyes of all the native inhabitants.

The players following Gong Yan out of the cave marveled, looking at the crude flag she held tightly in her hand with astonishment, "Is the effect of this flag really that strong?"

Managing to gather all these individuals they knew so well for their lackluster performances was an inconceivable achievement for their past selves.

However, on the horizon, two other rising tides of darkness silenced everyone who had emerged from the cave subconsciously.

"What is that?"

"That is..."

Someone recognized the identity of the newcomers from their familiar faces adorned in various clothes.

This cave was not the only one planned; the overflowing resources were distributed to the common people in three different caves.

And the players involved in the distribution of resources knew that the other two caves did not have a flag imbued with Spiritual Energy magic power.

Hence, horrified gazes all converged on the singular glowing figure at this very moment...

"Everyone has come..."

"How did she do it?"

Dai Lian, too, approached Gong Yan excitedly, "They've all come! Even more than our best estimate!"

"So, how do we arrange our next move?" Gu Lan asked in a soft voice.

"We could drown them with a sea of people," said Dai Lian with exhilaration, with a flash of insight on how to complete the mission.

Despite their quartet, the arsenal's defensive forces were indeed formidable.

They had not yet reached a level where they were impervious to blades and bullets, while the other side could hinder their approach with multi-directional machine-gun fire.

If they delayed for too long, guards from other parts of the city would receive the news and come to the support, leaving them no opportunity.

Even if the core elite forces were taken away by that so-called doctor and had not yet returned to the city, the mere "ordinary" guards who had undergone just the first or second surgery were already more than enough for the four of them to handle.

And now...

According to the intelligence gathered by Yafei, there were actually two so-called arsenals:

One is a conventional arsenal, storing the weapons, ammunition, shells, armor, and so forth that the warriors need; the other is their target: storing the Repair Stabilizing Liquid as well as the supplies for the warriors like food, cotton quilts, clothing, and so on.

The latter, due to the high frequency of access required, was purposely separated from the former.

The target arsenal was not very large, so normally, the defensive force was not particularly strong, about half a platoon or so—about fifty to sixty people.

Moreover, not all of these people were stationed at frontline alert positions; if a surprise attack was launched, they could likely get close before the enemy fully reacted.

Once they closed the distance, with their individual combat prowess, they could quickly overtake the majority of the arsenal's guards.

With a crowd of thirteen or fourteen hundred, even if they had to withstand bullets with their bodies, it would be enough to cover for the four of them to forcibly rush to the front of the arsenal.

Before the guards from other parts of the city received the news, they could already be driving away.

The chaos caused by the survivors scattering in all directions would make it impossible for the city's other guards to precisely chase down their small convoy.

Then this mission could be considered a perfect completion.

Nevertheless...

"We can't do that," Gong Yan shook her head.

They had tied these common people to their chariot in the name of dreams, but now to let them march to their deaths for the sake of those dreams—albeit strictly speaking just NPCs—blurred the line between reality and the game world for those who had been immersed for some time.

Even in the game, they could never be so devoid of principles.

"We have to keep them alive..."

Only being alive would allow them to see the so-called tomorrow.

To let them understand that everything they talked about was not mere lip service.

"And don't forget the additional mission given by the adult..."

[Side Quest — The City of Transformation...]

The mission was described quite simply: Help liberate this city of sin.

How could the city's sinfulness be expressed if these most representative groups of "rebellion" were to die?

"We'll follow your lead," Dai Lian responded directly.

Yanzi's capabilities and charisma exhibited during this operation were exceptional, and even he felt he could not do better. Strangely, he felt no frustration or envy, only full of gratification and amazement.

"Then what should we do?" Compared to Dai Lian, Kuang Xin was much more straightforward, directly asking for instructions.

Thinking too much was simply too troublesome.

Where to go? How many to kill?

...

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This is what he excelled at.

"We won't make a move," Gong Yan shook her head, "just crush through."

"Crush through?" Dai Lian looked puzzled.

Gu Lan glanced by the side, his eyes flashing slightly as he asked softly with curiosity, "Where have you been these days? We hardly saw you."

Apart from treating the ordinary people in the various caves, they hadn't seen a trace of Gong Yan.

Day in and out, she was running around mysteriously with Yafei, and they had no clue what Gong Yan was busy with.

"Getting some help..."

Whether it was what Yafei said or what they found out themselves, both indicated one thing, Grey Iron City's rule over its citizens was not absolute.

They did not exploit the monopoly over the necessary resource—Stabilizing Repair Fluid—to forcibly control every individual's actions and thoughts.

Thus, the city harbored a plethora of small factions and gangs that only looked out for themselves, and in Yafei's opinion, during their surprise attack, these factions might even add to their momentum and "assist" them.

Since that was the case, why not turn this uncertainty into a definite opportunity?

They weren't after wealth or profit; they sought one thing: power.

The power of authority.

The only demand from all the small gangs and forces was simple: to watch the show.

Observation could bring pressure.

With the so-called "Doctor" leading the city's core forces away from the city, and the regular garrison troops stationed with other institutions unable to arrive in time to assist, did the half-squad equipped with only a small number of heavy weapons have the courage to face the backlash of "the entire city's" wrath?

This was the only way Gong Yan could think of to accomplish their mission without shedding blood.

"We have helpers?" Upon hearing this, Kuang Xin grinned, showing his large teeth.

In the past few days, under Yafei's guidance, he had already observed the target armory from a distance, and although the guards were numerous in comparison to the four of them, if they were to face a crowd...

The dense crowd behind him had already given him the confidence of assured victory. If there were more people helping, wouldn't they be capable of drowning the enemy in spit alone?

The dense crowd entered the city gates calmly. Although a week's maintenance didn't make them look particularly formidable, the strong confidence following their "belief" revealed an astonishing presence.

Above the city's haphazard high and low structures, gazes, whether surprised or wary, were cast upon this troop.

"They are all our city's people..."

"Who's behind that girl?"

"She never said she had people behind her..."

"But to gather all these hidden rats together, I don't know how she did it..."

"Let's go, let's follow and see."

Silent communications emerged from various places.

Thus, unfamiliar groups of several or dozens emerged from the alleys on either side, trailing behind the main contingent at close or distant intervals, maintaining an ambiguous distance.

"Are those people helping us?"

"Why do they look so strange?"

A few players at the forefront of the troop gathered and murmured among themselves.

"What did the Goddess say? Are our helpers really them?"

"The Goddess said, 'Move forward'."

Move forward...

Move forward...

Countless black dots swarmed out from every corner of the city like ants, following behind the large troop that seemed to emit a "scent of food."

The troop moved slowly forward until it was overwhelming.

The informed armory guards had already blocked the main entrance with fences and set up their few heavy machine guns for defense.

As several calm strangers appeared at the end of the streets, every garrison soldier nervously clenched the handle of their gun.

"Shall we... shall we shoot?" a soldier stammered, asking his direct superior.

The direct superior hesitated and looked to his own superior, who pressed his hand down, signaling everyone to restrain themselves.

The opposition had an imposing presence; if they opened fire rashly, it might be they who would suffer a loss.

It would be better to first see what the other party wanted, then it wouldn't be too late to make a decision.

As the crowd at the end of the street gradually filled in, any place where a person could stand—on the street, beside the road, rooftop of the buildings—was filled with figures.

A heavy, oppressive mass hung weightily over hearts.

"Who are you? What do you want?!" The armory guard officer gripped the loudspeaker, speaking sternly, "I warn you! This is a military supply critical area; unrelated people are not allowed to linger. Disperse within three minutes, or we will resort to armed measures!"

A moment of silence.

Almost all eyes were focused on the seemingly delicate and frail figure leading the group.

Gong Yan smiled and brushed a stray lock of hair from her temple, taking two steps forward with the morning breeze against her face. Her voice, neither harsh nor soft, easily spread through the push of Spiritual Energy, "Sir, we are here for two matters."

"First, to grant every civilian in Grey Iron City the right to freely choose whether to undergo surgery."

"Second, to ensure that every civilian who has undergone surgery, regardless of success or failure, can maintain a normal standard of living."

"You shouldn't treat the Stabilizing Repair Fluid, which everyone needs, as a monopoly commodity and restrict its distribution; nor should you discard those who fail the surgery as if they were a burden."

"The foul stench pervades the city, not because of the garbage you all have created, which is everywhere..."

Slightly reassured by the fence, the guard officer gripped the megaphone tightly, "The requests you've put forward can be reported upward, but the specific outcomes are beyond our control... "

"It's not a request, you know..." Gong Yan said, smiling gently, her delicate figure swaying like a small white flower in the wind.

"It's a notice."

Gong Yan took a step forward.

So did the silent ranks on the long street, uniformly taking a step forward at the same time.

Just one step, and the nerves of every guard soldier were stretched to the limit.

Sweat beaded in their palms, their eyes fixated on what lay ahead, anxiously glancing sideways at their own commanding officer.

"..." The guard officer's eyes darted around, trying to find a way out.

But all he saw was a sea of silent figures, black and oppressive.

People...

So many people...

Just people...

The "tyranny" that the city had endured over the years faced a wild backlash.

The stench of the city...

It would eventually swallow everything...

The other party's words hammered in his heart like a heavy blow.

Cold sweat trickled down his forehead as the guard officer became increasingly panicked, struggling within himself.

'No!'

'No way!'

'I can't just give in!'

'I am the armory's guard officer!'

'I am a soldier of this city!'

...

Observing the guard officer's tense demeanor, sweat pouring out as if he were struggling, the bosses of the forces lurking in the crowd felt a sudden pang of alarm.

'We've been duped!'

"That girl deceived us!"

"She really didn't need our help, but by coming here, we've already served as endorsers for her!"

No one could have anticipated the current standoff, let alone the pressure it was placing on the guard officer.

However, if they put themselves in the guard officer's shoes, it was easy to see how the pressure from the "entire city" made his fifty or sixty guards seem so insignificant.

And to make matters worse, the "Doctor" had taken his most elite team and left the city without a trace...

"The timing was so perfect!"

Someone grumbled through clenched teeth.

But there was nothing they could do but silently wait for the event to unfold naturally.

Perhaps they could reap exorbitant profits from the underground trade of the monopolized goods, but they never shared a dime with the lower echelons of their operatives.

And at this moment, even if they wanted to retreat... they'd have to see if their own men on the ground would agree to it.

They had been used!

...

"No!" Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, the guard officer finally spoke up slowly, "No way."

'Perhaps the city's rules aren't quite right, but at the very least I should do what I must.'

The guard officer raised his head, looking directly at Gong Yan, his forehead still slick with sweat, but his eyes firmer than ever before, "Please leave! This is my final warning: this place is a military supply zone..."

Chapter 496 Expel

The voice had not completely fallen.

Gong Yan, who had been smiling all along, stole a glance towards her side just before the adversary showed an uncooperative attitude.

Dai Lian, already in on the plan from the journey over, immediately understood.

To coerce the enemy into submission with overwhelming momentum, thus taking the military warehouse without bloodshed, one not only needed a grand posture but also a display of forceful military intimidation at a critical moment.

It was not necessary to show too much; just the tip of the iceberg could be even more terrifying.

Thus Dai Lian bent his bow and nocked an arrow, his movements sharp.

With a "whoosh," the arrow cut through the air.

The forceful power instantly pierced through the center of the guard officer's brow. The warriors, tense and only waiting for orders, had not even realized what had happened when the officer's body stiffened and then began to fall backward.

Only then did the blood-hole in his forehead start to steadily ooze out red and white fluids.

"Bang!"

The sound of the body hitting the ground seemed to smash into everyone's hearts. The sight of the feminine figure still smiling sweetly, the guard officer's deputy trembled all over. He immediately raised his arms and called out to his soldiers, "Don't fire! Don't fire!"

He then, extremely tense, looked over at Gong Yan and said, "We won't resist! We won't resist! The place is yours now, my lord."

The other party was powerful and had superior forces.

Their highest-ranking officer had already died in the line of duty. Given the turn of events, there was no need for those remaining to engage in a desperate struggle against the dark mass of people before them.

And considering that the demands of those swarming masses might represent the will of the people, with the absence of the "Doctor," it seemed unlikely that anyone could stand against them.

They truly had been "scared"...

"The place is yours now," the guard deputy saluted respectfully, to the utmost degree of deference.

...

"This place... is now ours..." Stepping into the warehouse, Dai Lian still could hardly believe it, murmuring softly to himself.

A city nearly the same size as Blackwater City had succumbed to their handful of days of planning, directly succeeding in occupying the city's military warehouse.

In Blackwater City, such an event was almost unimaginable.

"Because the rules of this city are too pathological..."

Gong Yan shook her head lightly, her tone subdued.

Apart from the highest echelon, the "Doctor," almost everyone in the city disagreed with the current structure, expressing deep grievances from the top down.

Not to mention that today's actions had the advantage of timing and logistics, and more reinforcements from other parts of the city hadn't arrived in time.

If the remaining guard officers had been any sterner, they would have had to launch a full assault.

Not only would there have been significant casualties but, if they did fight, those forces watching from behind might not have intervened. If they had failed to seize control quickly, by the time the reinforcements arrived, it might all have been a one-way trip.

But fortunately... everything went as well as they could have hoped.

"What should we do next?"

"Distribute the supplies... aside from what we need for our mission, give the rest away," Gong Yan commanded with a wave of her hand.

Perhaps for them, the mission was almost complete.

But for the people in this city, today's operation was just the start of their rebellion.

Whether this momentary victory could be turned into more, or extinguished with the next blow, it was all possible.

Watching Gong Yan's eyes sweep over the cheering citizens, Gu Lan asked thoughtfully, "What else do you want to do?"

"I can't leave them behind," Gong Yan's lips pressed tightly, her brow furrowed, "but the deadline for our mission is approaching..."

Gu Lan, hearing the implications in Gong Yan's words, immediately countered, "We won't leave you here alone. If we leave, we leave together; if we stay, we stay together."

It had to be said, in this venture to Grey Iron City, Gong Yan's displayed capability and charisma were astonishing.

"It's not as if we can leave whenever we want to..." Gong Yan's eyes looked into the distance.

The noise from the bustling crowds distributing supplies was ignored, leaving only the sight of a group of well-dressed figures approaching through the ranks of various powers that had followed, their approach gradual but steady.

"Let's go." The commotion around her wasn't critical, the city's "reaction" to these events was what truly mattered, "Let's meet them."

Aside from a few players overseeing the distribution of goods, all the other players gathered behind Gong Yan. Kuang Xin placed a hand on Gong Yan's shoulder, grinning like nothing was amiss, and said, "It's all good, we're right behind you. If they don't agree, then we fight our way out!"

Gong Yan brushed her disheveled hair aside, her eyes and brows smiling, "All right... then we'll fight our way out."

...

"The city does not pursue your offensive actions today; you may also take all the spoils of war you've acquired today," said the group of prominent figures, surprisingly calm, without a hint of anger towards the lowly civilians' retaliation of the day.

The authoritative elder at the front stepped aside, gesturing toward the city gates and said evenly, "But as a price for your actions... starting today, all those present here are forbidden from appearing within the territory of Grey Iron City ever again."

Exile.

The supplies from a small military warehouse weren't significant enough to cause the city any real pain. The true aristocrats of the city didn't feel much compulsion to forcibly suppress the desperate counterattack from the lower classes.

Chapter 497 Expel

Massacring everyone is too bloody, and it would be troublesome to settle scores with the various gangs and factions that have followed us here.

Instead, these "troublemakers" who either refuse to undergo surgery or have failed the procedure have finally all gathered together. Expelling them from the country outright can restore calm to the city once again.

Only by cutting away the rotten flesh can the remaining body grow healthy once more.

In this dark and chaotic era, it's nearly impossible for ordinary people without the city's protection to survive.

Whether these people die of thirst or hunger outside the city's influence, get eaten by other creatures, or realize the hardship of life outside and come back begging for forgiveness or scrounge to stay alive in the shadows, it's all good for the city.

With this as a warning, other city dwellers who harbor ambitions due to this act of defiance will be better able to appreciate the city's importance to every individual.

Demands? What demands?

Do civilians think they can have a say in the city's hierarchy just because they band together?

Naive!

Do you really think the city doesn't know about those filthy crevices outside the walls, where filth accumulates?

A heap of garbage that we couldn't be bothered to look at twice gathers together, which is also a great opportunity to sweep them out of the body.

If you think the rules of this city are unfair, then leave the city!

A man nearby, grinning and holding a pile of supplies, heard what the noble had said. He stiffened and stood there dumbfounded.

He had ventured into the wilderness far from the city and seen nothing but endless wild grass on the vast land.

The howling of wild beasts stretched from the distant horizon to the sky, with not a single spot in sight suitable for human habitation.

The panic of leaving the city's protection and struggling to survive in the wilderness swept over him in an instant.

The supplies he was holding scattered unconsciously to the ground as he ran over, head knocking against the floor like a madman, "No! My lord! No! Don't send me away! Don't send me away!"

As he knocked his head on the ground, he frantically pushed away the various supplies that he had just treasured, as if his life depended on it, "I don't want them! I don't want them! I want nothing! I'll undergo the surgery! My lord! I'll do the surgery!"

Between a chance and certain death, he just wanted to gamble on his luck.

Watching the man kneeling and knocking his head, the nobles dressed in black tailcoats slightly pursed their lips without a word, arrogantly raising their heads, waiting to see how these "successfully rebelled" leaders would deal with it.

Not far away, a native in charge of distributing supplies saw this and immediately dropped what he was doing and rushed over.

His belief in the "Glorious Goddess" sincerely fulfilled him, and he felt nothing but disdain for the man's pleas for mercy, kicking the groveling man while the devout believer loudly scolded, "Get up! Get the hell up! Have some dignity! Sheng Yan has allowed us to finally stand tall as humans, and now you're crawling back to being a dog!"

Another figure hurried past this "devout believer," knelt beside the first man, and likewise begged, "My lords! We know we've been wrong! We won't dare again! We'll undergo the surgery right now! Please, lords, don't drive us out of the city!"

The nobles dressed in black tailcoats stood tall and proud, exchanging glances of satisfaction with each other.

'See... just with a casual command, these wretches start fighting among themselves.'

The leading elder glanced toward the direction of the other forces watching eagerly from a distance, and with a sneer of contempt for the two men groveling on the ground, said, "It's a shame, my people... You've made the wrong choice and must face the consequences. Allowing you to take these supplies and leave is the greatest mercy we can offer."

"Let's go."

Gong Yan's face remained calm, showing no sign of joy or sorrow, as she turned away.

Watching the young leader's frustrated retreat, the tailcoats' chins lifted slightly, proud as victorious roosters.

...

"Everyone, take the supplies you've been given and go!"

At this command, most people still followed Gong Yan and the others, holding the supplies they'd just received, filled with endless confusion and the possibility of excitement or enthusiasm, as they headed for the city gates.

Dai Lian turned back to look at the dense crowd behind him, his heart filled with worry, "Where are we going to take them?"

Gong Yan's lips slightly curled up, completely lacking the seriousness she had in the face of the city's nobles, "I just hope our lady doesn't blame us for picking up so many extra hands..."

"My lord..." Dai Lian's voice trailed off hesitantly.

Their lord might not care.

"But can we really bring all those people back with us?"

The wilderness in the background of this game was definitely not a playful amusement park.

When the four of them arrived, if it wasn't for their small target and strong capabilities, they might not have been able to traverse the vast space between the two cities.

With a team of more than a thousand people, besides themselves, the remaining players, including the combat-capable natives, were actually not numerous, and their strength was certainly not strong.

If they hadn't been unable to make it in the city, why would these people join them in such a risky endeavor where they risked their heads at their belts?

How to bring these people back to Blackwater City was a big problem.

"I don't know~" Gong Yan spread her hands.

After leaving the previous counterattack, she seemed to have returned to the kind-hearted girl who always smiled gently, speaking softly with laughter as if she had never been worried or anxious.

The girl looked back at the team following her and said with a smile, "But they all trust us~"

"They trust you..." Kuang Xin muttered softly.

Looking at Gong Yan's profile, he felt that the girl had become much brighter than when he first saw her.

Perhaps, he should learn from Yanzi?

...

[Feedback from the mission: Your insight +0.3, Physical fitness +0.2, Reflex +0.3, Mystique +0.3, Mastery of Long-Range Weapons Experience +12.]

[Feedback from the mission: Your Science — Psychology +4.]

[Psychology +4: Now that you have gained the trust of a larger population, you can arrange more tasks in advance. The stackable amount for the same type of mission can be increased by +4, consuming the corresponding daily authority quota.]

Bai E was somewhat surprised to receive the mission feedback.

The feedback on combat abilities was scarce, indicating that those players didn't get much opportunity to take action.

The significant increase in Science — Psychology, however, suggested that he had perhaps bamboozled those native NPCs into working for them?

But had the mission been completed or not?

Bai E grew anxious without more information.

Time was slipping away second by second, and the time left for the players was definitely not abundant.

As the days drew closer, the two warriors from Grey Iron City at Nova's side inched closer to the brink of genetic breakdown every day.

He could not go back on the promises he made; breaking them would not only hurt those who trusted him but would also likely leave an indelible stain on his own conscience.

'Or perhaps, go to meet them?' he thought.

After returning from the server ruins, he had already completed the overall handover and reporting of this mission. His involvement as an ordinary warrior wasn't crucial, and fulfilling the overall escort process was the full extent of his duty.

As for whether the main objective of the trip was achieved, what did that have to do with him, a mere foot soldier?

With no urgent battles at hand and the Mech Armored Corps training not requiring his presence, Bai E, once again enjoying his freedom, felt lively.

'Why not take everyone for another round near Grey Iron City?' he mused.

As for the excuse? That was easy.

Why not just accept a minor mission in the direction of Grey Iron City?

Chapter 498 Encounter

"I'll scout ahead."

The caravan had departed, and there always needed to be someone to act as a scout, to dispel worries and avoid dangers.

As the one with the strongest ability in perception within the team, Dai Lian naturally took on the responsibility without hesitation.

"Go ahead, we'll follow behind at a slower pace," Gong Yan smiled and responded.

"I need two more people."

After all, in case of encountering any situation, besides going back to report, there needed to be people who would continue to keep watch. Dai Lian couldn't possibly do the work of several people on his own.

Currently, apart from his own team of four, everyone in the large group listened only to Gong Yan; he couldn't command them.

"No problem," Gong Yan said, then turned back and looked at those behind her, "Wen Bo, Wen Yan, go with Dai."

"Okay!"

"Okay!"

...

The noisy sounds were so conspicuous that they had alerted Dai Lian before his eyes could see the source.

After deftly climbing up a rugged little stone hill, the sight that unfolded before him was even more revealing—

A messy, tumultuous sea of green.

Seeing the figures jumping up and down, Dai Lian's eyes immediately narrowed into dangerous slits.

Beastmen!

He had encountered these creatures once before, and their nearly indestructible nature had left a deep impression on him.

Even if bombarded by a Minefield Array, their robust bodies wouldn't die; had it not been for his own arrow, inherited from the Elder, their team of players on a mission would have probably been wiped out in one fell swoop.

And even with an arrow from the Elder, it wasn't enough to kill these powerful creatures instantly. Last time, it was more about driving them away than actually winning.

And this time... there were at least hundreds of them!

Such a large group couldn't be allowed to encounter the ordinary people's caravan following behind!

"Wen Yan, go back quickly and tell them to stop, it's best to retreat backward," he said.

"Yes!"

The beastmen's large group was right in front of the path the team was taking; perhaps the team behind would have to consider detouring?

But the first thing to ensure was... not to let the enemy notice them.

It was difficult for a large group of ordinary people numbering in the thousands to move, so hoping not to be discovered by the enemy could only depend on luck.

Watching Wang Wenyan at the foot of the small hill running quickly backward after receiving the order, Dai Lian sighed softly and muttered to himself, "Let's hope for some good luck..."

With that, he turned back to look towards the distant green sea once more.

The beastmen didn't seem to know what they were doing, chaotically gathering in groups, with two beastmen who couldn't see eye to eye starting to scuffle among themselves.

Amidst the punches and kicks, some debris could be seen flying around, whether it was teeth being knocked out or some other small parts of their bodies.

As for the rest of the beastmen, they had all formed a ring, inside which only two green-skins of slightly different sizes were dueling.

Their movements were fierce.

"What are those things?" Wang Wenbo asked curiously on the side.

They had been born in Grey Iron City and had never had the chance to experience anything outside of it.

Though they knew about the existence of such creatures from the game's promotional material, they had never seen them firsthand.

Let alone the fact that his basic attributes were no match for Dai Lian. He could only see a green tide moving on the distant plains and couldn't make out any details.

Dai Lian replied with a pondering tone, "Beastmen."

Hearing Dai Lian's response, Wang Wenbo curiously looked at Dai Lian's profile and asked, "Have you encountered them before?"

Finding new content in the game was exciting for Wang Wenbo.

It seemed Sister's decision was right; joining these outsiders made the game content more interesting.

They were players, not those poor natives who were truly struggling to survive in this world.

Having fun was far more important than any danger.

"We've encountered them."

"Are they tough?"

"Almost impossible to kill."

"Then you guys?"

"Scared them away."

Dai Lian didn't say any more but just crouched down, trying to minimize the area of his body exposed beyond the stone.

At the same distance, if they could see the beastmen, then the beastmen could also see them.

Though beastmen might not carefully scan their surroundings, it was not worth the risk to be careless.

Watching Wang Wenbo on the side straining his eyes to see the distance clearly, Dai Lian took a small object out from his bosom and handed it to him.

"Here—be careful, don't damage it. It's quite expensive."

"Binoculars?" Wang Wenbo carefully took them, pleasantly surprised.

He put the small black object before his eyes, and the view of the distant scene instantly became clear.

Wang Wenbo controlled the field of view of the lens, slowly sweeping through the beastmen horde.

Green faces with fierce fangs, muscular bodies.

Most beastmen were bald, only some of them had various unique decorations on their heads that looked like hair... along with pieces of iron armor on their bodies.

The view from the lens shifted, finally focusing on the center of attention for all the beastmen.

Two beastmen significantly sturdier than the surrounding ones were confronting each other. One's iron armor covered only the routine vital parts of the body, while the other, even bulkier beastmen, was fully armored.

Even though the armor pieces, in comparison to their massive bodies, looked laughably small and were quite crude.

From the slight heaving of their bodies, it was evident that both contestants were expending a lot of energy in this duel.

"Their weapons and armor seem so rudimentary..." Wang Wenbo mumbled to himself, holding the binoculars.

Facing a group of "wild beasts" that resembled a bunch of primitives, he felt a sudden urge to make a splash.

Chapter 499 Encounter 2

"Weapons are not important to them," Dai Lian shook his head, not taking the situation lightly at all.

To him, the gear of such creatures was mere decoration; their true reliance lay in their formidable bodies that allowed them to rampage freely.

Therefore, it was perfectly reasonable to see a scene where a thick axe full of spikes got deflected as it chopped onto what seemed like a rusted piece of iron armor.

Although the armor was subpar, the weapons were just as lackluster.

Wang Wenbo's eyes glimmered with excitement as he asked, "What do we do now?"

"Wait," Dai Lian's gaze was icy as he closely watched every move of the Orc Tribe's surge.

"Wait for them to leave, or... draw closer."

If they left, naturally it meant waiting for these orcs to leave before the large group behind them continued to advance.

If they drew closer... it might mean the large group at their rear would need to retreat and take a detour.

"Can't we fight?" Wang Wenbo licked his lips, somewhat reluctant.

"Fight?" Dai Lian glanced at the players beside him, "Go if you want to die."

"But they don't have many numbers..." Wang Wenbo was not quite convinced, although this guy was pretty strong, he was too cautious, lacking the boldness of "Sheng Yan." No wonder he could only play the role of a scout and enforcer in the team.

Dai Lian shook his head slightly, explaining with a hint of helplessness, "One of them is worth ten of us."

The first time they had encountered the orcs, the number wasn't large, but still, the players' brigade on a joint mission was sent scurrying like frightened mice.

Back then, the combat power of the players was quite decent, but now they were ailing, elderly, and sick. Though they numbered over a thousand, in a real fight, those who could effectively contribute might number only about a hundred or two—how could they possibly stand a chance against several hundred orcs?

"We can only avoid them." Saying this, Dai Lian paused, quickly devising other plans in his mind, "Of course, if you really want to engage with them, you can see if others share your sentiment. If you can form a small team, you might try drawing them in a different direction... Of course, that's assuming these orcs truly migrate towards our main force at the rear."

He knew the nature of players was to seek adventure and confrontation.

Asking them to hide like turtles went against many players' nature, but if the situation was urgent, throwing out some bait to mislead this Orc Tribe would undoubtedly be the most appropriate strategy.

"If you manage to survive in their hands, just continue heading southwest. Our main force isn't moving fast; you should be able to catch up," he said.

"..." Wang Wenbo twisted his mouth and fell silent.

Too cautious.

More than a thousand against a few hundred.

The advantage is ours.

So what if some NPCs die~ what does it have to do with us players if the original inhabitants of the game world live or die?

Wouldn't there be a pile of loot and experience points after annihilating this so-called Orc Tribe?

And now they ask the players to form a small team to serve as bait? Few against many is just asking to be killed, isn't it?

He wouldn't do such a thing.

So everything fell silent for a moment.

There were new changes in the distant fighting ring.

The orc who looked slightly smaller and had shabby armor was inevitably showing signs of decline after a prolonged confrontation.

However, just as he was sent spinning by an axe, a cunning glint flashed in the eyes of the smaller orc.

A small sleeve dagger that had been hidden under the piece of iron armor was gripped in his sturdy fingers and, in a lightning-quick motion, he spun around and shot it towards the head of the large and apparently proud brute behind him.

"Whizz!"

The furious winds, oblivious until now, only whipped up in the path of the flying sleeve dagger, but by that time, the large, green, and hideously ugly head was already gone.

"Blub blub blub~"

It landed far off, bouncing a few times on the ground.

The neck, separated from the body, was a mess of flesh and blood, yet the eyes on the head were still rolling around, seemingly pondering what had just happened.

Faced with the smaller orc who they had fully expected to lose, the onlooking orcs collectively fell silent, then suddenly erupted into chaos.

"waaaaaagh!"

"waaaaaagh!"

The calls shook the heavens.

In the Orc Tribe, the weakest challenging the strongest and emerging victorious was the most popular form of entertainment.

As long as one wins, no matter what means or techniques are used, that one is acknowledged as the king by all!

Amid the thunderous cheering of his underlings, the smaller-bodied orc strode towards the headless torso that still stood in place, dazedly.

Lifting his large foot, he kicked over the headless body. The victorious orc snatched the full-body armor off the loser's body and haphazardly donned it on his ill-fitting frame.

"waaaaagh!" The victor raised his arms and howled as he stepped on the restless severed head beneath his foot.

And thus, followers began to flock to him.

"waaaaagh!"

Under the watchful eyes of all the orcs, the body of this orc underwent a visible transformation.

The green muscles instantly began to swell as if being inflated, rapidly enlarging his size, and after subsiding, was even larger than the loser's frame had been.

The armor that was already a tight fit on his body was now stretched even tighter, and the iron helmet on his head was comically pushed up, making him look somewhat ridiculous.

The orc's fierce face, intertwined with a somewhat "simple-hearted" laugh, made the scene both eerie and comical.

"Enlarged... he's enlarged..." Wang Wenbo muttered in disbelief after witnessing everything.

Dai Lian's eyes were also filled with solemnity as he remained silent.

Was this some special sacrificial ritual?

Or a trait of the orc species?

Official game information about the Orc Tribe was sparse, leaving their secrets for players to explore within the game.

The previous battles had not revealed such a scene. Could it be that this enlarged orc would become one of the Orc Tribe's bosses?

"Eek!"

"Clatter, clatter, clatter~"

A startled cry next to him instantly made Dai Lian vigilant. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the delicate telescope rolling down the rugged rocky surface, stopping only when it reached a small groove.

"What happened?"

Wen Bo, who had subconsciously tossed away the telescope in his hand, met Dai Lian's eyes, "He... he seems to have looked over here."

The victor was turning around, welcoming the fervent gaze of his kin. However, as he swept his gaze in their direction, he seemed to casually glance over at them.

Wen Bo, who had seen everything clearly through the telescope, had met the orc's gaze and felt the brute's violent aura hit him, causing him to throw away the precious telescope in fright.

Even in the game, the orc's presence was frighteningly realistic, enough to make one's heart tremble.

It was only then that he realized Dai Lian's caution was not unfounded.

"What... what should we do?"

"What should we do?" Dai Lian had already jumped down to pick up the telescope that Wen Bo had thrown away, "Go back! Tell them to move quickly and avoid."

The victor's movements were not just about the glance Wen Bo had seen. With a commanding gesture from the victor, all the orc younglings rushed towards their direction as if they had gone mad.

Dai Lian, having picked up the telescope, stuffed it into his chest and shared his plan with Wen Bo, "I'll lead them away as much as possible. You go back and tell them to prepare for battle, to cover everyone's retreat."

"Got it!" Wen Bo hastily responded before turning and leaping away, quickly disappearing into the distance.

Gong Yan, who had already received the message, did not wait for the next one to arrive. The movements of orcs were unpredictable, and even constant surveillance might not accurately control their path.

Evading these orcs required maximal avoidance.

"Order everyone to return the way we came. We can't just wait for the message upfront!" Sheng Yan decided immediately upon receiving the message.

Chapter 500 Razor Face

Dai Lian, in his close-fitting attire, was hanging on the rock wall when the Vanguard Orcs reached a distance that was safe yet sufficiently close. From afar, he sneered at them and raised a middle finger, his mocking intent unmistakably evident in his smile.

The human face is capable of expressing a variety of subtle emotions, clear enough to convey the intended sentiment even in the eyes of Orcs, who thought all humans looked alike.

Nothing could be more obvious than the derisive mockery in that gesture, and the provoked Vanguard Orcs, as if driven mad, quickened their pace even more.

Their roaring "waaaagh" was indiscernible as either anger or excitement.

Watching the encroaching horde of Orcs, Dai Lian took one last look in the direction where Wang Wenbo had fled.

The figure had already disappeared from sight...

He drew an arrow, bent his bow, and set the string.

Aiming at the straight line where the densest group of Orcs and the victor were, Dai Lian drew the bowstring taut, his recently and modestly developed Spiritual Energy transforming into an endless source of power, surging into the shaft of the arrow in his hand.

After a brief accumulation of force, he let off a powerful shot that tore through the air, striking straight at the heart!

"Whoosh!"

The arrow whipped up a gale, bringing forth a torrential rain of green blood.

The finely shredded green flesh fluttering in the whirlwind of air, through the gaping hole torn in a chest, the Orc with the knife-face could see the human clad in black in the distance.

It was him!

It was him!

A fervent breath began to rise on his body, which was not originally that excited.

Although all humans looked the same to him, he remembered this feeling... the glory of this arrow.

It was for this human adversary that he trained hard in the art of throwing knives, pondering whether he could counter the other's archery with his own skill.

He wanted to defeat that human!

And he had even given himself a name—Knife-Face Orc—with the hope that one day he could stand before that human and tell him he was different from the other children! He was special!

As he practiced, he also roamed the wilderness, hoping to encounter that only human who had made a lasting impression on him.

However... despite searching far and wide, he never found that human again, and none of the smaller human tribes he inquired with knew of this bow-wielding human warrior.

Of course, the big cities of humans were entirely off-limits for Knife-Face Orc.

After leaving a message with the smaller tribes that said, "If you see that warrior, remember to tell him Knife-Face Orc is looking for him," he left decisively.

During his wanderings, he failed to find the human warrior first and inadvertently merged with another large Orc Tribe where they had to choose a new leader.

Among the Orcs, it was undoubtedly the fist that decided who could speak.

Though the fight was hard, fortunately, he was the victor.

Such internal battles surely got the blood pumping, but something seemed to be missing.

And when that familiar arrow once again appeared before his eyes, Knife-Face Orc finally understood what that sense of lacking was during his internal struggles.

Danger, excitement, and the razor's edge slashing close to the face were what truly exhilarated him.

"I'm comin' for ya!" Knife-Face Orc, excited to the point of nearly going mad, instantly changed his previously languid demeanor and began to runaway towards Dai Lian's location.

"Outta the way, outta the way!" Any runts in his path were easily toppled by his massive green hands.

From a distance, Dai Lian could only see a dust tornado racing towards him along the ground.

"..." Having just let loose an arrow, Dai Lian was preparing to take advantage of the distance to shoot another for a bit of experience gain, when he suddenly found that his arrow had stirred up a hornet's nest.

The largest Orc in the group, who seemed to be the leader, sped up tremendously, charging towards him with unbelievable speed.

The ground shook slightly with each step he took, causing several red boulders to tumble down the mountain.

Forgetting the idea of shooting another arrow, Dai Lian packed up his longbow and turned to run.

He alone with a bow could not face the hundreds of Orcs; even an adult encountering so many Orcs charging head-on would have to avoid them with a headache.

The existence of military forces in the game showed that even in this world, a powerful person's strength was ultimately limited. Given enough numbers, even fodder could overwhelm so-called "strong people."

Not to mention these Orcs were certainly no fodder; even a single one taken out might be considered elite among humans.

Having never witnessed a truly high-level battle in this game world, Dai Lian could only make some judgments and imaginings in his mind based on his current knowledge. The battle he had seen in Black Street against the greed demon's descent onto the human realm was all he knew about high-level battles.

But that was just two or three of the Arbitration Place's officers, who could probably have handled the situation without anyone getting hurt had they been together from the start, instead of the last officer arriving late. If all three officers had been together from the beginning, maybe the demon of fear wouldn't have even been able to hurt anyone.

Now, facing a horde of elite monsters alone, Dai Lian had not the slightest thought of resistance.

The rough terrain, Dai Lian's physical fitness, and reflex attributes were still excellent; at least among players, he could be considered way ahead, But against the Orc leader who had undergone several "promotions," he was still somewhat lacking.