

Oracle 562

Chapter 562 - Second Ambush

"Peh! Why should I regret anything?" Bhuzkoc smugly looked at him, shoving him to the side with a flick of his hand. Jake went along with the motion, looking like he was losing the round, but only his opponent knew his hand didn't touch anything.

The Nawai chief had a slight doubt for the first time, but when he saw the complicated expression on Jake's face mixing rage and apprehension he cast away his suspicions. Even if this human was up to no good, his faction had the numerical advantage in terms of Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers.

One of his trusted men, the Nawai clad in a tailored greenish velvet great coat who had hampered them with several Soul Spells earlier wanted to say something, but seeing the stubborn and fierce expression of his leader he shook his head and kept his thoughts to himself.

'This guy is too incompetent. His death would be a blessing for our Shibai Tribe.'

Upon realizing that his barbarian leader had failed to notice the heavy thumping of approaching footsteps and the unmistakable cacophony of their combined numbers, Fumdalf could only harbor the contempt he felt in his heart.

Bhuzkoc was a strength Evolver type, Perception had never been his strong point, but his Intelligence truly fell short...

Exchanging brief glances with several other Nawai core-members who had a good head on their shoulders, he sighed as he found that he was far from the only one thinking of mutiny. After all, the Nawai were primarily a warlike race that only respected strength.

Might makes right. This idiom remained true even in the Mirror Universe, but only when it was overwhelming. Bhuzkoc may have been the prodigy warrior of their tribe, but that was before the Oracle gave them the chance to evolve their brains.

Right now, the Nawai chief still thought he was respected, but he didn't realize that half of the Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers who had followed him through all his Ordeals already had power akin to his own. Even those who were a little weaker had a chance to dethrone him by cooperating.

Fumdalf, as his right hand man, knew a little more about Bhuzkoc and knew that he was not so simple, but it remained the truth that he was not nearly as invincible as he claimed. He had tried to cover it up, but the beating he had received from that Third-Ordeal Evolver had not gone unnoticed.

Other Fourth-Ordeal Evolvers were also in the mansion at the time and a beating of such violence could not have escaped their notice. If they did play ignorant, it was only to avoid bruising their leader's ego.

Still, regardless of the fate of his leader, Fumdalf had to preserve the faction's strength. Besides being attached to his tribe, he had friends here that he didn't want to see die foolishly by falling into a trap.

"Chief, enemies approaching."

Overlooking his right-hand man's warning tone, a toothy, enthusiastic smile stretched across Bhuzkoc's face.

"Perfect. Let's kill them all."

Somewhat exasperated, Fumdalf cleared his throat and added dully,

"They're a bit different this time..."

"You worry too much. We're only at the first floo- Hmm?" Bhuzkoc paused, his large ears twitching imperceptibly as he finally caught the distant din.

Gradually changing his expression, his face scrunching up with each passing second, the barbarian leader turned to look for Jake and offer him his place back in the vanguard, but he quivered with rage when he discovered that he and his men had already repositioned themselves at the tail end.

Now that it had been proven that fighting these monsters was worthwhile, neither Melkree nor Shaktilar had found any reason to stop him. The alien Ice Mage Elephant was of a different mold than Bhuzkoc and while he too desired those easy rewards, he preferred to watch carefully during the first few rounds to optimally calibrate his strategy. With Jake closing the line at least he didn't have to worry about an enemy ambush from behind.

A shame he would still have to fight this time. The plodding march of the enemy army had come close enough to be heard by all and the earth was quaking slightly as they approached. The refugees under Bhuzkoc's command were already making ugly faces, beginning to regret their previous impatience.

A few minutes later, a flood of Digestor goblins poured out of the huge tunnel in front of them by the hundreds, as if it were trying to belch out all its hellish monstrosities.

If these were the same goblins as in the previous skirmish, not even ten thousand would have threatened the integrity of their army. But these were different.

If the ones before were starving, rickety wanderers, these goblins were like an official army. Measuring a head taller than their inferior companions, their muscles were strong and firm while all of them were equipped with a few pieces of rudimentary silver armor as well as a short sword and a rondache of the same metal.

Behind them stood a dozen individuals riding a kind of hideous short-legged hyena, whose hairless skin was covered with pestilential boils. These riders had an intermediate morphology between that of a goblin like Xort and a short and stocky human like Diccon, and were consequently taller, their height approaching that of a 10 or 11 year old bodybuilder.

With his photographic memory and Xi's systematic data compilation, Jake had no trouble spotting the similarities. One of these goblins really did look like Diccon, and if his mother hadn't died years ago the guy in question would have wondered if she hadn't been sequestered by these monsters for reproductive purposes.

Likewise, their purulent mounts also resembled many of the rampaging beasts that had fled the horde of Digestors a few moments earlier. Unlike the frightened beasts, the silver glint in the pupils of these monsters was fearless.

If that wasn't enough, more regiments of goblin Digestors poured in from the other galleries overlooking the inaccessible balconies, this time armed with slings, bows, arrows and rudimentary javelins. Their weapons were still forged from the same recognizable silver chitin.

The four factions lined up in the hall were now surrounded by the goblin army in front and on the sides by the archers posted on the balconies. The faction that was currently free of any threat for the moment was none other than... the rearguard.

In other words, the Myrtharian Nerds.

How could Bhuzkoc and the other leading factions not be aware of this. Shaktilar had no regrets, it was a measured risk, but Melkree and Bhuzkoc would have no choice but to join the fight to limit their losses and test these new enemies.

When it came down to it, Bhuzkoc was still a fierce Fourth-Ordeal Evolver who had passed the mental test of his second Ordeal. Even in front of a horde of Rank 10 Digestors, he would have kept his fighting spirit, let alone this bunch of lowlife.

"Goddamn it! If you're seeking death, I shall grant it to you! Come!" Bhuzkoc roared as he materialized his huge double-edged axe almost his size. As he gripped it, his muscles swelled as the rock beneath his feet began to crack slightly. From the looks of it, this axe made of an unknown alloy weighed at least 3 or 4 tons.

The pent-up auras of his subordinates all erupted forth at once, brimming with killing intent and fighting spirit. None of these Third and Fourth-Ordeals Evolvers had any intention of running away.

ROOOARR!

The distant roar that had preceded the first skirmish echoed Bhuzkoc's defiant war cry, giving the signal to attack. As one, the goblin Digestors let out a deranged, squealing cry before swooping down on them like a swarm of locusts.

Simultaneously, the monsters on the balconies opened fire, shooting their arrows and throwing their rocks and javelins at them. Because there were no stairs or elevators to reach these balconies, the normal refugees were caught off guard, unable to react other than to take cover under their shields for those who had them or their less fortunate comrades for the others. The absence of torches on these balconies did not help, preventing the victims of these goblin archers from identifying their killer.

Several dozen refugees in the service of Bhuzkoc or Melkree were riddled with arrows and other projectiles in an instant, their faces frozen in a grimace of regretful stupor.

Others, more clever and responsive, took refuge in the shadow of the veteran Evolvers and let them repel these invisible projectiles. Fumdalf raised his hand in front of him and formed several mudras with his fingers while staring at one of the balconies. Immediately afterwards, the arrow fire stopped and several dozen inert corpses fell from the railings.

Other strong Evolvers demonstrated their own techniques, each with their own specialty. Bhuzkoc's faction was called the Shibai Tribe and most of its core members were fierce Nawai warriors. Faced with the arrows and javelins of these daring goblins, most of them promptly leapt into the air with superhuman speed towards their enemies thinking they were safe on their high balconies.

Boom! BANG! Clang! BOOM!

Several of these balconies collapsed on the first impact. Armed with their huge swords, halberds, axes or war hammers, these Evolvers showed the full extent of their talent by barreling over their enemies like unstoppable bulldozers.

However, not everything went according to plan. On two of these balconies, the axe and club of the two Nawai Evolvers met their nemesis. A violent impact stopped them dead in their tracks, numbing the hand and arm holding their weapon to the bone.

Before they could recover, a crimson bolt of lightning struck their bodies, paralyzing them momentarily, followed by several supersonic arrows that pierced their hearts and both eyes simultaneously.. The two lifeless Nawai fell limply to the ground, crashing with a thud onto the rocky slabs.