Governor 1001

Chapter 1001

In the sky, the massive flag symbolizing the Imperial Aquila flies alongside the simple yet powerful emblem of the Alliance's Thunder Phoenix, billowing in the strong wind.

Huge holographic projection devices from orbital satellites are directed at the center of the square, synchronizing the scene to every corner of Terra, and in the future, to every galaxy of the Empire.

This moment is destined to be recorded in history.

On the high platform, the core power and strength of the new and old Empire converged. The solemn and majestic Imperial Guard Ten Thousand Man Team stands monument-like on both sides; Dante of the Blood Angels, representatives of major core war groups, the red Archbishop of the National Church, senior members of the Tribunal, and a few surviving and confirmed loyal High Lord family members...

And without exception, everyone's gaze focuses on the forefront of the high platform.

Robert, the Regent King of the Empire. His finely crafted blue-gold Power Armor, tempered by ten thousand years of war, gleams under the heavenly light.

When Terra's ancient and restored gigantic clock struck the twelfth long chime, the entire New Life Square, and the Imperial Territory connected through radio waves, fell into a breathless silence.

Countless gazes, whether in person or through images, are focused on this high platform.

Robert, the Son of God, the Regent King of the Empire, steps forward resolutely.

"People of the Empire! Guardians of Terra! Those rebuilding homes among the ruins of Holy Terra! Warriors at the forefront fortresses of the Imperial expedition, waiting in readiness! Comrades in distant Star Domains, awaiting the light of dawn! Brave souls navigating the Scarlet Scar separating Order and Chaos! — Listen and engrave my voice in your hearts!"

"We have just crossed an abyss! An abyss marking the darkest and most hopeless period in humanity's millennia-long history!"

"The heart of the Empire, the holy city of mankind, the home of our souls — Holy Terra, has endured unprecedented desecration and corruption! The claws of Demons, hateful traitors, nearly shattered humanity's last bastion into dust! Trillions of lives withered in suffering, the palaces bearing glory turned to ruin, the land nurturing hope fell into dead silence! This searing pain, this bone-deep shame, will be eternally etched in the soul of the Empire!"

"It warns us that if the foundation of the Empire decays, even ten thousand years of glory can be destroyed in an instant!"

"However, forever remember — that heart still beats! Terra stands firm! The Human Empire has never submitted! All this, because of you — because of your courage! Because of your defiance in despair! Because of your steadfastness on the ruins!"

"I see common soldiers, wielding rudimentary weapons, not yielding an inch behind, battling Plague Walkers to their last breath! I see nuns and priests, igniting fire with pure faith, purifying the shadows of despair! I see Interstellar Warriors — the Emperor's Angels — fighting like towering mountains in the filthy quagmire, only to protect the land where the Emperor once walked!"

"And finally, I witnessed that heroic torrent from the Dark Side of the Empire! They crossed the vast Star Sea torn by Chaos, rushing to aid the capital on the brink of destruction! With steely will and unparalleled sacrifice, they carved a bloody path to ultimate victory! The Titan roars of the Alliance, the gleaming blades of mortal elites, the silhouettes of fearless warriors — their names shall be immortal with Terra!"

"Their arrival was more than a mere battlefield reversal. Their efficiency! Their resilience! Their ability to rebuild order atop ruins! Like a blazing dawn, they infused dying Terra with life! They proved to us one thing: order can be restored! Hope can be revived! When the entire Empire eliminates obsolete internal strife, breaks rigid shackles, and embraces the road of rebirth, human civilization will once again stand proudly!"

"The bloated, rigid, endlessly inefficient, crisis-indifferent bureaucracy of the old Empire was the incubator and accelerator of this catastrophe! It betrayed the expectations of the Father Divine

Emperor! It betrayed the trust of the Empire's billions of citizens! When the shadow of Chaos first loomed, when the Prime Minister's fall planted seeds of disaster, this vast machine turned a blind eye, even becoming accomplices to spreading corruption! It has proven its own decay and ineffectiveness — it must be changed! It is being changed!"

"Today! What we welcome is an unprecedented rebirth in the Empire's history! It is the rebirth proclaimed by human governance drawing lessons from its failures in ashes! To this end, the seat of the Regent King of the Empire will jointly exercise supreme power with the Imperial Prime Minister's office, forming the Supreme Council representing all loyal forces of the Empire!"

"This is the New Empire we shall build together! An Empire that dares to face historical wounds, boldly admits its mistakes, commits to reform, and steadfastly faces the future! An Empire that remembers the greatness and pain of sacrifices, yet never indulges in sorrow, and will transform grief into a driving force for progress!"

"The flames of Holy Terra's reconstruction have been ignited! The edge of the Imperial expedition has never cooled! Those territories lost in the calamity! Those worlds tainted and enslaved by the shadow of Chaos! They call for the light of order in the darkness! Await liberation by the Empire's sword! Await the embrace of the mother! Await us to bring them — back under the glorious order of human civilization!"

"We shall embark on a grand expedition, symbolizing humanity's resilience, fleets will depart from Holy Terra, bringing the glory of the New Empire to every inch of the world that should be illuminated by the Emperor's radiance!"

Chapter 1001: (Part 2)

"In the name of The Emperor! In the name of Holy Terra! In the name of the countless comrades who perished for today's dawn! The flame of human civilization—may it burn eternal!"

Robert's voice was like an invisible giant hammer, striking heavily into the soul of every listener.

After a brief, heart-stopping silence, the entire New Life Square erupted like a long-dormant volcano with a roar that shook the earth!

Countless shouts of "For The Emperor!", "Long live Terra!", and "Long live the New Empire!" converged into an emotional tide.

The Imperial Guards responded with a thunderous vow, striking their breastplates with their fists.

On the podium, even the most reserved old Empire nobles straightened their spines.

Robert nodded slightly, acknowledging the surging crowd below. Then, with a barely perceptible sense of relief and a familiar, slightly helpless yet gratified expression of "just as expected," he calmly took a step back and turned toward Gu Hang, simultaneously making an unmistakably clear invitation gesture toward the lens of the holographic projector.

The camera instantly captured it, and the focus of billions of eyes shifted like a tide.

Gu Hang’s gentle and profound smile, as deep as the Star Sea, remained unchanged.

He walked forward calmly to the position where Robert stood moments ago. His voice, needing no electronic amplification, resonated clearly in every ear, like a calm valley stream, yet carried an inexplicable penetrating and rational soothing power:

"The Regent King has bestowed upon us a definition of this era filled with strength and historical weight—a brand-new Empire."

"But what does ’new’ mean?"

"This question interrogates us: how can we prevent our New Empire from repeating the mistakes of the Old Empire?"

"The cornerstone of the New Empire is not merely reliant on that lofty throne!" Gu Hang’s voice suddenly became firm and powerful, carrying a conviction as strong as steel, "but on the countless individuals who burn themselves out, silently sacrificing, fighting for the future of an entire civilization, maintaining order, and rebuilding homes!"

"Only humanity truly deserves that exalted acclamation!"

"Then, how should the New Empire respond to this brilliance? How should it protect the precious foundation gained through rational sacrifice? His Majesty the Regent King has pointed out the necessity of reformation. Its core is in constructing a mechanism that allows this brilliance to blossom to its fullest and makes this sacrifice most valuable—a governance system that is efficient, transparent, service-oriented, and deeply rooted in the recognition of billions of people. It must enable every ordinary spark to illuminate the way forward, rather than become a new shackle."

"The reconstruction process of Terra is the testament to the strength of this system!"

"Fifteen years ago, the post-war Holy Terra was plagued by corruption and chaos; these were the real experiences of people. But now, water supply, sewage, energy, medical care, food distribution... these lifeblood systems are being restored and revitalized."

"This is no divine miracle!" His voice carried objective authority, "Engineers, doctors, teachers, technical experts, civil servants from all worlds of the Alliance, fought side by side with the survivors of Terra, day and night, creating a miracle through clear goal setting, scientific planning, strict execution standards, and selfless dedication."

"This is the most precious ’gift’ the Dark Side of the Empire has given Holy Terra! It doesn’t lie in gold and silver wealth, but is a paragon forged through countless battles, capable of organizing and operating efficiently even in the deepest despair of human civilization!"

"Without the ’red tape’ of old tradition, it does not conform to some people’s noble vision of ’dignity’... But amidst the ruins, at the edge of war, it has already demonstrated its unparalleled vitality and adaptability!"

"One of the core tasks of the New Empire is to fully integrate the essence of this system—the pursuit of efficiency, respect for rules and science, and acknowledgment of the inherent value and dignity of every ’person’—into every inch of the Empire’s flesh and blood, to reshape a body completely different from any era past, truly oriented toward the future Star Sea!"

"But the New Empire requires the entire heartland of Terra, every world that has not yet fallen, to assemble swiftly and resolutely! Resources! Soldiers! Technology! Talent! Belief!—must converge into an invincible iron torrent, surging incessantly toward territories tainted by darkness!"

"His Majesty the Regent King and I, along with the soon-to-operate Supreme Council, will reorganize Empire resources with the force of a thunderstorm, constructing the most efficient and reliable expeditionary operation system. We will use Terra's rebirth today as a cornerstone, reclaiming the light of order and civilization, inch by inch, from the clutches of chaos!"

"This is also the first solemn promise of the New Empire: to lay a solid foundation for survival for humanity—for all of humanity! To free us from fear, to save us from extinction!" Gu Hang's gaze was as solid as reality, sweeping over every face below, his tone exceedingly solemn.

"The second solemn promise of the New Empire: to guarantee every survivor and every descendant—the right to pursue a better life! The basic rights to be free from fear and scarcity! The right to pursue dignity and happiness in life!"

...

After the grand ceremony came the grand parade, the celebrations in various places, bustling with joy.

But these festivities belonged to the people.

The two leaders of the Empire, in reality, only made a brief appearance at the ceremony, then quickly returned to their own work.

Gu Hang needless to say, he had too many things to be busy with.

He stayed at the Storm God Kingdom, maintained the Thunder Torch Tower, suppressed the corruption in the entire area that had been occupied by the Alliance; observed the subspace waves, witnessed the Emperor's attempts bit by bit to mend and calm the Scarlet Scar, occasionally putting effort to assist...

As for the affairs of the real world, although he no longer needed to personally handle much, he delegated more work to the Alliance Government—oh no, it should be called the Empire Government now.

Including a series of former high-ranking officials of the Alliance Government, such as Osenia and Lambert, who have now transitioned to high-ranking officials of the Empire. The former is the Prime Minister of the Imperial Executive Yuan, and the latter has also become the Minister of Justice of the Empire Legal Affairs Department.

To be honest, the current Imperial Central Government is actually just the Alliance Central Government.

One team, two labels.

In the future—or rather, now—the Empire's matters are the Alliance's matters.

All powers of the old Empire, with the progression of the expedition, will be completely reshuffled.

The Dark Side Expedition of the Alliance has already been executing this.

Next, the scale of the expedition will be further expanded.

That will be Robert's work.

Though referred to as the 'Regent King', he actually won't have much 'rule' to 'regent'. His main task at present is to assemble the Imperial Expeditionary Force to launch what he previously referred to in his declaration as the 'Indomitable Expedition'.

This Indomitable Expedition is likely to be divided into three directions.

Northward, along the path of the real universe, towards the Infinite Cosmos.

Meanwhile, armies have been formed on the side of the Infinite Cosmos, advancing southward. Both sides strive to achieve a victorious meeting within decades.

To the west, is the weakest branch, primarily for exploration.

To the southeast, is the largest branch, aiming to link up with the western army of the Alliance’s own Dark Side Expedition within five years.

...

The western army led by Yan Fangxu, already decades ago, had struck from the Infinite Cosmos side, also forming armies advancing south. Both sides strive to achieve a victorious meeting within decades.

To the west, is the weakest branch, primarily for exploration.

To the southeast, is the largest branch, aiming to link up with the western army of the Alliance’s own Dark Side Expedition within five years.

Chapter 1002: The Drums of the Third Empire

System. It might not be ’traditional’, not so full of noble ’ritual’, but it has shown its strong vitality amidst the ruins, in the midst of war, and under the relentless advance of chaos. One of the core tasks of the New Empire is to integrate the essence of this system—this respect for efficiency, rules, science, and the intrinsic value of ’human’—into the bloodline of the Empire, forging an Empire body different from the past, truly facing the future."

Gu Hang’s tone became more determined, his gaze as sharp as electricity, seemingly able to penetrate the space and cast onto the dark battle zone:

"And where is this newborn ship of the Empire heading? There is only one answer: the Dark Side! Jian Qi’s conspiracy shattered in Terra’s orbit, Nagor’s decayed core burned on Terra’s surface! But these setbacks are far from enough! The spirit of the Dark Side Expedition is timeless, and today it is even more urgent! Those fellow humans still enslaved by Chaos are wailing! Those desecrated worlds are groaning in pain! The victory of the Battle of Terra’s Defense is just a turning point, not the end! The day the Third Empire declares its establishment is the time to comprehensively deepen, accelerate, and expand the Dark Side Expedition! The power of the Alliance is the vanguard, but the New Empire needs the entire Terra hinterland, needs the steadfast support of every world not yet fallen! Resources, troops, technology, talent, faith converged into a steel torrent!"

"His Majesty the Regent King and I, along with the soon-to-be-formed Supreme Council, will reorganize the Empire's resources with thunderous momentum, establishing the most efficient expedition supply system. On the Dark Side, 'Warlord' Martins Salas will continue to command the Empire's sword, expanding the gains! We will use Terra's victory as a foundation, reclaiming the light of order and civilization, inch by inch, from shadowed territories!"

Gu Hang's voice reached a fervent peak:

"Let the carcasses of the old Empire be eternally buried! Let the shadows of Chaos tremble beneath our feet! The war drums of the Third Empire have sounded! These drums beat not for personal glory, not for imperial hegemony, but for the continuance of humanity! For the lost starlight to return to order!

Chapter 1002: New Empire, New Contradictions

Gu Hang held a report, his eyebrows slightly furrowed.

Even though he was the Imperial Prime Minister, he was not residing in the Empire for long periods. Even at the founding ceremony of the New Empire, his so-called 'personal' appearance was merely an avatar.

He couldn't really leave Rage Owl Star.

Rage Owl Star is the seat of the Storm God Kingdom, a place he cannot afford to leave for long.

After all, his greatest duty is 'suppression.'

Only once he has successfully suppressed everything can Old Deng free up his hands to slowly fix the major issue of the Scarlet Scar.

Before Gu Hang, 'suppression' was something he had to handle on his own.

In this 'filthy pit' of a universe, one could say everyone has their prison sentence to serve.

However, although he cannot visit Holy Terra frequently, Gu Hang still has a good grasp of the overall political situation of the Empire.

The main method of achieving this, naturally, is through the Alliance Government.

The current Alliance Government mainly operates in the east, in Rage Owl Star and the Tianma Star Sector, this 'Land of the Rising Dragon.'

The Alliance Central Government and the Imperial Central Government are one organization with two different names, theoretically stationed in Holy Terra, the center of the Empire.

This is indeed the plan for the future.

But for now, they have not taken up permanent residence there.

Currently, the focus is still on the Alliance, spending more time in the Alliance regions.

But this doesn't mean that the control over Holy Terra is weak.

Firstly, the Alliance—or rather, the Empire Government—has a specific Capital Government for Holy Terra, handling the unique affairs of this special world, with administrative elites drawn from all over the Alliance.

The importance placed on Alliance Holy Terra is not even less than that of Comoros.

The scale of this Capital Government is high, capable of operating independently and executing the Alliance Central strategies effectively.

Secondly, there is convenient transportation.

The leadership of the Alliance Central Government, specifically leaders like Osenia and others, despite not residing permanently in Holy Terra, would visit Holy Terra once every two weeks or even every week and stay for two days.

In the past, this would have been impossible.

The journey to Holy Terra was too far, taking much time—not to mention the travel issues, communication itself wasn't reliable.

In this scenario, it was impossible to effectively govern the Imperial Central region from the Empire's frontier.

But things are different now.

Although communication has worsened due to the presence of the Scarlet Scar, the effectiveness of Comoros controlled by the Alliance has been immense. For efficiency, ultra-miniature Veil Spirit Gates have been set up in the most important government buildings of the central government in Rage Owl Star.

On the other hand, in Comoros, a small government-use port has been opened, corresponding to the administrative offices within Holy Terra.

For this, the Alliance Government had a prolonged dispute with the Imperial Guard. After all, these administrative offices were within the Imperial Palace. The Imperial Guard refused due to palace security. Ultimately, Gu Hang and Robert intervened together to barely persuade Yan Xinzhen.

With these three doors in three places, officials with high enough authority like Osenia, if she wishes, could open the door of her office, arrive at the ultra-miniature Veil Spirit Gate in the same building, walk through, reach Comoros, take a few more steps to the corresponding spirit gate, and enter, arriving at Holy Terra.

The entire process might not even take fifteen minutes.

With the teleportation ability of Comoros, it became possible for the Alliance Government to simultaneously govern the Dark Side of the Empire and Holy Terra.

Currently, the report Gu Hang is looking at is from the central government of the New Empire.

What made him frown was that the main issues mentioned on it were rather troublesome—the ever-increasing fiscal pressure on the Alliance.

...

The governance of the Alliance is quite good. Worlds conquered by the Dark Side Expedition often recover economically well in a short time, providing fuel supply for future expeditions.

However, this economic recovery has a prerequisite—investment.

Development doesn't come from nowhere. Builders, technology, resources... all these are indispensable.

Investment in construction across various regions occupies a tremendous amount of funds.

Many newly conquered worlds not only fail to bring immediate returns but instead become a financial burden.

After years of Dark Side Expedition, the Alliance has developed a comprehensive rebuilding work process. But no matter how good the process, it still takes time to slowly build up the world and turn finances positive.

However, before turning positive, there is a financial burden.

Simultaneously, the current Dark Side Expeditions of the Alliance are divided into five main fronts—the Central Front Army, the East, West, and South Front Armies, plus an Angel Corps. Each one is of massive scale, and even without increasing troops, merely maintaining their current scale and sustaining their continuous operations requires astronomical funding.

This alone would be manageable, after all the Alliance has sustained a balance through the century-long expedition.

However, once the Alliance received Holy Terra and assumed the responsibilities of the Imperial Central, this balance became somewhat disrupted.

The scale of Holy Terra is too vast, with seven hundred billion survivors and a massive amount of basic infrastructure that needs reconstruction, numerous factories that must be rebuilt, requiring an enormous investment.

According to the Alliance's previous experience, it's equivalent to instantly incorporating an entire Star Domain into the Alliance's governancy, and hundreds of worlds all requiring reinvestment.

This has significantly increased economic pressure.

Fortunately, there is Mars nearby.

Mars has provided great assistance, yet they themselves are not in an easy situation. Mars' production also requires a significant amount of raw material resources and a large workforce. Even with the discounts from the Sect of Mechanics, they still need to make a profit to some extent.

Placing orders with them also costs money.

In essence, at the founding ceremony, Gu Hang, on behalf of the New Empire's government, promised the residents of Holy Terra a better life.

This requires sufficient construction, and the construction period is long; recovery of costs and visible significant returns require a considerable amount of time.

But here lies a contradiction: Robert hopes to push forward building a strong Expeditionary Force.

Massive ground soldiers, colossal new Starfighter Battle Groups, vast fleets...

Building these requires massive funding.

In terms of scale, if Robert's demands were fully met, it would be equivalent to constructing two and a half times the scale of Alliance's Front Armies.

While the funding investment is one thing, it also demands a huge portion of production capacity and manpower, which would slow down the original economic development and recovery time.

This contradiction has persisted for a long period, and now it finally cannot be endured any longer, arriving at Gu Hang's desk.

Chapter 1003: The Greatness of Ordinary People

We have countless times witnessed the cornerstone supporting the survival of civilization—the indelible light within the human soul! When a Warlord Level Titan falls with a thunderous crash under the claws of the Demon Prince, the pilot transforms the last second of life into overloaded core energy, just to tear open a path for comrades' charge; when warriors of the Glory Guard Corps, facing the monstrous Nagor beasts like mountains, form a defense line with their flesh and blood, shouting 'Every second for the rear is worth fighting for'; when our Yulin warriors, knowing they will die, still unhesitatingly face the demon's giant scythe, just to open that gate to victory... That is not just courage, it is the brilliance of extreme rationality after deeply understanding one's own mission and fully merging the insignificant self into the torrent of human civilization's survival!"

"This is the greatness of ordinary people! They have never been candles in the wind, but the original Starfire that ignites the civilization's star! The cornerstone of the New Empire does not solely rely on those high thrones!" Gu Hang's voice suddenly becomes sonorous and forceful, carrying a belief as solid as steel, "It is these millions who burn themselves, silently contribute, fight for the tomorrow of an entire civilization, guard order, and rebuild homes! They are truly worthy of the acclaim of 'Long live!'"

Before the words were finished, the area where the alliance officials' representatives, grassroots workers involved in reconstruction, and their families were located on the square exploded into thunderous, sincere and enthusiastic applause and heart-felt shouts of "Long live!"

Chapter 1003: The Dilemma of Expansion and Development

Robert's expeditionary force, it was truly vast.

He wished to recruit a significant number of soldiers for training, these people needed to be sourced from Holy Terra and from the nearest Nest Capital World—Necromund.

However, drawing such a large population away from construction would significantly undermine the economic development and investment of the Alliance.

To build more Starfighter Battle Groups, a considerable amount of population is needed for recruitment and selection as well.

The genetic seed stocks on Holy Terra and Mars would need to be utilized. The Original Casting technology developed by the Great Sage Kao'er would play a role; if there weren't enough genetic seeds, they could even directly extract genetic fragments from Robert and re-cultivate them—although this was rarely done.

In short, the genetic seeds weren't particularly a big issue.

But the issue was the population, and the money.

Interstellar Warriors aren't simply made and done with; orders for a massive amount of weapons and equipment need to be placed frantically on Mars and the many Founding Worlds and Industrial Worlds of the Alliance.

An entire set of equipment for an Interstellar Warrior is very expensive, not to mention equipping an entire standardized battle group, which would also require various heavy equipment and ships.

In addition to these ground forces, Robert's expedition naturally required a large number of warships.

The Solar Fleet was an important component, but Robert still found it insufficient. Moreover, the Solar Fleet couldn't be entirely used for his unyielding expedition, as Holy Terra also needed to retain ships for defense.

This meant that a large number of new ships needed to be constructed.

The orders for Mars were already packed, and they had repeatedly sent letters asking: the Terra Government requested that all kinds of industrial consumer goods, infrastructure necessities, and various factory equipment production be given high priority. However, the Command Center from Robert's unyielding expedition demanded that all kinds of military products be given the highest priority...

The conflicting orders left them confused about how to proceed.

How was Gu Hang supposed to resolve this contradiction?

...

Without even thinking about it, among these two real contradictions, Gu Hang naturally chose to prioritize development before going to war.

According to his philosophy, the territories conquered were considered core territories for development, all needed agricultural development, thus the benefits of war were never immediate or present, but looking towards the future.

To be honest, this was unlike any expedition conducted by the Human Empire in the past.

In past Imperial expeditions, there were immediate benefits. As long as they won victories, they could sustain the war through the gains of war.

The reason was simple—if they conquered non-humans, they would undertake an extinction-level plunder; even when reclaiming human worlds, it was merely changing from destruction-level plundering to exploitation-level plundering.

The Empire's expeditionary forces always adhered to one viewpoint: the current sacrifices were for a greater goal.

Whenever the army was short on food and armaments, whenever the rear military factories lacked raw materials, workers, and energy, the quickest solution was plundering and enslavement.

As for the destruction caused to local societies... it frequently existed objectively.

The destruction of war was objectively present, and the subsequent over-exploitation would turn a once possibly prosperous world into one of decline.

If luck was on their side and peace ensued after the war, then even under the pressure of an Imperial Tax, perhaps the vitality could slowly recover; if luck was bad and the war dragged on for a long time, a world with severely damaged vitality would struggle to recover, and the Empire usually wouldn't invest casually in reconstruction, leaving it to themselves.

However, the Alliance didn't fight wars this way.

Sometimes, Gu Hang would rather expand the army less and extend the expedition longer, as long as the foundation was solidly laid.

It's precisely these solid foundations, one world after another, recovering from darkness, chaos, and poverty, that contribute back to the expedition, gradually forming a snowball effect, creating the outward appearance of a 'prosperous' Alliance today.

Where is the prosperity? It's all accumulated bit by bit!

In the past century of expeditions, the Alliance found this model successful and worthy of long-term adherence. The same applied to Holy Terra.

Building up Holy Terra, even if it doesn't fully restore to its previous peak, a recovery of sixty or seventy percent would already be excellent.

Gu Hang would prefer Robert's unyielding expedition to slow down, as long as the construction is done well first.

He decided to personally talk to Robert about this issue.

...

Robert was not oblivious to the Alliance's strategy. However, his conversation with Gu Hang still ended in a somewhat unpleasant manner.

This wasn't about understanding or comprehending.

It's a matter of position rather than intellect.

Robert actually agreed with the Alliance's mode of expedition. Although there would be greater short-term pressure, the foundation would be more stable, and the future potential would be greater. The Alliance's current state of being couldn't be separated from their solid groundwork over decades.

However, everything in the world has a limit.

If every world had to be well-established before launching an expedition, many worlds that could have been saved would potentially be lost due to delays.

Robert agreed that Holy Terra should indeed be well constructed, and he understood that once Holy Terra regained its vitality, it would be very beneficial in the long run for his unyielding expedition.

However, the irrefutable issue was that whatever choice was made, at its core, it still had to serve the expedition.

Being excessively focused on construction, to the point where the expedition's progress is being dragged particularly slowly...

Such scenarios did occur during the early national expedition era. Some groups clearly suffered lessons because of it.

Construction was also for the expedition, and sometimes there was no need to go to such extremes.

Besides these factors, another consideration was that he was the leader of the unyielding expedition, the Regent King of the Empire, and the Empire Government should adhere to his requirements.

How could they go against it?

This diverged from what was initially agreed!

However, after the conversation with Gu Hang, despite the displeasure, he ultimately...

Conceded.

On one hand, he felt the firmness in Gu Hang's attitude.

On the other hand, Gu Hang also presented a solution.

After hearing it, Robert's face turned a bit dark, but... he ultimately chose to agree.

Chapter 1004: I Have Served the Empire!

Holy Terra, Nest Capital Top Layer of Indinea.

Among thousands of nest capitals on this human capital planet, Indinea was not particularly extraordinary.

However, one family gained fame.

Its name is Kafiora.

Before the Great Cataclysm, they were not among the top, but they were at least one of the prominent noble families on Holy Terra. The family had produced three Empire Prime Ministers, and during the Great Cataclysm, a Deputy Secretary of the Imperial Taxation Department came from their family.

Besides high officials, this family, with thousands of core and peripheral members, wielded immense power and influence in their origin place, Indinea Nest Capital, leveraging their power and connections in the Imperial Central Government.

Then came the Terra Campaign.

This war was a huge disaster for any noble family on Holy Terra, and Kafiora was no exception.

A severe Chaos corruption also erupted within the Nest Capital of Indinea.

But they did one thing right that significantly changed the fate of the entire family, unlike those families utterly destroyed during the Terra Campaign.

They did not collude but decisively cut off the rotten parts of the family, executing those members corrupted by Slaanesh and took on the noble responsibility of leading the people of Indinea Nest Capital to resist Chaos.

Although they had to go underground due to their inability to curb the large-scale outbreak of Chaos corruption at the peak of the Siege of Terra, they did not abandon resistance. They continued purging corruption within their ranks, rescuing the populace, and succeeded in holding on until the counterattack phase, even providing some assistance to the Imperial Army entering Indinea.

Their efforts were rewarded after the war. Many family members sacrificed themselves during the Chaos War, but those who survived rose to high-ranking positions. They not only secured many positions locally in Indinea but also entered the Central Government, assuming high-level official roles.

When the Imperial Central Government and the Holy Terra Capital Government were established, to ensure a proportionate number of locals within the government, officials had to be selected from local noble families.

This was a necessary compromise for stable political transition.

If a compromise had to be made, why not use a family like Kafiora?

As a result, they were in high spirits for quite some time.

Though times had changed, great chaos brought great opportunities!

But just when the entire family was bustling with joy and eagerness, ill news arrived.

An entire team of elites from the Legal Department surrounded the Kafiora family estate without warning.

The family was incredulous at such an event—they were deeply rooted, if not local emperors, in Indinea, yet had received no prior word of the Legal Department's action.

Moreover, they were puzzled as to why the Legal Department was troubling them.

They even suspected at one point that it was Chaos Traitors pretending to be from the Empire Legal Affairs Department, coming to harass them.

Of course, this possibility was soon ruled out. They quickly confirmed the identity of the visitors; they were indeed from the Legal Department, led by Angel Granier, a prominent figure. She came from the Alliance and became one of the special executive directors in the Empire Legal Affairs Department, stirring up several major cases within just a year. Many families barely surviving the disaster of the Terra War fell to this 'she-devil.'

But the Kafiora family never expected Angel to come for them.

By all rights, they had made the right bet! They had contributed to the Empire!

No matter how frightened, they could only maintain composure and engage with this ’she-devil.’

As expected, she opened with an intimidating power display.

One charge after another was laid before them.

The Kafiora family was profoundly aggrieved!

Were these charges true?

Indeed, they were true.

Regardless of what the previous Legal Department was like, the current one wouldn’t fabricate evidence.

It had that level of integrity.

However, stretching interpretations and flexible enforcement were not uncommon tactics.

Especially in politics, where most times it’s not about right or wrong, but about stance.

At the moment, they were encountering just such a thing.

They were being convicted for crimes committed by peripheral family members, even events from decades ago, before the Terra War, were being used to indict the entire family!

Many charges, under normal circumstances, were trivial matters for a family of their stature. Particularly the most core members who had attained positions as officials were always extremely scrupulous. The dirty work was done by others in the family, and at necessary times, like now, these individuals could be discarded as scapegoats.

But clearly, now it’s not enough to discard scapegoats; they must know what Angel wants.

Do they really intend to kill the donkey when the grinding is done, even slaughtering such a ’rooted’ Terra Noble?

Don’t they fear inciting opposition and anger from all local forces on Terra?!

The rebel forces underground are not completely annihilated, corner them and they’ll all fight to the death!

Despite their internal rage, they still had to bow and scrape when speaking with Angel.

Even when the highest-ranking official in the family had reached the level of Assistant Minister, a mere step away from Deputy Prime Minister, they had to humble themselves before Angel, who hadn’t even been promoted to Deputy Secretary.

In private solo meetings, they finally understood the conditions set by Angel.

The scapegoats definitely had to be handed over; otherwise, how could these charges be withdrawn once presented?

However, beyond the charges, the Kafiora family had to be dismantled, with all the resources, factories, and workers bound to their servitude... all productivity had to be ’liberated.’ A sum would be allocated by the capital government to purchase all these industries.

Though the price was somewhat below market value, it wasn’t outrageously low.

However, was the price the key issue?

This wasn’t about slaughtering the Kafiora family, but it was tantamount to eradicating them!

Family members split, all family assets acquired, what meaning did the family have left?

They could no longer sustain family members' political futures through economic strength, nor develop family businesses through reciprocal political power. What difference did such a family have from death?

Chapter 1005: Dismantling the Family

In the Kafiora family's meeting room, there were only four people.

Angel, along with three family heads.

After she finished talking about her so-called terms, the three heads found it hard to maintain their expressions, their faces inevitably looking grim.

The atmosphere in the meeting room became silent and tense.

Yet, the more tense they became, the more relaxed Angel seemed, as if she couldn't see the occasional glint of fierceness in their eyes.

She crossed her legs and placed her hands on her abdomen, adopting a rather leisurely posture, and said to the three of the Kafiora family:

"Actually, you only have three choices right now."

"You can give the order for your family guards to charge in and kill me, and then count on those guards to protect you as you break out of the mansion."

"However, firstly, you might not be able to kill me. After all, I've undergone rigorous agent training, excelled in it, and received the highest score in crisis escape training during my session. You can try to see if I can escape."

"Secondly, it doesn't matter if I die here or if you hold me hostage. The elite forces outside from the Legal Department are ordered that if you act violently, they will mercilessly eliminate all life within the encirclement, regardless of whether I'm alive."

"Finally, even if a few of you manage to escape by chance, what does it matter? All assets will still be seized and nationalized, and you can only linger in the dark with those hiding rebels, with the final outcome being no different."

After hearing her words, the heavy expressions of the three remained unchanged.

In their hearts, perhaps they've long wished to tear Angel to pieces, but they certainly can see sense in her words. They've never seriously considered turning hostile and engaging, as the result would be almost as grim as public suicide.

Angel smiled with satisfaction. She clapped her hands and said with a grin, "Very well, it seems we've reached a preliminary consensus. Let's talk about your second option next."

"You can also choose to pretend to agree to my demands now, and afterward, figure out ways to oppose them, or use your so-called political connections, or contact the rebels, to counter these conditions after the fact."

"But I suggest you think carefully. Can your political connections really work? I'm afraid not. The Empire's political landscape is currently dominated by our people; of the remaining locals like you, if they're not obeying the Empire's orders, restructuring their families, becoming good and pure officials, then like you, they will be swiftly exterminated."

"Can contacting the rebels do you any good? No, if those rebels continue to survive in the dark, they might carry on, as the thorough cleanup of Holy Terra's thousands of Nest Capitals can't be completed quickly. But you certainly wouldn't want to live with them in the sewers; if they are to rise and assist you overtly, it will only hasten their own destruction."

The members of the Kafiora family still said nothing.

But in reality, what Angel said was indeed what they were thinking.

Outright refusal is impossible; today would be do-or-die; but the world is not just black and white, they could agree now but leverage numerous gray areas in actual execution and operation to maneuver.

Policy-wise, dismantling the family while in reality still maintaining personal dependence; claiming industry nationalization, yet from the workers on the factory floor to the management level, all controlled by the Kafiora family, making nationalization no different than non-nationalization...

This is just surface compliance, not to mention leveraging the Alliance's name to implement policy to the extreme. You dismantle my family, I'll dismantle everyone's family in Indinea, creating widespread resentment in this Nest Capital, then unite with other families from other Nest Capitals...

Directly mingling with rebels and living in the sewers certainly won't do; however, efforts to suppress bandits can be somewhat ineffective, after all, we've all been family dismantled. Those Chaos Rebel Army members were also local residents, they have myriad ties, their grasp of local news and intelligence is particularly strong which is quite understandable...

These are thoughts running through the heads of the three Kafiora family heads.

They were almost resolved to act in this way.

As for Angel's talked about consequences and threats... they do care, and they are concerned.

But the more they care, the more cautiously they aim to act afterward, trying utmost not to leave any evidence.

There must be resistance.

There's never been an order from above that makes the entire chain operate exactly as imagined.

Angel saw through it but didn't say much.

She simply mentioned a few incidents in other Nest Capitals, certain families' outcomes.

The core idea is: Since soldiers could be brought in today, surrounding the house, it proves the Central Government and Alliance Government's determination. Any subsequent uncovering of errors will mean extinction with thunderous means.

There's precedent, and sufficient strength guarantee from the Alliance that necessitates careful consideration.

After saying these, she smilingly proposed her so-called third item:

"Of course, there's a third choice."

"According to the Alliance's requirements, dismantle the family, all Kafioras either scatter to different Nest Capitals or join the Unyielding Expedition. The Alliance's rank system will be implemented, Kafiora talents will gain high ranks, and in Holy Terra's industries, in countless worlds reconquered by the Empire, they will exert their wisdom and abilities."

"You are capable, your family members received education, experienced affairs, possess far-sighted vision superior to ordinary people, those capable enough will undoubtedly rise."

"In the future Empire, perhaps there will no longer be a political collective named 'Kafiora'; but every Kafiora family member will spread through this universe, living more prosperously than now."

"The choice is yours."

"Oh, by the way, let me tell you a piece of news."

"Assistant Minister of the Imperial Taxation Department, Sirabi Kafeira, has submitted an administrative request for surname change, not yet approved. However, his appointment to Deputy Premier of the Department of Taxation has already been issued."

"It’s uncertain whether he will be Deputy Premier Kafiora, or bear some other surname."

The three heads of the family looked at each other, with their expressions dim.

Chapter 1006: Don’t Block the Way

When Angel left the Kafiora family, her face was adorned with a smile.

They had surrendered.

Of course, this was expected. After all, whether they truly surrendered or were planning to comply superficially while resisting covertly, their current choice would be to agree.

Unless they had a death wish.

But the probability of that was too low.

As for how they would choose afterward... actually, Angel cared more than she let on.

After all, if the Kafiora family wasn’t truly obedient, it would lead to trouble later on, all of which would fall on her as the Chief Executor.

Although she believed that in the ensuing battles of wit, victory would undoubtedly be hers. After all, she was experienced in such ’settlement’ tasks and backed by a strong Alliance, winning was inevitable.

However, it would ultimately consume considerable time, seriously slowing her efficiency.

What she was dealing with wasn’t just the native families of Indinea’s Nest Capital but all across Holy Terra, encompassing thousands of Nest Capitals.

Of course, not every Nest Capital had powerful local aristocratic families. Nor did each require her intervention.

There were dozens like her, specialized in dismantling the local aristocracy on Holy Terra as 'Chief Executors' or 'Senior Executors'. Among them, the scope of authority was quite similar, and so was the work content.

But among them, besides being colleagues cooperating and sharing intelligence, undeniably, there was also strong competition among them.

After all, the position of Deputy Minister at the Imperial Central Legal Department had only two or three possible promotions this time, making it very competitive.

Moreover, Angel realized that this promotion wasn't just about who used the more ruthless methods, who was quicker or accomplished more, thereby winning.

What they were vying for was the 'Deputy Minister' position, counted as a high-ranking official of the Empire. In such competition, if it's merely about quickness and quantity, it would only qualify them as efficient removers at best.

To get promoted, a sufficient degree of political sensitivity was needed, and the ability to handle their affairs well.

Although having a sharp blade in hand, if everywhere they go results in bloody turmoil, it would lead upper management to seriously doubt their political capability;

But excessively placating everywhere, only to leave a mess afterward, would directly end their political career.

The grasping of this scale was quite challenging.

But Angel had some insights.

The key point was understanding what the Alliance or the New Empire truly desired.

Was it the lives or money of these aristocratic families?

No.

Money had no meaning to the New Empire.

Nor did they need the lives of these aristocrats. After all, those currently active in the imperial political arena, those aristocratic families and local interest groups, either shed blood and made an effort during the Terra War or, at the very least, delineated from Chaos, did not turn to darkness.

That period during the Terra War, when various Nest Capitals fell en mass, with Chaos corruption raging, they indeed managed this. These aristocrats of the Imperial Capital showed some spine more or less.

The stereotype of them being corrupt, extravagant, and excessively lavish is true. Simultaneously, it doesn't hinder the fact that they indeed are elites among humans, maintaining their principles on major issues despite having fallen individuals.

Raising the butcher's knife directly towards these people is inappropriate.

Even without considering their past achievements, these individuals, having received the best education from a young age, seen the larger world, and been tempered by the Terra War, are indeed talented—the premise being their intelligence and wisdom are not used wrongly.

Slaughtering such people entirely would be a huge loss.

Moreover, the Alliance never executes those who have contributed.

The premise is, they mustn't obstruct the path.

Aspiring to be officials is acceptable;

Desiring to run enterprises is fine;

Even simply wanting to be idle and rely on historical contributions and economy to live comfortably without doing anything is barely tolerable.

But what the Alliance absolutely cannot accept is these families still controlling the means of production at the grassroots level of society, forming an entrenched economic-political cycle as interest groups.

Looking at it from afar, in a broader sense, this will severely threaten the New Empire's regime.

Currently, it's not apparent because, having just been through the war's trials, these families are severely weakened, politically also marginalized due to the Alliance's entry, Infinite Starfield's pressure, and insufficient positions available, appearing in decline. But in the long run, they will gradually rely on their grasp at the grassroots level of society to climb back up.

Whoever controls productivity is the holder of the societal grassroots.

The Alliance framework is meant to operate on Holy Terra. If it's not intended to run as an empty shell, these interest groups must be dismantled.

This is irrelevant to their obedience.

Currently, they are indeed obedient because the war just ended, the New Empire is newly established, they have yet to grasp, yet to establish new societal rules of the game. The authority of the Alliance is also profound enough.

But who can guarantee they will always be compliant?

Moreover, their so-called 'obedience' is already something the Alliance finds hard to endure.

Take the conflict between development and expedition with the New Empire's center—these local interest groups have very wavering stances.

Some people quickly became active-minded, attempting political maneuvers with their influence in the Nest Capitals. Some aimed at the Alliance, demanding benefits; some joined the Regent King's side under the guise of supporting expeditions...

This situation is intolerable.

Moreover, even when these local interest groups produce according to the Central Government's requirements, they have numerous conditions.

They love receiving government orders, but they accept conditioned on certain terms.

Profitable and easy tasks are undertaken by their own direct enterprises;

Average ones get subcontracted layer by layer, skimming profits for external enterprises to do, even requiring these civilian class entrepreneurs to sing praises, wag their tails, and beg for food;

Those with poor profits and difficulty, potentially losing money, they equally subcontract, forcing it upon unrelated or even adversarial enterprises and factories. They exploit if possible, reduce product quality, or outright fail to fulfill orders, conveniently shifting blame away, sentencing individuals and fining factories, unable to operate, leading to mergers...

This causes waste in overall efficiency and obstructs the Alliance's development strategy.

Failing to act now and resolving these stubborn powerful families will only worsen and complicate the issue over time.

Meanwhile, 'consuming' them enhances efficiency and increases output, crucial in resolving contradictions between the current Empire Government's development strategy and the Regent King's expedition strategy.

With greater resources and output, the expedition scale requested by His Highness the Regent King can be met faster.

Therefore, Gu Hang could persuade him.

News of complaints to the Legal Department, reaching the Regent King's mansion, sunk without a trace. Even some high-status individuals finding their way to him received news that the Regent King was inspecting fleet training.

Chapter 1007: The Trend of Calamity's End

The production capacity and efficiency on Holy Terra have great potential waiting to be tapped.

As the heart of the Empire, the production capacity it once boasted was terrifying.

Even after experiencing the baptism of a brutal war, Holy Terra still contains immense potential.

But the premise is being able to tap into it and make it work for oneself.

When the policy from the Alliance Central was implemented, and a group of stewards eager to make achievements in the Legal Department began working hard everywhere, the place underwent a significant transformation in just a few years.

Various noble families were rapidly disbanded under the strong political decrees.

A considerable part of them, in the end, accepted their fate without causing trouble—like the Kafiora family.

The family's entire industry was taken over, yet they did not use their influence within the industry to sabotage the Central Government. Instead, they cooperated well with the reception and transfer work, ensuring the smooth continuation of the handing-over process.

Since they accepted it, were submissive, and surrendered, they acted decisively and thoroughly. They once again demonstrated decisiveness without hesitation.

Such cooperative attitude earned them quite good returns.

Although the family's industry was lost, the acquisition price was decent; with the money, distributed it, and the family's members were fragmented, with hardly anyone left in Indinea Nest Capital, dispersed to other nest capitals, and even to other worlds.

However, everyone in the family received rather high ranks under the Alliance's system. Moreover, many received good positions suited to their high ranks. Among them, in other worlds, there were some who became administrators of nest capitals or even Planetary Governors.

Although within the Alliance's administrative system, the so-called position of Planetary Governor is not akin to a traditional planet's sovereign but is just a 'circulating official' within the system, however, it still represents the highest administrative leader of an entire planet.

Positions such as caravan members or leaders of large cross-regional state-owned enterprises...

Members of the Kafiora family filled their plates generously.

In the end, be it family or interest group, it is still a collective of 'people'. People form groups to pursue personal interests. When a group's interests are highly unified with individuals' interests, that's when the collective has the most cohesion. And now, the benefit the Alliance brings is that by disbanding the interest group, every member within it will gain even greater benefits.

This way, the resistance to dismantling the entire interest group greatly reduces.

However, the problem also exists: Where does the benefit come from?

Here, it involves two parts:

First, it comes from those disobedient, rebellious nobles, families, and interest groups.

There will always be those muddle-headed ones who choose rebellion. When their collectives are violently dismantled and rapidly suppressed, the vacant positions they leave become a nice piece of cake.

In fact, you don't even need to completely eliminate them.

Dog-eat-dog is also a good method.

Some families agree on the surface, then practice deceit later. Those caught with evidence are directly dealt with harshly; those not caught but still suspicious are handled by assigning personnel from 'obedient' families, putting them in charge, directly overseeing their work.

The effect is quite significant.

These converts to the Alliance don't hold back. Moreover, they understand well the traditional nobility's various cunning strategies on Holy Terra, conducting targeted strikes with remarkable results!

However, the above part is only about cake distribution.

Relying solely on distribution is not enough to satisfy those whose families have been scattered.

To satisfy them, and to offer so many good positions and high ranks, relying solely on devouring the remains of flattened families is still insufficient. This inevitably encroaches upon and affects the Alliance's original promotion system.

Unless the cake is made bigger.

This is precisely the purpose of this action.

Not to mention expanding territories, just within Holy Terra, when the various core industries of various nest capitals are entirely controlled by the Alliance, enormous production potential is unleashed!

No more shirking work due to profit issues, no more subcontracting layer by layer, no more exploitation.

Industries began to integrate, efficiency improved, and production capacity was unleashed.

In the following years, Holy Terra's overall economy began to grow at a faster pace!

And all this contributes to greater support for His Highness the Regent King's cherished unyielding expedition.

Despite being dissatisfied with the overall organization plan of the expeditionary force, which was delayed by two years before completion, he had to admit the cost during these two years was completely worthwhile. The expeditionary force will have a stronger backing, and future support from Holy Terra for the unyielding expedition will be more robust.

The time saved in future expeditions may far exceed the two years expended up front.

And now, the great unyielding expedition, as the important other part of the Empire's expedition, formally begins.

...

In fact, the precursor to the unyielding expedition began even when Holy Terra was not entirely pacified. Part of the expeditionary fleet brought by Robert, mixed with part of the Solar Fleet, formed an advance fleet, left Holy Terra, heading towards other areas of the Sun Star Domain, once again 'expanding territories'.

However, progress was slow.

On one hand, the troops were insufficient, and on the other, during the previous chaos corruption, problems were not limited to Holy Terra alone.

Holy Terra was too important, capturing everyone's attention. But outside that attention, other worlds in the Sun Star Domain each had their own problems, some even quite significant.

And these worlds within the Sun Star Domain, although all can be considered as core territories of the Human Empire, all guarded with heavy troops, still a considerable number of worlds were completely overrun.

With only the advance fleet's force, even with many interstellar warriors onboard, even Robert persuaded Marshal Yan Xinzhen to dispatch some Imperial Guard units to participate in the action, but in reality, the best they achieved was preventing the situation from further deteriorating.

During the fifteen-year Terra War period; ensuing five-year reconstruction period and expeditionary force formation period, fewer than two hundred worlds in the entire Sun Star Domain were fully reclaimed and under the New Empire Central Government's complete control.

While the entire Sun Star Domain contains eight hundred worlds.

After the unyielding expedition's army was formed, the first goal was to reclaim the entire Sun Star Domain with comparable force to two and a half dark side expedition armies.

This step was achieved within two years, supported by massive military force.

Subsequently, they followed the original plan, dividing into three directions—the North Field Army of the unyielding expedition, the West Field Army, and the South Field Army.

In the tenth year after the formal start of the unyielding expedition, the South Field Army was the first to complete their task: successfully meeting up with the Alliance's West Field Army, and reorganizing into a larger-scale Southwest Field Army, advancing along the Scarlet Scar continuously towards the Empire's southwest.

In the twenty-fifth year after the beginning of the unyielding expedition, the North Field Army completed their task as well, meeting the forces moving southward from the Infinite Starfield, forming the expedition's North Field Army, with the goal of reclaiming the entire Imperial North Border.

The West Field Army was relatively difficult, but at least they captured the entire Cosmos Domain and entered the western Anyang Cosmic Domain.

At this point, in the Empire's Holy Territory during the twenty-five years of the unyielding expedition, six domains, accounting for a quarter of the Empire's Holy Territory, have been generally reclaimed.

Counting on the dark side expedition, over these twenty-five years, all thirteen domains of the Imperial Eastern Frontier have been fully recovered.

The South Field Army reached the two domains divided in the Scarlet Scar Dark Side of the Central Starfield and conquered them.

The Angel Expedition Army led by Dante, the East Field Army, has fully entered the Imperial Southern Border.

Adding the two sides together, the New Empire currently controls twenty-one star domains.

This constitutes half of the Empire's entire territory.

What's more crucial is that currently, the Empire's expedition has six field armies executing expedition missions, thriving like a snowball rolling along, growing larger, more majestic, and increasingly unstoppable.

Moreover, the good news doesn't just stop here.

To date, the Scarlet Scar has appeared for nearly one hundred and fifty years.

This immense scar representing deep disaster now visibly shows a trend of fading.

Chapter 1008: The Prize Pool Is Dry

In recent times, Gu Hang has been in quite a good mood.

Despite still having a lot of things to deal with, especially after becoming the Imperial Prime Minister—a position of centralized power—the breadth of his responsibilities has expanded even further. However, thanks to the increasingly mature Alliance Government and New Empire Government, everything has been running fairly smoothly.

What makes him happiest is the weakening of the Scarlet Scar.

What is the most impactful factor currently affecting the Empire?

Without a doubt, it is this Scarlet Scar.

Both communication and transportation, which are crucial for governance, are deeply negatively affected by the Scarlet Scar.

If the Scarlet Scar were to be repaired, the difficulty of the Empire's ongoing expeditions would be greatly reduced!

In some ways, the expeditions might even transform into rapid armed parades.

Many worlds today are not actually corrupted by Chaos or overrun by rebels or aliens, but rather have simply started embarking on independence due to decades or even centuries of lost contact with the Imperial Central Government.

This is perfectly normal.

Counting by a century, that's five generations. Unless someone has undergone life extension surgery, no living person on the planet would have heard the Empire's voice. To them, the so-called Human Empire

is merely a page in the history books, seen only by their grandparents, or even their grandparents' grandparents.

Moreover, the Empire's image in these oral histories and records may not be anything positive at all; it could very likely be seen as a regime that continuously exploits the locals. If the local planetary corruption issues aren't severe and the alien threats aren't significant, with no craving for military protection from the Empire, then strong separatist tendencies naturally emerge.

But if the Scarlet Scar disappears, the Empire's voice could be clearly transmitted to every world; voyages to these worlds would not be obstructed by the waves of Subspace, and we wouldn't have to install Thunder Torch Towers one world at a time, allowing many places to be placated through mere decrees.

Even if many worlds face considerable problems, as long as there are survivors, the Expeditionary Force could use information from locals to determine the specific situation in that region and thus decide the necessary military force to address the issue, greatly increasing efficiency.

Moreover, the weakening of the Scarlet Scar would reduce the impact of Subspace waves on the real universe. Consequently, Chaos corruption would struggle to easily infiltrate reality, not only raising the difficulty for demons to appear but also making it harder for people to hear whispers they shouldn't. Some normal individuals' occasional dark thoughts would revert back to just thoughts, not easily captured by an Evil God and catalyzed into soul corruption, reducing the probability of cults breeding.

In summary, the weakening of the Scarlet Scar is a great boon, signaling the end of calamity.

However, currently, there are only signs of weakening, and the extent of weakening is far from being significant enough to effect change.

Gu Hang wishes the Scarlet Scar would improve by tomorrow, but unfortunately, he can't do much to help in this matter.

The only thing he can do is let the old Emperor be busy.

Regarding the weakening of the Scarlet Scar, the main effort still relies on the old man.

Gu Hang's main focus is still on the real universe.

Part of it is, of course, to govern the nation and reduce Subspace's erosion of the real universe—commonly known as 'prison sitting.'

The other part involves his duties as the de facto governor of the New Empire, where Gu Hang has a great deal of work to do.

Even though the New Empire Government can handle a considerable portion of the work for him, there are some things that can't be delegated and must be done by him personally.

For instance, major, strategic matters must be decided by Gu Hang as the leader of the Empire Government; Osenia, as the Alliance Premier and Premier of the Imperial Executive Yuan, certainly holds high office, but even she can't decide some of the biggest matters on her own.

Another aspect is the spending of Gift Points.

No one can help him with this.

For a long time, the bulk of Gu Hang's expenditure of Gift Points was on lotteries in the technology pool. Expenditure on technology requires little thought—just anticipation.

After all, whether you get something useful or not depends not on thought but on luck.

The most crucial thinking, however, happens after the technology lottery draws.

How to use the technology rewards obtained, how to layout new industries—these are the tasks that require brainpower.

But over recent decades, Gu Hang has increasingly refrained from spending Gift Points on technology pool lotteries.

It’s too wasteful.

The main reason is that the technology pool has been drawn dry, offering very low returns.

At this stage, Gu Hang has a general understanding of the nature of the whole system. The technology and black boxes extracted from the system are not created out of thin air; they are essentially techniques that have appeared in the Empire’s history.

And even when Gu Hang’s spending on Gift Points reached the highest level, it was only at the billion Gift Points tier, with no higher tier available. But even drawing at the billion Gift Points tier, there isn’t much good to draw out now.

It mostly draws out elite-level and normal-level technologies, most of which are things already possessed and just exist in different models.

The value of these drawn items is rather limited, especially considering the cost of drawing exorbitantly high Gift Points.

Certainly, there are still some high-level rewards in the prize pool, but the probability has become too low, and drawing them is already exceedingly difficult.

Hence, over the recent decades, Gu Hang has mainly spent his Gift Points on other areas.

Employee enlightenment, military construction, building exchanges... these things have directly brought significant improvement to the Alliance’s strength, far surpassing the drawing of that exhausted prize pool.

And these require a lot of Gu Hang’s attention.

The relevant data is provided by the government. However, this is just a portion of the reliance. In the Gift Points settlement interface, Gu Hang can also see a lot of data.

These two sets of data each have their advantages and disadvantages.

The data submitted by government departments are rich and varied; if Gu Hang wants specific data, he can request it, and the government departments will certainly provide it.

The problem, however, is that the data may be distorted or even erroneous.

Whereas the system's data is entirely accurate but very limited in content.

Combining the two, they provide Gu Hang the information needed for decision-making, regarding where to spend the Gift Points.

Chapter 1009: Spending Points

The Gift Points that Gu Hang is able to earn come in the billions each month as the war progresses and as the Alliance's homeland develops.

And billions of them are spent cleanly each month.

These spent Gift Points have become the extra fuel for the Alliance—now it should be said the entire Empire—to move forward.

Why are so many administrative management officials of the new government, who all hail from the Alliance, so outstanding?

That's because the Alliance has a complete education system. These academies, whether they are professional institutions or schools like the Loyal Heir Academy that focus on further education and have a bit of a gilded edge, were mostly enhancement projects exchanged by Gu Hang in the system's [Building] interface. The enhanced educational institutions have greatly improved educational levels, and the probability of producing talent itself has been raised significantly.

It is also because the so-called talents who have reached a certain level have been enlightened on a large scale by Gu Hang using the [Hero] interface.

Not counting the cost of upgrades, with ten Gift Points each, some enhancement entries are directly provided based on an individual's potential. Moreover, the vast majority of people have gone through the Loyal Heir Academy, so in terms of ideological and moral standards, loyalty to their careers, and love for the Empire, they are certainly way above average.

An essential aspect not to be ignored is that the Alliance Government can completely achieve "knowing people and making good use of them."

The talents enlightened by the Gift Points have their entries clearly reveal what this person is most proficient in. At the same time, the size of this person's talent can also be determined through their level and 'rarity' of talent.

This assessment cannot determine a person's future. After all, Gu Hang has witnessed more than once that individuals he has enlightened have changed in rarity after some unique personal experiences—both upgrades and downgrades have occurred.

Let alone that, with long-term practical experience, talent can upgrade itself. Merely, when Gu Hang forcibly imbues Gift Points to raise levels, it happens particularly fast, whereas an individual's own upgrade takes a much longer time.

But overall, at least viewing the person at the moment is extremely accurate.

And the Alliance is capable of utilizing the instructions and information given by the Governor to place the right people in the right positions.

This also reflects Gu Hang's overarching control over personnel matters.

An official system composed of such individuals is professional, efficient, reliable, and loyal.

Although it inevitably also faces corruption, dereliction of duty, and even times when one is tainted by Chaos, overall it looks much better than the usual situation under human Empire rule.

Such an extensive and high-level civil service corps is what guarantees the Alliance's system to operate correctly and efficiently.

No matter how perfect a system is, it must rely on people to implement it. If the people are unsuitable, any system can be ruined. If the people are competent, even a poor system can be reformed into a good one.

...

The spending of Gift Points, aside from talent, involves exchanging for buildings. How difficult is it under normal circumstances to enhance productivity at factories? Either you conduct process research and transformation, which requires massive funding without knowing the return; or you reform and optimize management and systems, but this is not only equally difficult, an unsuccessful modification may yield adverse effects.

However, with a hundred Gift Points, the enhancement to a basic factory translates into a very significant productivity improvement. Specifically, it manifests in increased worker efficiency, rapid progress in processes, improved precision of machine tools, decreased failure rates... the effects across all aspects are plainly visible.

Currently, Gu Hang can spend three billion Gift Points per month on this aspect.

That means up to three million factories scattered across different Star Domains in the Empire can receive productivity enhancements.

Of course, there won't actually be that many because, at some key factories, Gu Hang exchanges not only for level one factories but can upgrade to level five—which means millions of Gift Points.

However, the enhancement's effect will also be more obvious, typically used in some particularly important industries such as shipyards, extraordinarily large energy conversion centers, mineral smelting centers, Titan Manufacturing Centers...

At present, Gu Hang has a general plan for the spending on factory exchanges.

The most critical area is the region from the northern Eastern Cosmos Domain to the southern Spiderweb Domain.

This is the Alliance's "dragon's rise land," also the area with the longest management. Rage Owl Star, Tianma Star Sector, Dragonhawk Star Domain... are the core of this region.

About 25% of Gu Hang's monthly Gift Points spent on boosting productivity are in this area.

The centralization of productivity certainly has its advantages. Especially under the current cosmic environment, where shipping is challenging, the efficiency brought by concentrated scale becomes more apparent.

In essence, centered on the Dragonhawk Star Domain, two to three surrounding Star Domains collectively form this 'Alliance old area,' which indeed is now the most developed and productive region across the entire Alliance—even within the entire Empire domain. It encapsulates the essence of nearly two hundred years of Alliance construction.

Just this Alliance old area alone can barely support four front army-level expeditions—of course, one cannot really press it to the extreme as that would be too taxing.

Excessive centralization is not beneficial; eggs should not be placed in a single basket.

While the Alliance has excellently managed the protection of the core area, apart from the Central Front Army's mobilization during the Comoros War, throughout other times, an entire Front Army—or rather the largest and most powerful Central Front Army among all Front Armies—has remained stationed within the Alliance's core territory.

However, no one can ensure all risks have been eliminated.

What's more, as the expeditions drive further, the supply line of the Alliance would also elongate.

If every battleship and every Titan's loss needs to be replenished from the core territory, the expedition will become severely restricted.

The Alliance also consciously established one industry belt after another across other locations.

The pattern is often centered around a planet or Star Sector that was relatively advanced before the war, radiating an entire Star Domain or multiple Star Domains around it to form an industry belt.

The capital Wuji Star of the Eastern Cosmos Domain is a particularly good example; in the Spiderweb Domain, the Lingze Star, which once served as the core hub for Alliance and Empire trade, took advantage of its location and accumulated super-strong infrastructure level. After the over a decade long trade hiatus due to the Scarlet Scar, it successfully transformed into the center of a new industry belt...

Such similar examples are being replicated in many places throughout the universe.

60% of the Gift Points Gu Hang spends on factory exchanges goes into this aspect.

Moreover, another 15% of Gift Points are spent on Holy Terra.

Chapter 1010: Military Development

The expenditure of Gift Points on Holy Terra initially felt somewhat inevitable.

After all, one must consider the special status and complex situation there, which is not completely controlled by the Alliance. Although it's possible to use Gift Points to develop there within the system, Gu Hang is also worried that future changes or repetitions might waste the investment.

However, the situation has reached a point where the revival of Holy Terra is unavoidable. Instead, Gu Hang has opted to increase investment.

Whether it’s direct funding, resource investment, or Gift Point investment, it’s all to boost the construction of Holy Terra.

The better the reconstruction, the better the stability, aiding one another.

As for the risk of losing control, it depends on whether the governance level of the New Empire government can manage it.

Currently, the situation looks good.

The dismantling of local aristocrats on Holy Terra has been relatively successful.

On one hand, a hidden danger has been removed, or rather, part of it has been provoked and thoroughly suppressed; on the other, the control of the New Empire government has extended to the grassroots of Holy Terra.

After acquiring grassroots power, many development strategies can truly unfold.

And the construction of Holy Terra should actually be called restoration.

As long as it returns to its former scale, this planet can rival the wealthiest entire Tianma Star Sector of the Alliance.

With a large population and strong foundations, that’s how it is.

This doesn’t even account for the Mars Founding World nearby.

Surrounding Holy Terra and Mars, belonging to the Sun Star Domain’s eight hundred worlds, the foundation is also good. Although due to decades of turmoil, some places are in worse condition than Holy Terra, fundamentally, the population scale is large. With enough resource and Gift Point investment, this entire region can quickly redevelop through the radiation of Holy Terra and Mars.

In fact, until now, it can already be considered an initial success. Although we are not yet at the breakpoint, looking further ahead, the potential is gradually being realized, and in three to five years, another strong driving force for Imperial Expedition will be formed.

At this point, Gu Hang's investment in this place is quite sweetly satisfying.

...

Apart from the conversion of factories and schools and the enlightenment of talent, another major category of Gift Point consumption is closely related to 'people'.

Military construction.

Six expeditionary armies, plus one guarding the homeland, with the Comoros rapid-movement Central Front Army, require a huge amount of resources and funds to maintain, in addition to a large personnel support.

The wear and tear of war is one aspect; another, even larger, is the normal retirement of soldiers.

First, the military laws of the Alliance are generally more lenient towards soldiers compared to the previous Imperial Star Realm Army, which rarely took soldiers away without them ever returning home unless their station was local. Otherwise, if sent to war, they might never return to their hometown in their lifetime.

This situation arose because the Empire was inhumane.

There were also objective reasons.

Interstellar travel is both difficult and expensive, and with frequent wars, naturally, veterans would not be easily discharged. Even injured, disabled, or particularly elderly soldiers who affect combat capability would be more likely to be settled in situ. Only a very few lucky ones would have their original deployment location match the destination of returning logistics ships with empty cabins, allowing them to return home.

But it’s different for the Alliance, as it places more emphasis on veterans’ retirement benefits.

The Alliance’s Dark Side Expedition has been ongoing for over a hundred years. New recruits at twenty, by their thirties or forties, their physical capabilities are not as strong as when they were young, but thanks to more extensive experience, they can still maintain strong combat effectiveness. However, after fifty, the decline in physical strength is significant.

Except for a few officers and generals who have taken on command or management roles, to maintain the unit’s combat effectiveness, even without injuries, those who should retire must retire.

In fact, many in the Alliance Army retire in their thirties and forties.

Actually, the Alliance also tends towards local or nearby settlement, as it is convenient and cost-effective.

But unlike the old Imperial Army, the Alliance’s local settlement does not rely on coercive measures, simply placing people in one place. The Alliance mainly uses reward and incentive methods for veteran settlement.

Alliance’s retired veterans can receive corresponding retirement benefits based on military merits, honor medals, military rank, and military position level.

Those choosing nearby retirement transitions can receive higher benefits than the stipulated basis.

This represents better transition roles, such as instructors or logistics officers for the local Planetary Defense Force, officers for the security forces; transitioning into police departments under the Legal Department; or local security companies...

These are considered relevant roles. Besides these, many other good positions in other government or corporate departments are available to accommodate retired veterans.

The more challenging the environmental conditions, the closer to the front lines, the better the retirement conditions for local settlement.

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If you're really unwilling to be settled in places with poor conditions or too close to the front lines, you can always take a few steps back, follow the supply line of the transport ships to more convenient places for settlement, which would barely meet the 'nearby settlement' preferential terms.

Of course, the number of veterans each year in the Alliance is particularly large—considering the size of the army, it stands to reason. Positions with certain governmental characteristics simply cannot accommodate everyone. Mainly, it's still various levels of officers who are mostly settled through this method.

However, ordinary soldiers and sergeants actually have it relatively well. After they retire, they often directly receive a relatively high social rank, which directly translates to a pretty decent monthly allowance. Even if there aren't any good positions, living is not a big problem.

The young and strong, without any particularly outstanding merit, and not of high rank, tend to be placed by the Alliance Veterans' Resettlement Bureau into Technical Academies through a special channel for further study. A good student becomes an engineer; at worst, they're a skilled worker.

Or if settled on a planet with not many worker positions, such as an agricultural planet, more land is distributed. The land on Empire's agricultural planets is state-owned, so rather than being farmers, they are more like businesses leasing state-owned land as farm enterprises with agricultural workers. However, due to the differences between agriculture and industry, farms often can obtain contract terms that last for ten, twenty, or even fifty years. Rent is not expensive, taxes are paid, and crops must be sold at a unified price.

But overall, large farms, large-scale mechanized production, along with purchasing quotas, ensure that unless encountering extreme situations, farm owners generally do not incur losses.

Being a small farm subcontractor might even be a bit more comfortable than being a skilled worker or engineer.

If that's not viable, a substantial retirement fund and some employment and entrepreneurship guidance may be provided. Not misleading at all, usually just making a convenience store in a residential area, engaging in the food or construction industry... In short, whatever you want to do is fine.

For those who are really unwilling to settle nearby, have families back home, or want to return to their hometowns for no other particular reason, the Alliance is also supportive.

It wasn't very convenient before, but as time goes on, it becomes easier to resolve.

The Alliance's shipbuilding industry is becoming increasingly developed nowadays.

This is both the orientation of the Alliance Government and actively implemented by the local administrative officials.

The reason being the shipbuilding industry has a large scale and can accommodate many workers, mostly technical workers and engineers, making it an ultimate industry. As long as a shipyard can be introduced, it often brings a leap in economic development for the entire planet.

Features like being technology-intensive, high added value, good growth potential, strong relevance, and driving force... these all factor in. As the core of the production chain, it can drive the development of a whole bunch of industries along with it, linking a vast number of high-level positions.

The local governors who manage to introduce the shipbuilding industry to their planet, star sector, or even star domain, often get promoted. This is both a direct assessment indicator of the administrative leaders by the Alliance and because the development of the shipbuilding industry often leads to substantial economic growth in the region. The latter is precisely the core political achievement of local main officials.

Of course, this has also led to some issues. Some people, with high aims but low abilities, forcefully launching projects regardless of the actual situation of their area, have caused some negative impacts.

If the project eventually lands successfully, it's still counted as a positive outcome, even if the local area doesn't actually support the basic industries needed for shipbuilding, leading to a large number of components needing to be purchased from outside with particularly high production costs, outgoings

exceeding incomings. Nevertheless, the related foundation can be made up for, and eventually, it can have its utility.

Yet, there are some cases where the project ultimately couldn't land, causing enormous waste.

In either case, the corresponding officials receive severe penalties.

But no matter what, the shipbuilding industry within the Alliance has developed at an extremely rapid pace. It isn't just about building warships; even those with much lower technical content, merely building ordinary merchant ships and transport vessels also have great value.

The core limit to trade between planets is the lack of ships.

Under the immense scale of the Alliance and the entire Empire, no amount of interstellar spaceships is too many.

The military needs a large number of transport ships for supplies; trade requires numerous vessels; even the most ordinary interstellar flights, for personnel exchange, are valuable.

Many places' so-called shipbuilding industries just specialize in building ships of the 'Travelertier' kind.

Or even smaller ones that can only carry dozens of people.

Yet it is precisely these spacecraft that support a significant number of interstellar flights.

The Alliance's official Star Navigation Company actively procures vessels and opens up one fixed route after another for material transit and personnel transport.

And those veterans who wish to return home can take these empty-cargo logistic supply ships to return to the rear, then use the now-developed interstellar transport of the Alliance to go back to their hometowns.

Sure, this might take a long time, not only the journey but also waiting in between flights. But for many veterans who yearn for a homecoming, all the waiting is worthwhile.

And once they return home, they can often receive hero-like treatment.

Their experiences, including those who didn't go back to their hometowns, opting for nearby settlements with significant life changes—even if they didn't become wealthy in another world, at least they lead much better lives—the shared stories motivate generations of newcomers to step into the Alliance's recruitment office, dreaming of earning accolades.

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And they are precisely the last major group for whom Gu Hang would spend a large amount of Gift Points over a long period.

Soldier training.

He does not aim to directly elevate each soldier using T5 or T4 level training functions; usually, soldiers serve one or two years in the Planetary Defense Force. The past Alliance Army and now the Imperial Army would recruit new soldiers only from the Planetary Defense Force.

At this stage, the proportion reaching T5 level is actually between 20% and 40%. The exact number depends on the local armed construction of the planet, which is also one of the key assessment indicators for the Alliance's Planetary Governor.

Some special planets have even pulled this ratio to over 80% through the training of the Planetary Defense Force, with soldiers reaching T4 level or even higher. For instance, Crime Planet, the home of the Death Corps, now under Alliance control; or the Jungle Corps emerging from the Death World Katachan.

The Alliance respects the traditions of such special units, forming them into independent armies and incorporating them into various field armies for battle. They are often used as a trump card.

After selecting the best recruits from the ordinary Planetary Defense Force, the Imperial Army further subjects these new soldiers to a more intense one-year training.

Upon completing the Army's training program, the concentration of T5 level soldiers can reach over 60%.

Building on this foundation, Gu Hang uses Gift Points to elevate about 20% more soldiers, allowing the proportion of soldiers above T5 level to exceed 80%, thereby completing the formation of an Alliance Army reserve unit.

Sometimes, they will be incorporated into frontline operations as a new unit; but more often, soldiers are transported ship by ship to the front line, delivered to existing division-level units just withdrawn from the front.

These frontline units, often just finished with battle, are resting. The fallen, wounded, retired due to age are replaced by newly trained soldiers.

After a period of rest, as personnel and equipment are replenished, they will once again set foot on the battlefield.

Many divisional formations have decades or even centuries of history, accumulating countless glories.

The Dark Side Expedition's combat front maintains a war exceeding a century in this manner. The entire process is mature, with relatively healthy guarantees for veteran treatment, thereby ensuring recruitment quality while maintaining the combat effectiveness of frontline units.

And in this entire process, Gu Hang, every month, through the [Construction] interface, exchanges training facilities, and through the [Training] interface directly spends Gift Points to train new soldiers, easily amounting to billions of Gift Points.

This is enough to redeem training quotas for tens of billions of new soldiers, which, in the Alliance's training method, translates to over fifty billion new recruits supplementing the front line.

Of course, there aren't actually that many.

After all, the Alliance long ago passed the stage where quantity alone matters over quality. The Army is developing towards being more and more elite, with not only better weapons and equipment but also demanding a large amount of T4 level or higher soldiers.

The cost isn't one Gift Point for a hundred anymore, but only ten, or even just one.

Gu Hang throws a billion Gift Points into it each month, but actually, the number of troops the Alliance sends to the front annually, Army and Navy combined, is only about a hundred billion, roughly maintaining the scale of seven field armies unchanged.

The total scale of the seven field armies is less than eight hundred billion, with the total number of soldiers sacrificed and retired annually in expeditions approximately around a hundred billion. The specific ratio depends on the combat situation of that year. During intense times, the majority are sacrifices and injuries. In relatively stable times, normal retirements are the majority. The change can be significant and cannot be generalized.

Except for some aging senior officers and generals qualified for life extension surgery, practically all combat personnel of the entire Expeditionary Force are completely replaced approximately every 13 years.