Governor 161

Chapter 161: You Have No Choice_2

Henry still didn't fully agree with Swan's words, "Just rely on those eight hundred people outside? Just rely on the seven or eight thousand people that Mr. Gu is bringing along on the road? Battles we can't withstand with a hundred thousand armed adventurers, and they would be able to resolve them?"

Henry just smiled again, did not speak, and simply stretched out his hand and pointed to the sky.

Swan understood immediately, and then he really went silent.

He was still unwilling to accept it, but he had to admit that every word Henry said was right.

To live, they had to rely on Mr. Gu; no one else could save Rubbish Town.

To die, Mr. Gu had far too many ways to kill them, even without lifting a finger himself.

In such a situation, what right did he have to negotiate any terms?

But not to negotiate any terms at all?

To hand over everything he had fought for over the past thirty-five years?

Henry seemed to see his worries and a voice tempting like a devil whispered in his ear:

"Even if we don't mention those ideals and the future, I will just say one thing: Mr. Gu, all of a sudden, gained control over such a vast region from a starting point of almost nothing, and with Rubbish Town under his control, the total population would exceed one million three hundred thousand. Conversely, Mr. Gu's rapidly expanding power is in short supply of talents. A female refugee from the Green Valley Region can become the Civil Affairs Chief of Revival City; a small merchant like me who was once

insignificant in Rubbish Town can now represent Mr. Gu in discussions about the life and death of Rubbish Town with someone like you. So, if someone like you, experienced and capable, is willing to help Mr. Gu wholeheartedly, what kind of status would you obtain?”

…

Henry felt that Swan must have been persuaded by him.

Although he did not give a definitive answer in the end, and even when he expressed a desire to contact Mr. Gu directly, he was brushed off on the pretext that he needed to report to Mr. Gu, but Henry still felt that in the end, Swan would definitely kneel before Mr. Gu unconditionally when he arrived at Rubbish Town.

Because he had no choice.

Besides, he could not really make any specific promises on behalf of Mr. Gu. He did not even think that Mr. Gu would agree to anything; at most, he would allow Swan to earn what he wants through his own performance.

It also reminded him of the time he wanted the exclusive rights to alloy steel for Mr. Gu but ended up being scared stiff. That’s when he realized what kind of person Mr. Gu was.

Mr. Gu, even when he had nothing, already had the mentality of someone in a superior position, let alone now.

Furthermore, he believed that even if Mr. Gu agreed to nothing, Mr. Swan would still end up humbly prostrating himself before Mr. Gu.

Henry comforted himself by staying in the room Mr. Swan had prepared for him, waiting for Swan to give him a definite answer before the deadline or for Mr. Gu’s arrival.

On the third day, a servant came to ask him to see Mr. Swan.

Despite his expectations, Henry still could hardly conceal his delight.

He was absolutely confident that Swan must have submitted.

Following the servant, he saw Mr. Swan in the office.

“You’ve realized…”

Henry hadn’t finished speaking when Swan interrupted him:

“I agree, and I will make all the other agents agree as well. If there are any who don’t, I will make sure they have no other choice but to agree as soon as possible.”

Henry was stunned.

That was a one hundred and eighty-degree change in attitude.

But why are you more anxious than me?

He keenly felt like something big had happened.

“When can Mr. Gu’s army arrive?”

“At the earliest, in two days, and at the latest, five…”

“Can we go any faster?”

“Wait a second, what’s happened? You need to tell me first.” Henry’s heart was already uneasy, “Those Green Skin Orcs?”

“…Yes,” he sighed.

There wasn’t much point in hiding it. Poor communication of military intelligence could easily lead to strategic misjudgments.

Afterward, Swan gave Henry a rough outline of the current situation.

In the past, Rubbish Town didn’t have much by way of management. It was originally just a town formed by adventurers picking up trash, but as the number of adventurers increased, many industries reliant on the rubbish collected by them started cropping up, gradually forming the town.

But as the town took shape and the industrial chain became more complete, a somewhat finer level of management became essential.

The agents roughly divided Rubbish Town toward the pre-war era’s supercity ruins, also known as the high-tower ruins, into four levels: valueless safe areas, valuable safe areas, high-value dangerous areas, and unknown areas.

Valueless safe areas, true to their name, are places where, after years of exploration, the number of mutant monsters has greatly diminished, but similarly, due to many years of scavenging, they have almost no yield. The only output here is the hot ash produced after a Low Energy Storm has passed.

Valuable safe areas are places that have been cleared many times, have few monsters and are not very dangerous, but have only become relatively safe in the past one or two years. They haven’t been scavenged for long and still yield a fair amount. This is where the most metal waste is produced, and occasionally, some precious pre-war items can be found.

High-value dangerous areas are places teeming with monsters, but with ample rewards; unknown areas are almost unexplored, or where very few who enter manage to come out alive.

These four types of areas, in terms of distance relative to Rubbish Town, grow progressively further away.

And in the fight against the orcs, the defense zones were divided in the same way. Or rather, in recent years as the Green Skin Orcs began activity within the high-tower ruins, even becoming more and more numerous, eventually turning into adventurers' main foes, the classification of the four areas was largely related to the orcs' activity frequency.

One month ago, when the Green Skin Orcs began to emerge in large numbers, the high-risk areas basically became no-go zones, only accessible to large adventure groups with many members; after a month of this Green Skin disaster, a considerable part of the low-risk area turned high-risk. Adventurers could no longer easily scavenge but had to form teams and battle lines to fight these Green Skin Orcs.

This had nearly evolved into a warfare situation, rather than skirmishes between small groups of adventurers and lurking or wandering monsters.

For that very reason, adventurers were reaching the point where they could hardly hold on, not willing to endure any further.

"We're here to make money through adventure, not to fight a war."

Now, the latest news was that in the 18th District, an important place where adventurers formed a battle line and had built fortifications for a large-scale battle with the invading Green Skin Orcs, had fallen apart.

Nearly twenty thousand adventurers had gathered there, fighting against more than three thousand orcs for a week, under immense pressure.

And just this morning, three adventure groups, without notifying anyone, withdrew from their positions; a total of six thousand people left directly.

Consequently, during an expected orc assault on the defences, with nearly a third fewer hands, the defensive line completely collapsed, and the remaining adventurers had no choice but to retreat or even scatter.

By morning, the Green Skins had broken through three districts, and it was only in the Fifth District that they were barely held back. And this area was traditionally a valueless safe zone.

Even, Swan had already deployed his most treasured adventure group, ‘Clockwork Blades’, to the frontlines. They were well-equipped and highly trained, a rare elite force. It was their intervention that plugged the breach.

However, the casualties were significant.

What was crucial was that, through the breach, more Green Skin monsters kept emerging from the deeper ruins, exerting tremendous pressure on them.

If the Fifth District fell, the other parallel districts’ defences would surely not hold either, and before long, Rubbish Town might genuinely face the Green Skins at its gates.

That’s why Swan was in such a hurry.

“Fuck!”

Henry couldn’t hold back and blurted out a curse.

Chapter 162: Beast Slaughter Group

“Fuck!”

Henry couldn’t hold back and blurted out a curse.

Swan had indeed submitted, and from that perspective, the deserters’ rout and the Green Skin Orcs’ sudden onslaught had helped a bit.

However, Henry surely couldn’t hand over a Rubbish Town turned to ruins to Mr. Gu and then shamelessly claim he had fulfilled his mission, could he?

With a grim expression, Henry asked, “What’s the situation in the Fifth District now?”

“It’s terrible, there’s been no time to build new defensive positions there; our people can only fight desperately with those Greenskins among the rubble. No one knows whether the adventurers can hold on, I can only guarantee that my men will hold firm until the end.”

“I will pass this message to Mr. Gu as soon as possible, Mr. Swan, If you don’t want to present a Rubbish Town turned to ruins to Mr. Gu and thoroughly disappoint him, please do whatever you can in the next few days to hold the line, at least until Mr. Gu’s troops arrive.”

Swan said solemnly, “You don’t need to tell me that, but please urge them on. Nobody in Rubbish Town wants it to become ruins, but sometimes it’s not about what we want.”

After saying this, he paused and hesitantly made another request: “Additionally… the troops stationed outside Rubbish Town, can they help?”

Henry hesitated.

He paced back and forth, conflicted.

Without Swan asking, he had already thought about the strong army outside Rubbish Town that could be called for reinforcement.

But there was a risk involved.

Convincing Perbov to seek authorization for action from Mr. Gu seemed manageable. Perbov was eager to fight, and Mr. Gu, knowing of Swan’s submission and Rubbish Town’s surrender, would likely allow Perbov to join the battle.

But that would mean sending the Composite Camp to fight the fearsome Green Skin hordes!

Were they an easy opponent?

Perbov's Composite Camp was formidable, slaughtering looters as easily as slaughtering pigs, but the Greenskins were a different matter entirely.

If casualties were heavy, would that responsibility fall on him?

Yet in the end, he gritted his teeth and told Swan he was willing to try.

With Rubbish Town willing to fully submit to Mr. Gu, it was worth protecting.

Securing Rubbish Town was of great significance to Mr. Gu's expansion of power. It was the most important raw material production area around Revival City, as well as the strongest military force among the uncontrolled powers in the vicinity.

It was also his biggest stepping stone to advancement.

…

As Henry had expected, convincing Perbov to go into battle was not difficult. Once Mr. Gu was informed of the entire situation here, especially the likelihood that Rubbish Town's defenses might indeed be breached by the Green Skin Orcs and destroyed, he of course did not want to see that happen.

He granted Perbov the necessary authority, allowing him to make decisions based on the situation.

Meanwhile, the troops led by Mr. Gu himself also accelerated their march.

With authorization in hand, Perbov did not hesitate for long and quickly launched a full assault.

The fully mechanized troops rapidly bypassed Rubbish Town, heading towards the so-called Fifth District.

Along the way, all Perbov saw was chaos.

Many adventurer groups, hastily assembled for a hefty fee, formed up and rushed towards the Fifth District; but at the same time, Perbov saw even more adventurers retreating from the front lines.

Among those moving back, a considerable part looked very shabby and frightened.

These clearly were deserters who had fled from the front lines.

Additionally, some of the retreating adventurers bore no signs of battle. This group was somewhat odd.

Perbov had several different groups of adventurers stopped and brought to him to inquire about the situation at the front lines.

From the accounts of the deserters, he received news that was uncertain whether to be considered good or bad:

The battle at the front was still ongoing, but without fortifications, the Orcs easily got close enough for combat, causing massive casualties. One group of adventurers after another couldn't withstand such terrifying losses and retreated from the front lines.

To say it's good news was because the front lines were still holding; to take it as bad news was because it was on the verge of collapse.

The other group retreating without having fought told a more intriguing story—they had received orders to pull back. These orders came from the merchants and agents who had paid to hire them.

Perbov didn't know much about Rubbish Town, but Henry, who had come to the front lines with him in the command vehicle, immediately understood what it meant.

The pessimists thought Rubbish Town was indefensible. They had withdrawn the teams they had paid for, no longer maintaining the battle line at the front, instead wanting them to protect themselves and flee from Rubbish Town.

Even likely, the news that Mr. Gu was taking over Rubbish Town might have leaked, which also fueled the desire of these merchants and agents to flee.

After all, if Rubbish Town was defended successfully, it wouldn't be theirs anyway, so why spend money defending it? Better to run away quickly.

Thinking of this, Henry was particularly angry!

How could Rubbish Town be saved amongst these vermin!

This could certainly lead to a complete collapse of the front line!

Perbov's Composite Camp continued to advance, while Henry used the communication equipment on his command vehicle to contact Swan, who was still in Rubbish Town, informing him of the situation here.

Chapter 163: Beast Slaughter Group _2

Swan said he would find a way to deal with it.

He wasn't just going to handle those who wanted to flee; he would also try to rally the fleeing soldiers and maintain the battle line as much as possible.

Hearing Swan's assurance, Henry breathed a sigh of relief.

This big shot from Rubbish Town, if he truly intended to stop this situation from worsening, probably had a way to do so.

But there was one thing that Henry felt uncertain about: what if Swan himself wanted to run?

What if he had convinced Perbov to go to the front lines just to buy time to move assets and wealth?

To put it bluntly, he was afraid Swan was deceiving him.

For a moment, he felt a confusing turmoil inside.

Seeing that Perbov had already begun to give orders for the artillery support unit to deploy, he said to Perbov:

“I’ll stay here.” He paused, then continued, “There’s no help I could provide at the front, better to stay here. Leave me a radio set, and I’ll keep in touch with the interior of Rubbish Town at all times to ensure no unrest occurs. If all goes well, I’ll manage to rally some fleeing soldiers and retreating units here. If… if there really is a major problem inside Rubbish Town, I’ll notify you in time. I won’t let your army get mired alone.”

“Alright, let’s do that.”

…

Half an hour later, at the front lines of the Fifth District.

As expected, the battle was still ongoing, with many adventurers resisting, but they had no advantage. From a distance, the Green Skin Orcs were killing the adventurers one by one, and occasionally, entire teams of adventurers were collapsing and retreating.

Among them, those with the most resolute fighting attitude were a group wearing gray combat coats. On their arms, they had uniform armbands with the image of a spear piercing upward through the skull of an orc.

This armband represented an adventuring group that had only been established six months ago but had rapidly expanded and swollen in size: The Beast Slaughter Group.

These were people determined to take revenge on the Green Skin Orcs, gathered together to form a team. Its founder, who was also the current leader, was named Lucy Lee Ko Xi.

Li Kexi used to be the leader of a medium-sized adventuring group, often mixing in Rubbish Town, known for his generosity, enthusiasm, and loyalty he held a reputation within the entire adventurer industry.

Six months ago, his group encountered a band of Green Skin Orcs and were nearly wiped out. He and a significant part of his comrades were captured by the Orcs.

He witnessed many of his closest comrades having their heads split open and their brains devoured, their abdomens ripped open to be used as food by the Orcs.

Among them were even his wife and two sons.

Later, the small Orc encampment was raided by another team of adventurers. During the chaos, Li Kexi managed to escape. Since then, he dissolved his former group and established a new adventuring team named ‘Beast Slaughter Group’, intent on revenge.

Anyone harboring a grudge against the Green Skin Orcs and determined to eliminate them could join the adventuring group. In fact, it could no longer be considered a usual adventuring group as their main goal was no longer urban exploration and scavenging for high-value items, but instead hunting down Green Skin Orcs.

In the past few years, there were no shortage of people with grudges against the Green Skin Orcs. Some would be terrified by the Orcs’ strength, brutality, and belligerence, but naturally, there were also those who were instead filled with anger and hatred.

They gathered in the Beast Slaughter Group and began their war against the Green Skin Orcs.

For Rubbish Town, which was facing an increasingly severe threat from the Orcs, such a team was, of course, very welcome. Although they were not productive, no longer scavenging, and rarely accepting employments, the merchants and agents from various districts of Rubbish Town were still willing to provide generously for their weaponry, logistics support, and even additional financial aid.

With hatred fueling them internally and financial support externally, the Beast Slaughter Group expanded rapidly over six months and also proved to be the best performing team in combating the Green Skin Orcs out of all adventuring groups in Rubbish Town.

Their original defense zone was neither in the eighteenth district nor in the Fifth District. However, after the outer defense line of the eighteenth district was breached and pierced through to the Fifth District, they too had to retreat to avoid being flanked.

At the same time, they realized the Orcs' breakthroughs were not yet over. If they were allowed to continue their assault, Rubbish Town, the major rear area, could very well be lost.

Li Kexi led his Beast Slaughter Group, which boasted more personnel than usual, to the Fifth District for reinforcements, trying to plug the gaps in the defense line.

Then, as the battle raged on, his forces became the mainstay.

Other allied forces retreated one after another until only a few remained fighting alongside them.

Grasping his personally modified shotgun, which had three large barrels bound together, Li Kexi pulled the trigger, and the barrage of large-caliber shot at close range blew apart the head of a Green Skin Orc. "Pah," he spat out the cigarette in his mouth that was almost burnt to the end, looking around him.

A sense of sorrow welled up inside his heart.

He knew this might be where his bones would finally lie.

The number of Green Skins rushing towards the gap in the defense line seemed to have surpassed three thousand; by contrast, the only ones still persevering in combat, apart from his own three-thousand-strong Beast Slaughter Group, were probably just a thousand or so other adventurers.

Chapter 164: Beast Slaughter Group_3

Based on past experience, to withstand the onslaught of the Green Skin Orcs, especially at such a close range, one would need at least ten times the number of enemies to gain victory; holding out with five times the number is the bare minimum to maintain a defense.

Despite his Beast Slaughter Group mastering some special techniques through long-term combat with the orcs, and even with weapons specifically modified to fight them, they could at best manage to fight three against one.

Now, the number of combatants on each side had not even reached a two-to-one ratio, a situation which, according to experience, meant the defense would not hold.

But beyond the Fifth District, there was no other line of defense.

His deputy had already asked more than once what to do.

And his answer had always been the same:

“We must fight to the death!”

His own will to fight was unwavering, and he understood that if they let the Green Skin Orcs break through Rubbish Town, they would no longer have a chance for revenge. The orcs would gain greater living space, and humanity would face utter defeat in this region.

He was prepared to die.

But the Beast Slaughter Group was faltering.

Although the performance of the Beast Slaughter Group was better than that of any other adventuring band, they were still human. Hatred and anger could sustain their ferociousness in battle, but fear remained, and not everyone could face a certain death with equanimity.

He could feel that many of his brothers were already wavering.

At first, he was anxious, but he soon settled into a calm state.

Go ahead, if a few more can live, that's good. In such a desperate situation, I simply wish to die in battle against these orcs; I can't necessarily ask the same of others.

After painstakingly loading his ammunition, he strode forward. Another Green Skin Orc charged towards him howling, and three of his brothers opened fire. Despite being shot several times, the orc stood firm, lifted a crudely made firearm, and quickly killed two men.

The third man charged forward with a long-handled greatsword and slashed at the orc's head.

The flesh burst open and blood flowed, but the skull was not cleaved, the blade stuck in it.

The orc, however, pulled out a hand axe and split the brave Beast Slaughter Group warrior's head with a backhand swing.

The orc pulled the greatsword out from its head, blood smeared all over its face, and howled to the sky as if mad.

"Bang!"

Seizing the opportunity, he approached within five or six meters of the orc. The exaggeratedly designed triple-barreled shotgun was pointed at the orc's head and he fired.

The orc's face distorted by the blast, it fell backward to the ground.

Rubbing his shoulder, aching from the recoil, he saw two more orcs approaching.

At that moment, there were no brothers by his side, and he clearly didn't have time to reload the triple-barreled shotgun.

He dropped the firearm and took out the Beast Slaughter Group's signature long-handled greatsword.

This must be the last fight before death, he thought. He wondered if he could take down an orc before he died.

He couldn't aim for the head, limbs, or torso, which would not be instantly fatal. The only target was the neck. He needed to exert full strength and get the angle right as the blade penetrated the flesh; only then might he have a chance of severing the spine.

He had only one chance with his blade. If he missed, the orc's strength, far superior to a human's, would tear him to shreds in no time.

He took deep breaths, waiting for the final moment to come.

The two orcs, one in front and one behind, drew ever closer.

They seemed to be competing to get to him first, fearing that slow movement would rob them of the chance to kill.

Just then, a loud noise came from behind, followed by a rocket trailing flames.

The rocket exploded right in front of him, hitting the two monsters, one behind the other, and flipping them over. The one behind was already dead, while the other landed not far from Li Kexi.

Ignoring the singed hair from the trailing flames, Li Kexi quickly walked up and chopped off the monster's head with three swings of the sword.

Only then did he have a moment to turn his head and see a squad of unfamiliar soldiers approaching from behind.

It was a small combat team of three, two armed with rifles, one with a rocket launcher.

The recent rocket came from them. And now, the man with the rocket launcher was pulling new rockets from the large tactical pack on his back to reload; the other two kept firing at another approaching orc in the distance.

The firearms in their hands were unfamiliar to Li Kexi. He had never seen such rifles, black and clearly well-crafted, different from the iron tube rifles many adventurers carried.

Looking in the direction of the gunfire, the orc being targeted was clearly hit repeatedly.

The two groups were about a hundred meters apart.

A hundred meters, what does that mean? From a distance, the orc seemed hardly bigger than a small black dot.

At this range, accurate shooting not only indicated the precision of the unfamiliar soldiers but also meant that their rifles were extremely reliable in terms of accuracy.

Using the rifles commonly employed by adventurers, even if aimed precisely, the bullet trajectory at a hundred meters was unpredictable.

In fact, the firearms used by the Green Skin Orcs were similar, perhaps even less reliable. The orc firearms were surprisingly powerful; within the effective range, a single shot could blast apart an entire upper body. But their effective range was only within fifty meters, beyond which the bullets would stray significantly, even worse than the adventurers' iron tube rifles.

For this very reason, the adventurers used to engage in regular combat with the Green Skin Orcs at distances within a hundred meters.

Between fifty and a hundred meters, the adventurers had some firepower advantage, but the Green Skins were able to rely on their thick hides to charge within fifty meters, at which point exchanging fire was no contest at all.

One of their shots could blow apart a person, while our side's puny guns needed to pour a hundred bullets to kill a single Green Skin, how could we fight like that?

Moreover, once the Green Skins got within fifty meters, aside from shooting, their steps wouldn't stop, and they would charge even closer to take advantage of the high power but low accuracy of their guns.

Or more directly, they'd get into melee range and resolve the battle with cold weapons.

And often by that time, it was when the human adventurers' morale completely collapsed. Except for the Beast Slaughter Group, who dared to wield big knives and engage in chopping at the Green Skins with an exchange rate of more than five to one, nobody dared to engage these monsters in close combat.

But these new and strange infantry seemed a bit different.

Not only did they have the extremely precious rocket launchers, but their rifles still worked effectively at distances beyond a hundred meters.

This was significant.

The orc charging toward this location got hit by at least thirty bullets when it reached fifty meters away, and despite firing two shots, both missed.

Following that, it continued its charge, and when it got within fifty meters, it finally couldn't withstand the frequent hits and fell dead.

The shooters weren't just from this infantry squad; there were two additional infantry squads who had evidently also spotted it and were firing six guns at it.

Li Kexi couldn't help feeling envious.

Envious of the rocket launcher, and of those guns.

At the same time, he couldn't help but wonder a bit: where did these strangers come from?

He had extensive connections; he knew most of the named adventure groups that mingled around Rubbish Town. He had never seen any group equipped like this.

He saw someone waving at him.

Li Kexi hesitated for a moment but still went over.

He asked, "Which group are you from?"

The person waving at him was momentarily confused, then quickly responded, "We're not from any adventure group, we are warriors from the New Alliance! I am Sergeant Luke Duffy."

"…"

The amount of information was a bit overwhelming, and Li Kexi for a moment didn't even know what to say.

Sergeant Duffy noticed the armband on his arm and asked, "Are you also from the Beast Slaughter Group?"

"… Yes."

"Then get to the rear as quickly as possible; many of your comrades are regrouping there. We still need your help to put in a joint effort to clean out these filthy Green Skin monsters."

Li Kexi was stunned again.

His resolve to die retreated.

If there was still hope of victory, then indeed he shouldn't die. If possible, he still hoped to see more Green Skin monsters die before his eyes.

"Sergeant Luke Duffy, I'll remember you. I am Li Kexi, captain of the Beast Slaughter Group. May we meet again under better circumstances."

"You're the captain?" Duffy was startled, then quickly added, "That's even better! You have to get to the rear then, your brothers still need your leadership."

"You're right."

Li Kexi picked up his rifle and followed the direction Luke Duffy had pointed.

After walking a bit further, intense gunfire and the sound of rocket launchers firing came from behind him.

He couldn't resist looking back and saw ten soldiers form into three combat squads. They didn't advance further but held their current position. Before them, a group of about twenty Green Skins was approaching.

Li Kexi's heart sank heavily.

Especially seeing that two rocket projectiles thrown at them killed only three Green Skins. Ten soldiers, their distant gunfire raining down, even with focused fire at long range, killed only two.

Fifteen remained!

They had already charged very close.

Within this distance, in just a few seconds, these monsters would rush upon the soldiers' faces. And in the meantime, they couldn't even reload their magazines, nor could the rocket launchers be replenished with new ammunition in time.

Li Kexi was not optimistic about their fate and hesitated whether to turn back and fight alongside them.

Of course, this was not a wise decision, but… they had just saved his life, and now was he to turn his back on them, to live in ignominy?

While he was in the throes of indecision, he heard two rumbling sounds from behind him.

Turning his head, he saw two steel behemoths emerge from behind a building.

One of them was a tank, the 'Challenger' Tank he had seen once before. The other was a somewhat lighter-armored but more robust-looking wheeled combat vehicle.

They both fired at the Green Skin Orcs.

Chapter 166: The Limit of Perseverance

Seeing the appearance of a 'Challenger' tank and another war machine he didn't recognize, Li Kexi was initially stunned.

He had truly not expected to see such a thing here.

He had once thought about buying a Challenger tank, especially after forming the Beast Slaughter Group, his desire grew stronger. If he had such a tank as the combat core, surrounded by a large number of infantry troops with a cannon ready to provide fire support at any time, battles would be much easier to fight.

Unfortunately, affording it was one thing; the key issue was that there was no channel to purchase it.

Not to mention the armored vehicle next to it. Though it had no large cannon, the twin-barreled machine gun was not something to be underestimated.

And when these two opened fire together, the effect was astonishing.

A tank shell blasted into the midst of the Green Skin Orcs, killing at least three on impact; even more terrifying was the volley from the armored vehicle's machine gun and the alongside "machine guns" that didn't look like regular ones.

The 40mm caliber machine gun could cause fatal damage when it hit the Green Skins; the strange, explosive twin-barreled "machine gun" could still detonate inside an enemy after a direct hit, ensuring the death of an orc.

Under the frenzy of the strafing fire, six or seven Green Skins were killed on the spot with one round.

After this round of fire projection, coupled with the casualties inflicted by the infantry squad, a total of fifteen Green Skin Orcs were killed.

Facts proved that orcs were not brainless creatures that only knew how to charge in battle. On the contrary, their wisdom—or rather, instinct, in combat was exceptionally sharp.

They knew that continuing to charge forward under such firepower would result in their deaths before they could cover the final twenty to thirty meters.

They scattered to the sides and quickly found cover. One even poked his head out and took a shot at the infantry squad, actually hitting and breaking a soldier's left arm.

Someone quickly administered first aid with gauze—mainly pressing on the wound to stop the bleeding and minimize blood loss—and then two others helped to evacuate the injured to the rear.

The remaining seven soldiers were in no hurry to advance—they would wait for the tank and the armored vehicle to come up.

Only after clearing this wave of enemies would they continue forward, encountering and stopping at the next enemy, fighting to try to eliminate the enemy, or if not possible, preserving their combat power, with the tank and armored vehicle soon supporting them again.

Infantry and tank coordination is not as simple as armored units leading with infantry following behind, using the tank or armored vehicle as cover; that's a very rudimentary approach.

Indeed, in relatively open terrain with few obstacles, armored units can lead the assault with infantry closely following within tens of meters to support the attack.

But at this moment, in this location, in the midst of urban ruin combat, it is usually necessary for the infantry to lead, with armored units providing fire support from behind and leveraging the infantry's close combat advantage to eliminate the enemy one by one.

If armored units led under these circumstances, with complex terrain and enemy situations, who knows what sort of enemy might emerge and what weapons they could use to threaten the armored vehicles?

For example, enemy infantry could be lying in ambush, utilising explosive charges, anti-tank rocket launchers, and other weapons to deliver a severe blow to the tanks and armored vehicles.

Of course, these so-called infantry-tank coordination tactics were not something Li Kexi could understand clearly; he only knew that the seemingly numerous cluster of Green Skin Orcs stood no chance of turning the tables, and their fate was certain annihilation.

Compared to the tactics of coordinated operation between tanks, armored vehicles, and infantry, what Li Kexi envied even more were the tanks and armored vehicles themselves.

His entire Beast Slaughter Group, with six or seven thousand men, couldn't muster a single tank; yet an infantry squad's attack tactic included the coordination of tanks and armored vehicles…

All were human, so why what a huge gap there was!

Tactics could be practiced; but equipment, if you didn't have it, you really didn't have it, and there was nothing you could do about it.

…

Perbov was not in the best of spirits.

He had already received several casualty reports.

According to the earlier plan, there were nearly twenty infantry-tank coordinated assault groups operating in phases, controlling a battlefield front about three to four kilometers wide.

He had ordered the frontline combat units to advance two kilometers forward, planning to strike a blow to the Green Skin Orcs that were still rushing in.

Perbov's troops did indeed accomplish the predetermined objectives, and in the two-kilometer advance, at least 300 Green Skin Orcs were eliminated under the fire of the infantry and armored units.

But his troops did not come out unscathed during this process.

Two tanks were destroyed, three armored vehicles were lost, and over 50 soldiers were casualties… That was distressing enough for him.

And indeed, such casualties would impact the entire battalion’s combat effectiveness.

The biggest single loss was when an assault group nearly got wiped out.

Perbov saw a verbal briefing from the evacuated wounded soldiers, who reported that during their march, they were ambushed by Green Skin Orcs.

Those Green Skins cleverly hid in the building ruins and avoided the infantry’s search range. Then they launched a simultaneous assault, and by the time they were discovered, they were already within sixty to seventy meters.

These orc-like creatures tactically divided into four formations and launched simultaneous attacks on both the infantry at the front and the armored units at the rear.

Suddenly engaging in close-quarters, the infantry squads suffered greatly in the exchange of fire. They managed to kill four or five enemies at close range, but they were also subjected to close-range blasts from the Green Skins. The crude firearms in their hands could incapacitate a soldier with a single shot, even if it hit a bulletproof vest—it might not be fatal, but breaking ribs and causing internal injuries that significantly reduced combat capability was not an issue.

What was even more terrifying was that the Green Skins were fond of using shotguns; the scattered pellets sometimes even shattered limbs.

In close-quarter combat, the casualties among the soldiers were heavy.

After that, when the Green Skins closed in to the range of melee combat, despite the G9 rifles being equipped with bayonets and serving as decent pole weapons, they were still no match for the Green Skins.

More critically, they could not get immediate fire support from the armored units.

The armored units had their own troubles.

Over twenty Green Skin Orcs, using obstacles as cover, approached the vehicles from the side and continuously moved while the artillery and machine-gun angles were rotating, forcing the vehicles to be unable to fully utilize their firepower advantage.

Despite a considerable number of Green Skins dying in the charge and two being taken down by the protective infantry accompanying the armored units, seven or eight still managed to get close.

With their shotguns, they eliminated the accompanying infantry and placed explosive packages on the tanks' tracks and the rear sides of the armor, and the armored vehicles received the same treatment.

Such explosive packages destroyed a tank and an armored vehicle.

Had it not been for the squad leader who was ambushed immediately sending out a distress signal, and fortuitously, a team located just a few hundred meters away coming to their aid, they might have been completely wiped out.

Yet, even so, their losses could still be considered severe.

Of the more than twenty infantry who survived, only six remained, one tank was destroyed, and out of two infantry fighting vehicles, only one was left.

A warning bell sounded in Perbov's head.

The enemy they faced this time wasn't something easy to deal with like common marauders.

Although these Green Skin Orcs only had light and melee weapons at their disposal and had to rely on such primitive methods as manually placing explosives to destroy armored units, it was apparent that the Green Skins were severely lacking in long-range firepower.

But by virtue of their beast-like physical fitness and their surprisingly strong combat ability at close range, as well as their reckless disregard for death…

Even if his forces had a significant firepower advantage over the enemy, they still could not avoid losses in battle.

From the time they left Weixing City until now, Perbov's First Battalion had already lost two tanks (one had broken down en route and had not been repaired), two armored vehicles, and nearly a hundred personnel were either killed or wounded.

This meant his forces had already lost over 10%.

The battle against the Green Skins would surely be tough, but they had already sustained such heavy casualties at the very beginning… What about moving forward?

Unthinkable!

But soon, he pushed these tentative thoughts back down.

The fight had to go on.

The troops that set out earlier had, as planned, advanced the frontline by two kilometers, eliminating a considerable number of Green Skins. Also, because of their decisive push forward, many Green Skins that had been on the offensive had to pull back.

It must be stated again that although these Green Skins were wild, warlike, and bloodthirsty, prone to get carried away, they were not without intelligence. On the contrary, they were quite cunning and pragmatic when it came to combat.

Realizing that they were at a great disadvantage and suffering heavy losses in open ground combat against armored assaults, those Green Skins didn't continue to stubbornly charge headlong into firepower with their flesh and blood.

This made Perbov somewhat regretful; otherwise, the number of Green Skin heads taken might have been more than just over three hundred.

The retreating Green Skins started to construct simple fortifications, or simply relied on the ruins of the terrain, and set up layered defenses.

The difficulty for the armored combined force to continue advancing would become much greater after that. It was foreseeable that further assault would not only see a sharp decline in military achievements, but their own losses would be significant, and it was possible they would face a one-to-two or even one-to-one casualty rate.

Perbov did not have enough troops to wear down these Green Skins.

Having achieved the predetermined objectives, there was no need to continue pushing forward.

The front-line combat units began to fortify their positions on site, also relying on the ruins of the terrain, and started constructing key fire points and defensive fortifications. Their advantage over the Green Skins lay in the fact that their defensive positions were supported by armored vehicles and tanks providing mobile firepower from a distance. If the Green Skins dared to rush out and charge the positions, tank cannons, machine guns, and bomb-firing machine guns would teach them a lesson.

Both sides thus entered a standoff phase.

If this situation were maintained, Perbov could accept it.

He had already discussed and agreed upon the objectives of this operation with the commissar at the battalion headquarters, as well as with several staff members and adjutants.

They could not possibly reverse the deteriorating situation of the entire war with the strength of just one battalion. What they needed to do was to stabilize the frontlines, be the mainstay, plug the gaps, and stop an all-out collapse.

Chapter 168: The Limit of Perseverance_3

As long as the battle could be sustained until the Governor arrived, it would be considered a success.

But those Green Skin Orcs seemed to have no intention of backing down, they still had ideas of breaking through human defenses.

But this time, Perbov wasn't going to be polite with them.

Ten miles from the front lines, the 155mm howitzer positions were fully constructed. It wasn't the rush stage anymore, a large number of adventurers had retreated from the front lines and reorganized, there was no need to worry about friendly fire, and the shooting elements from the front lines had already been transmitted back.

Without a second thought, they fired five rounds of artillery.

Sixty heavy artillery shells fell on the Green Skin Orcs' attack route within less than ten minutes, and the nearest shell landed less than a hundred meters from the front-line soldiers.

It was difficult to determine the exact casualties caused by these five rounds of artillery beyond the front line defenses, but a rough estimate suggested that the Green Skin Orcs suffered more casualties than previously inflicted by tanks, armored vehicles, and infantry combined.

After another loss of three to four hundred Green Skin Orcs, the attackers at the Fifth District had basically lost 20% of their fighting force.

After five rounds of shelling, the surge of strength the Green Skin Orcs had been gathering for a charge came to an abrupt end, and they finally ceased their aggressive push.

A 20% loss, of course, hadn't exceeded the threshold of what the Green Skin Orcs could withstand. But casualties must have meaning. Stubbornly advancing under heavy artillery to attack layered defense positions isn't about bravery, it's about stupidity.

Green Skins are never stupid in battle.

Moreover, the Green Skins weren't necessarily forced to continue this deadly struggle. The width of the first battalion's combat front stretched at most five to six kilometers. Yet the overall width of the attack front toward Rubbish Town within the High Tower ruins probably exceeded sixty kilometers, encompassing the entire High Tower District as well as the surrounding suburban areas. There was ample frontline width for maneuvers such as flanking and encirclement.

If they couldn't bite through, then they would simply stop biting and strike elsewhere.

Perbov understood this as well.

The scale of this war was, after all, nearly a hundred thousand adventurers and armed scavengers facing off against ten to twenty thousand Green Skin Orcs. An eight-hundred-person Composite Camp, however well-equipped, served as a significant weight, capable of tipping the balance of the scales.

But that was the extent of it, one couldn't expect a single camp to hold a sixty-kilometer front line.

Achieving the current battlefield results was sufficient.

They had inflicted significant casualties on the Green Skins' fighting force and stabilized the defense line, holding off the peak of the Green Skin Orcs' assault forces, gaining time to reorganize the follow-up troops.

Perbov had done all he could. What remained to be seen was how people like Dennison Henry and Jason Swan would handle the situation.

Oh, and one more thing, he had received intelligence that the leader of the Beast Slaughter Group had been rescued by them.

Perhaps he could be counted on as well.

Perbov had an estimate of how long he could hold out: he could defend until the artillery support ran out of ammunition; if the pressure became too great and the 155mm howitzer shells were exhausted, then there was no room for discussion, it was time to retreat promptly.

Not to retreat would mean sacrificing the troops for nothing.

A 155mm howitzer shell weighed 60 kilograms, and with twelve guns firing five rounds, they had already shot out three and a half tons of shells. The logistics support had three trucks dedicated to transporting ammunition. Subtracting the ammo used at Sanchi Town, the remaining shells were enough for, at most, thirty rounds of fire.

That was the limit of their defense.

Chapter 169: just because he is the governor?

Dennison Henry was anxious too.

He didn't know much about military matters, but he understood the simplest comparison of numbers. Perbov's troops could fight, but they couldn't replace the role of a hundred thousand people.

Here at the artillery positions, he was gathering the fleeing soldiers, and the effect was actually not bad.

Mainly, the twelve large cannons lined up in a row were extremely intimidating. When the fleeing soldiers retreated here and saw these cannons, they couldn't help but slow down.

Then, Henry would step forward, offering a carrot and stick, and keep people around.

The so-called carrot was money.

Henry had money, but not as much as it seemed. He had only become wealthy in the past two months and had made quite a bit, but he lacked accumulation.

But the key was that he was now willing to spend money, even spending all his money and going into debt if necessary.

After all, as long as they “won” and held their ground, and Rubbish Town was ultimately incorporated by the governor into the new alliance’s system of governance, “money” wouldn’t matter much anymore.

This information was unknown to the ordinary adventurers. Therefore, his willingness to spend generously still had an effect.

Another big stick was the policy on deserters implemented by Rubbish Town. For the adventurers who kept fleeing, Rubbish Town certainly had to come up with a measure. In fact, during this period, quite a few adventurers who had left the front line had already been executed as deserters.

This pressure had somehow reached the front lines.

During the great collapse, everyone was running, and with no officers enforcing military discipline, no one took this matter seriously.

But now, with mention of heavy artillery here and the offer of double pay, the adventurers naturally had to seriously consider their choices.

Of course, another key factor that could not be overlooked was that after the adventurers were reorganized, they were not sent to the front lines immediately.

Having just been routed by the Green Skin Orcs, sending them straight to the front line would likely have no effect. But just reforming the organizational structure and regrouping on the spot, staying beside the artillery positions without having to fight directly, was much more palatable.

And by using these adventurers, they could continue to gather more adventurers, which could have an expanding effect.

In a few hours, Henry had gathered around four to five thousand adventurers.

With these people, Henry began to think about sending them to the front line to fight.

However, after contacting Perbov, the answer he received was that no more people were needed; they were managing fine on their end.

Mainly because the Beast Slaughter Group had been reorganized.

Colonel Li Kexi, whom Henry knew, had led half the Beast Slaughter Group. Behind the defensive line formed by the First Composite Battalion, they finally had time to properly regroup and boost their morale. They were reorganized and then deployed to the front lines, significantly reinforcing the various firepower points and relieving the manpower shortage of the First Composite Battalion's infantry.

With that, the defense line of about six kilometers in the Fifth District could be considered impregnable.

The difficulty lay in the rest of the battlefront, which was about fifty kilometers long.

The Green Skins had quieted down in the face of the first battalion, but they could strike at other positions at any time.

In fact, this situation was likely already occurring.

But what was worse was that neither Henry nor Perbov had a good grasp of the overall situation.

The army, composed of Freelance Adventurers' Bands, even chose which defensive line they were responsible for by themselves, self-selecting their tasks. They didn't even have a unified command structure. Despite their great numbers, many thought more about adventuring, scavenging, and making money rather than fighting the Green Skins. Teams without contracts weren't even considering confronting the enemy head-on, consequently, their enormous numbers couldn't exert their full strength.

But at least, Swan should have an understanding of the overall situation.

He reached out again to the Rubbish Town magnate, partly to find out the current state of the battle and if any areas needed support. The three to five thousand men he had gathered could temporarily hold the line—though their combat effectiveness shouldn't be overestimated.

On the other hand, he was more eager to know whether the issue of numerous adventurers' bands, either choosing for themselves or being hired away by other vacillating merchants and agents to protect those fleeing bugs, had been contained or not?

…

"I am about to address this problem."

After ending the communication with Henry, Swan wore a solemn expression as he pushed open the door of the meeting room in front of him.

Inside, quite a few people were already seated.

His influence was evident at this time.

Without him, no one could have gathered so many agents and important merchants together during such chaos, with many considering abandoning everything to flee.

But that was as far as it went.

The meeting hall was noisy, and many faces showed clear signs of impatience.

Their arguments were routine, having been debated many times in the past.

There were those who advocated for holding out, and others for giving up;

Even among those who wanted to hold out, opinions varied—some were calling for the establishment of a unified Rubbish Town army to end the disarray; some suggested stricter supervision of the adventurer groups and more rational task distribution with increased rewards…

Chapter 170: Just Because He Is the Governor?_2

Swan had actually eavesdropped for quite a while before entering the room.

The situation of the argument was pretty much as he had understood before.

Most people still wanted to continue holding on.

Even though the situation was dangerous, everyone's investments were still in Rubbish Town.

On these wastelands, the value of "floating wealth" was very low.

Currency? This thing that can't be eaten or drunk isn't the same as in a stable society where money can buy everything. In the wastelands, it was too common to have currency but not be able to buy anything. Even if it was the Alliance currency issued by the Alliance, it might not be accepted much farther afield, and its purchasing power fluctuated greatly.

What was truly valuable were tangible goods, whether it was food, raw materials, or weapons and equipment—these were wealth.

Another important form of wealth was industry.

Industry depended on many things—machinery, locations, sources of raw materials, trade channels, business environment… Many of the people present had worked their way up to being agents because they owned industries.

Giving up Revival City was tantamount to surrendering their greatest wealth.

Not even seeing a coffin would necessarily bring tears, let alone without seeing one.

The situation was just a bit dire now—the Green Skin Orcs hadn't charged into Rubbish Town yet. Indeed, many people were unwilling to give up Rubbish Town; that would be like dispersing their wealth and breaking up the group.

But on the other hand, many agents who had no fixed property and relied on transportation and channels, the trader-type agents, wanted to flee. Although the losses from disbanding and fleeing were not small, it was still better than continuing to hold on and ending up completely collapsing and unable to escape.

However, the next piece of news that Swan was about to announce could very likely change the situation.

When he stepped onto the podium, the noisy and chaotic arguing gradually subsided.

People began to wait for this big shot to speak, hopefully with some good news.

And Swan did not disappoint them, "The retreat that spread from the 18th District to the Fifth District has stopped. A force from the Alliance Army in Revival City has responded to my request. They have not only plugged the holes in our defensive line but have also pushed back out two kilometers. Meanwhile, other units on different fronts made an orderly retreat and have now reestablished a new defensive line centered around the Fifth District. The situation has temporarily stabilized."

This news was exhilarating!

The arrival of the army belonging to Mr. Gu near Rubbish Town was known to everybody. Those who were not well-informed wouldn't be able to sit in this meeting room.

Someone couldn't help but ask, "Is Mr. Gu coming to help us? Will he resolve the trouble with those Green Skin beasts for us?"

"Yes," Swan gave a confirming response.

In fact, he had not had the chance to communicate with Mr. Gu, only with Henry.

But that didn't prevent him from speaking confidently now.

And this message, indeed, was inspiring!

Anyone with clear eyes knew that the Green Skin crisis had spread to a point where it could not be resolved by the power of Rubbish Town alone. By bringing in Mr. Gu, who had completely taken control of Revival City, there was hope for a solution to the problem.

However, some even smarter people thought of another key point.

A man with dirty, tangled, blond hair stood up and questioned Swan, "What's the cost? What is the cost?"

Swan looked toward him.

That was Nasr, his rival.

The second-ranked agent in the whole of Rubbish Town, unlike him, Nasr didn't control much in the way of physical industries. His greatest "industry" were the adventure groups.

At least thirty large and small adventure groups active around Rubbish Town had been brought together by him through funding, sponsorship, direct organization, and other means. He controlled these adventure groups' earnings and sales channels and could directly issue tasks to those adventure groups.

The thirty adventure groups, the largest with thousands of members and the smallest with dozens, collectively added up to two or three tens of thousands of armed adventurers under his influence and control.

Moreover, he also had close connections with many raiders on the wastelands.

This was an annoying fellow, and precisely the person Swan was most wary of during this Green Skin crisis. He was the typical type with no industries; his wealth lay within those “people.” Even if Rubbish Town was ruined, Nasr would indeed suffer severe losses, but he could take his people and try to develop another ‘Ruin Mine,’ or simply become a raider for some time.

With a gun, there’s always a way out.

Facing Swan’s intimidating gaze, Nasr seemed utterly unconcerned. Splitting his mouth into a grin, he revealed his yellow teeth and said, “Would Mr. Gu be so kind as to help us fight this war without asking for anything in return? Our dear Mr. Swan, just what exactly did you promise Mr. Gu?”

His question sent the room back into silence.

It’s certainly good that Mr. Gu is willing to help, but one must indeed clarify what the price will be.

The other various agents awaited Swan’s answer.

Swan revealed a smile, “The price? The entirety of Rubbish Town.”

With those words, the room fell silent.

Even his old rival Nasr was completely thrown off balance.

He tried to create difficulties for Swan, but how could you blurt out everything on your own?

He had planned to press further, to clarify what specific rights over Rubbish Town Swan had sold out, wanting to embarrass him further. Unexpectedly, he heard news that left him speechless.

It wasn’t a matter of selling out some rights; it was the selling of the whole thing, stripped clean, with nothing left!

Nasr, regaining his composure, burst out laughing. His hoarse, unpleasant laugh sounded incredibly shrill: “You sold the entire Rubbish Town to Mr. Gu? What right do you have to do that! Is Rubbish Town yours alone?!”

In the face of the accusations, Swan wore an indifferent smile.

“Let me correct you on one point; it’s not ‘selling out’ but a ‘price.'” Swan said. “Whether Mr. Gu chooses to save Rubbish Town and what he asks as a price, do you think those are decisions I can make?”

“What do you mean?”

“Let me be even clearer.” Swan continued, “Mr. Gu believes that Rubbish Town is already part of the Alliance, and as the ruler of the entire planet, it is only right that he would rule Rubbish Town and rightfully incorporate it into the new Alliance system. It’s just that Rubbish Town happens to be facing a huge crisis, under the threat of Green Skin Orcs. He is coming to help his own people.”

Swan emphasized the word “helping his people” heavily.

Many understood his implication and fell into thought.

Others either did not understand or refused to accept it even if they did.

Nasr continued to make noise: “What gives him the right to do that? Do our hundred thousand people, our hundred thousand guns, mean nothing?! Those factories, those industries, they are our property! How can he just take them because he’s Mr. Gu?!”

Some, confused, joined in the commotion.

Swan just looked at them and let out a cold snort, not saying much else.

Gradually, some began to understand and gradually fell silent.

Finally, Nasr's face turned sour.

His supporters were no longer numerous.

Clenching his rotten teeth, he said to Swan: "Are you intending to wipe us out completely?"

"I never said that," Swan retorted.

"I'm taking my people and leaving! Right now!" Nasr declared.

Finally, Swan smiled, a radiant smile: "That's not going to work. We are in a state of emergency. The battle outside the city has not yet ended, the threat of the Green Skin Orcs is still severe, and with Mr. Gu's imminent arrival, I propose that, effective immediately, Rubbish Town enters a state of emergency, the entire town under martial law, with no one allowed in or out!"

Following procedure, Swan's proposal should go to a vote, but today, he didn't ask for those in favor to raise their hands; instead, he asked for the opponents to raise theirs.

Nasr shouted in opposition, and a minority roared angrily with him.

But it was to no avail as the majority maintained an eerie silence.

With a smile, Swan announced: "Then from this moment on, Rubbish Town is officially under martial law."