Governor 181

Chapter 181: More Deaths, More Waaagh!

Aéro Lacroix felt that the war had changed its nature.

Or rather, this was what war truly was, and what had passed were just minor skirmishes.

He was born into a wandering Survivor Tribe, where staying meant struggling to survive, so under the lead of a senior, he and a dozen other youths left the tribe and followed a merchant to Rubbish Town, where they joined an adventure group.

To call it an adventure group was actually a stretch—they were armed garbage collectors. After getting a dozen guns on credit from the merchant, they began their scavenging life.

Not daring to venture too far, they scavenged in the safe zones just outside Rubbish Town, looking for metal scraps and picking up radiant stones to make it through the day. They'd then trade their haul for food back in town.

Their daily earnings went to buying food and paying off a bit of their firearm loans, leaving nothing left over.

And if they ever encountered a fight, like with the mutated monsters occasionally found in the city ruins, they had to be conservative with their ammo since bullets were expensive.

That period of his life was devoid of hope, of a future. But he didn't find it particularly sad; having food to eat was good enough. For a long time in the past, he didn't even know what it felt like to be full.

He and his companions spent two years drifting through Rubbish Town. Just when he thought he'd end up scraping by for the rest of his life until he could no longer work, he encountered the Green Skins.

Out of the several companions from his hometown, only six survived. The rest, including the senior who had led them out, were all killed by the Green Skins.

If it had been just casualties, that would have been one thing, but the way his companions died was too horrific. The Green Skins devoured and skinned people alive in front of them, cracking open skulls to eat the brains.

He wanted to retrieve the bodies but didn't dare, so he was pulled back by others as they fled.

Among the survivors, some completely gave up the life of scavengers and adventurers because of that incident. But he and two other brothers could never forget that scene.

After hearing about the Beast Slaughter Group, they joined it.

It was shameful to admit that even though they joined with the intent to take revenge on the Green Skins, after four months in the group, only he survived, and he had personally killed only one Green Skin.

When they went looking for trouble with the Green Skins, they could only try to find very small targets, no more than two or three together. But even then, they needed to assemble a force of thirty to fifty people before they dared to make a move.

Using iron pipe rifles when exchanging fire with those Green Skins offered no advantage; they had roughly the same range but far less power, and humans unlike the Green Skins couldn't endure many bullets. So, people in the Beast Slaughter Group had to think of other methods.

They modified their firearms, increased the caliber, and added more powder. Although this severely decreased the reliability of their guns, it definitely increased the power of the bullets; they equipped themselves with large knives and long spears, so when the Green Skins got close, they had handy weapons to fight back. In the time it took for one Green Skin to rip through three or four people, six or seven spears could be plunged into its body.

Everyone said that the Beast Slaughter Group had special methods for fighting the Green Skins, but to Lacroix, what special methods were there? It was nothing but stronger courage, a deep-rooted hatred, and a reckless willingness to outnumber and sacrifice many lives just to kill two or three Green Skins.

It was just like that.

But now, it was different.

Earlier, when the leader asked if he wanted to accept reorganisation, he thought it was simple: better treatment than before, better equipment, and still able to fight the Green Skins. What's not to like?

But what he didn't expect was that after accepting the reorganisation, the entire way of waging war had changed.

After resting in the barracks for a few days and undergoing a round of training under the governor's watchful eyes, he felt like he suddenly understood a lot more.

Shooting posture, military skills, constructing fortifications, squad coordination, armored support, artillery support…

Those days were miraculous. His mind suddenly cleared up, and he immediately understood any principle he was told, and any skill he practiced.

Arriving at the front again, he was led by the team… oh, now it was the squad leader.

Under the squad leader's command, their ten-man group constructed two fire points. They were made from the common rubble and broken bricks of the ruins, located on a small slope to create a high-ground firing position.

And such fire points were scattered at intervals, built by other comrades in the same company, ensuring crossfire could be exchanged between points and providing smooth mutual support.

This knowledge was newly acquired. Before, they could only rely on experience and guesswork, lacking such efficient construction of positions.

And these positions soon proved their worth.

A group of about a dozen Green Skins, taking advantage of the night, stealthily approached, and they were already near one of the fortifications when the sentry spotted them.

The sounds of gunfire woke everyone, and the few soldiers stationed there began resisting fiercely. Brothers from the neighboring point who could provide fire support also immediately opened fire. The machine guns and rifles blended into a chorus of shots.

Two or three Green Skins were killed on the spot by the dense gunfire.

The small group then retreated while firing, losing three people, allowing the Green Skins to conquer the position; but then, reinforcements came, launching two rockets into it.

After firing, seven or eight men charged in together, bayonets fitted, and started fighting the remaining Green Skins hand-to-hand.

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Lacroix was one of them; he had even personally stabbed one to death.

In close combat, humans were naturally at a disadvantage, even though many of the Green Skin Orcs were wounded or killed by the blasts. The remaining four still managed to slay seven soldiers.

But overall, the exchange ratio between the two sides was only one to one.

In the past, these dozen Green Skin Orcs would have been enough to wipe out their entire platoon.

However, the battle was far from over at this point. Their position had been thrown into disarray, and it seemed like the Green Skin Orcs seized this opportunity, sending in more troops to launch an assault on them.

Tonight was moonless, but with the help of the searchlight illumination from the position, Lacroix could clearly see at least fifty Green Skin Orcs forming layers of dark shadows, charging toward their piece of the battlefield.

At that moment, he was extremely tense, frantically opening fire along with his comrades.

It seemed like everyone knew there was no way out. There was no escape; they couldn't outrun these Green Skin Orcs.

At this moment, their only thought was to take at least one enemy with them before dying.

And just then, a whistling sound came from above their heads!

Lacroix remembered that before coming to reinforce, the platoon leader had said that as soon as the fight broke out here, the company commander would send a telegram to the rear joint artillery regiment. If they held on, they could get artillery support!

And here it came!

At least three artillery shells landed in front of them.

The huge explosions almost deafened him.

But Lacroix was inexplicably excited!

This is what fighting in a war was like!

The orcs had thick hides and flesh, but they were still made of flesh and blood. Under the power of the 155mm howitzer, those within a radius of five or six meters from the explosion were obliterated; within fifty meters, the shock wave and the dense shrapnel were lethal enough to kill.

The three shells hit their mark precisely. If the Green Skin Orcs hadn't been so spread out and had known to lie down and hide when the shells were coming, those three shells would have been enough to kill them all.

But even so, at least twenty Green Skin Orcs were finished.

The rest, howling, got up and continued to charge up the slope.

But by then, more of the surrounding firepower points had reacted, opening fire frenziedly on this position, with at least ten machine guns targeting here, and countless rifles as well.

The G9M light machine guns, paired with the G9A automatic rifles, formed a fire network that was many times more powerful than the old iron-barreled rifles they had used before. Under the dense fire of the network, the Green Skin Orcs eventually all fell on their way to the charge.

After that, the entire night and the entire defense line seemed to come alive as if battles were raging everywhere. The sound of gunfire was faintly heard from as far as ten kilometers away, and the constant roar of artillery never ceased.

Lacroix and his men also suffered several attacks after that; they too sustained many casualties, especially when those Green Skin Orcs got within thirty to fifty meters, as the enemies' crude firearms could ensure the death of one of their own with a hit.

But when has there ever been a battle without casualties?

Tonight, what Lacroix could assure was that at least on his stretch of the front, more Green Skin Orcs died than his own men did.

After dawn, the Green Skin Orcs' offensive stopped.

After tallying losses and counting the enemy dead, there were over fifty Green Skin Orc corpses in front of them. Thirty to forty of them had been killed by artillery and rocket launchers, about ten had been shot, and five or six had been bayoneted to death after charging into close combat.

On Lacroix's side, they had lost thirty warriors.

A new platoon, carrying their breakfast, took over their position at ten o'clock in the morning.

Lacroix and his comrades, after fighting all night and losing 30% of their combat strength, were allowed to retreat and rest for a while.

He himself didn't even feel tired, his heart was actually filled with excitement, and he even wanted to fight another battle!

…

Roastaxe felt exhausted and incredibly irritated, yet he still wanted to fight another battle.

Fighting, killing, and seeing blood splatter… These were the biggest hobbies of the Green Skin Orcs, ingrained in their genes as a natural instinct.

They were savage, ferocious, battle-driven by nature, fearless of death. The one thing they feared the most was not having a fight, and losing a battle would also put them in a foul mood.

Today was one of those not-so-happy days.

To avoid losing, Roastaxe could only temporarily order his boys to withdraw.

A few mad surgeons were performing surgeries on Green Skin youths with severed hands, feet, and heads. If a hand was missing, they'd chop one off another Green Skin and sew it on; the same with feet. Some of those hit by the cannons were missing quite a few parts, but as long as the head was still there and they weren't dead, they'd just cut the head off and transplant it onto another body with a more intact physique but a ruined head…

Roastaxe watched his boys being put back together again and felt a little bit better.

I like to fight, I ain't afraid to die, but that don't mean I don't know when a fight can't be won. Living is for fighting another day. Too many Green Skin boys dying makes it bad for future battles.

He returned to the makeshift barracks built from the rubble, grabbed a red, crudely made communicator with no apparent system, and fiddled with it to contact the boss at the rear.

However, the communicator crackled with electric noise but failed to connect.

Roastaxe grew angrier. He yelled out, "Carcha! Carcha! Get in here!"

A guy who looked much skinnier than him, but actually was stronger than the average Green Skin Orc, came in holding a wrench.

"Boss Roastaxe, what do you need me for?"

"Fix this thing for me! I need to talk to boss Ripflesh!"

"It's broken again?"

Carcha took the communicator from Roastaxe's hand, scratched his head, then tapped it a few times with a small hammer, and dismantled some parts with the wrench.

Then, he handed the communicator back to Roastaxe, "I reckon it should be good now."

Roastaxe didn't care much; he fiddled with it again and, indeed, it connected.

He gave Carcha a kick in the butt, sending the wrench boy on his way. Once he heard familiar panting from the other end, Roastaxe couldn't wait to shout, "Boss Ripflesh! I listened to you and led the boys in a charge during their shift change! We lost a whole lot of lads, and we still didn't break through. Those shrimps' cannons are too fierce. I want big booms! I want trucks! I want speed bikes!"

“No!” boss Ripflesh refused, “You just hold there! Any boy who wants to fight should go fight! The elders say to wait a bit longer, and we can have a big thing, a big boom! We can’t reveal it yet! Once we get new boys and new squigs grown, we’ll take these big booms and wipe out all those shrimps in one go!”

“Alright… you’re the boss, I’ll listen to you,” Roastaxe spoke grudgingly, “but you gotta promise me, when it’s time, you’ll give me extra big booms!”

“You’ll get them, you’ll get them!”

…

With a smack, the communication was cut, and the big boss of the Iron-Tooth Clan, Ripflesh, with heavy steps, went to find the elder.

He was an old orc, with teeth nearly all fallen out.

Among the Green Skins, elders were rare. An orc that couldn’t fight wouldn’t live very long, for Green Skins had no tradition of respecting the elderly or caring for the young.

But on the other hand, if a Green Skin managed to survive to old age but still held a position of great importance within the clan, it meant they must have something special about them and were definitely not as feeble as they appeared.

In the presence of the elder, even boss Ripflesh, the leader of the entire clan, maintained some respect—an arduous task for a Green Skin.

“When will our big booms be ready?” Ripflesh asked. “The boys keep asking and demanding support. If not, I can only have them pull back. Some new shrimps have arrived, and they’re giving the boys a real beating!”

After a moment’s thought, the elder said, “We still need to fight, more deaths, more WAAAGH, more new boys, even more deaths, even more WAAAAGH, even more new boys, and more and more deaths…

and then we'll win! We all can become bigger orcs! The boys at the front need to push harder. If not, send more squigs up there. We've got too many of those squigs. We don't need that many. The new mushrooms are growing well, but we still need more land to grow even more mushrooms."

Chapter 183: I want this big guy!

"I don't want to hear so much reasoning, I just want to know when you can finish making the big thing!" Tearing Flesh growled, growing somewhat impatient.

The elder grabbed Tearing Flesh's hand, "If you want to see those big guys, come with me, I'll show you."

Following the elder, Tearing Flesh arrived at an 'factory'.

This was an open-air site, with lots of wrench kids working here, kicking their pixie assistants' butts, laughing loudly, and occasionally brawling with each other. Sometimes a greenskin was even killed on the spot.

But this didn't affect their work efficiency, and the scene was bustling with fervent activity.

And here, Tearing Flesh saw a lot of good stuff.

There were greenskin trucks being assembled that looked like a pile of junk casually put together into a semblance of a truck, with multibarrel autocannons awkwardly stuffed on top, both capable of transporting the boys to the front lines and acting as a fiercely firing armed transport.

He also saw what looked like cannons made out of iron drums, two or three iron drums were simply bound together with wire, and fitting them with a couple of wheels was considered a completed job.

Besides these, he also saw several roughly three-meter-tall tin cans with 'arms and legs' painted with a crude and laughable orc face in white paint.

He turned his head, and the elder was watching him.

“This is a gift prepared for the strongest boss in the clan! Once it’s done, if you put it on, with the clickety-clack of chainsaws, the boom of artillery, and the rat-tat-tat of rotary guns! You’ll surely be able to kill those shrimps to the last one!”

Tearing Flesh couldn’t help but caress the big fellow, and, finding a pixie worker in the way, kicked it a few meters away with disgust.

It was quite a while before he cracked a wide grin and laughed delightedly, “Hahahaha! I want this big guy! When can I wear it?”

“Don’t worry, don’t worry, soon, very soon!”

…

One month had passed.

Gu Hang didn’t stay in Rubbish Town all the time, flying back to Revival City several times in between.

After all, the twin-city area of Revival City and Weixing City is the foundation.

He inspected the reconstruction of Revival City. The outer city area, which had been devastated, was now beginning to take shape. Although it was still a big construction site, according to Osenia’s planning, the city area was starting to look like something. The population still active in the outer city was about 600,000, nearly 200,000 of whom were engaged in the city’s reconstruction.

With the efforts of nearly 200,000 construction workers, the city was being rapidly rebuilt.

Now, the total population of Revival City was around 800,000. Of the nearly 900,000 people who used to live outside Revival City, 200,000 moved to Weixing City and another 100,000 to the inner city.

The entire city's population structure and industrial structure would become more rational in the following time.

But Gu Hang was more concerned about the situation in Weixing City.

His main industrial area was here.

The population in Weixing City had exceeded 300,000 after receiving a large number of people who had migrated from Revival City and from other settlements within a two-hundred-kilometer radius to the east.

The military industry was particularly important.

Under the round-the-clock work of the black box within the research institute and through Wu Jiarong's efforts, various military industrial production capacities were rapidly increasing.

In the last month, the military industry in the Waste Hole area produced 55 armored fighting vehicles, 40,000 sets of individual soldier equipment with the G9 rifle as the core, 100 various types of artillery, 40,000 rounds of various types of ammunition, 200 military trucks…

The equipment for the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade wasn't fully produced yet, but at least two more heavy composite camps were ready and would be sent to the frontlines.

Along with the 1st Wind Extinguishing Brigade's 2nd and 3rd Battalions heading to the frontline were also logistics supplies carried by those two hundred trucks, along with numerous ammunition and weapons.

Two hundred trucks couldn't carry all this in one trip; it would take several trips.

And once this batch of equipment and logistics supplies were in place, the four garrison divisions from 4-7 could be fully reorganized.

Of course, Gu Hang still had to spend more than four hundred points of grace to train them.

With training complete and equipment in place, their combat power wouldn't be far behind the 2nd Infantry Division, except for the insufficient number of artillery pieces.

Besides military construction, Gu Hang's grace points had surged again in this month.

It had nothing to do with the war.

Although there was a big war going on outside Rubbish Town, and it was the biggest war since Gu Hang arrived on Rage Owl Star, so far, there has never been a combat settlement interface.

Obviously, the previous battles, whether they were counter-push frontline or defensive battles, the many individual fights weren't counted as concluded.

If you wanted to see the combat settlement interface, you would probably have to wait until the entire campaign was over.

But not having the grace points from battles wasn't a big issue, as his monthly grace point income had risen from less than four hundredlast month to 588 points now.

This spike in monthly income wasn't due to the surge in population, but a genuine increase in productivity. The biggest increase came from Weixing City, where nearly two hundred thousand more people moved in. With short-term concentrated training and on-the-job training, most of the people solved the unemployment problem. Most importantly, heavy industry and military industry received manpower supplements.

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The significant increase in productivity brought about an income rise of over one hundred and fifty Grace points.

In terms of Revival City, the construction speed of the outer city was fast, and with the recovery of various industries, the rise in management ability, and the elimination of debuffs, the situation in Revival City kept improving. Although two hundred thousand people had moved out, the Grace points provided by Revival City each month did not decrease but instead increased by thirty points.

This monthly income, after accounting for the four hundred points spent on training soldiers, along with the expenses for activating Tadeusz, and the training costs for the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade and the 2nd Division, left Gu Hang with only three hundred Grace points remaining, which then again rose back to eight hundred and ninety.

Gu Hang wouldn't squander these Grace points carelessly.

The war against the Green Skin Tribe he now faced was the largest scale battle he had encountered since his arrival at Rage Owl Star.

These Green Skins turned out to be much more troublesome than imagined.

Over the course of this month, the soldiers under Gu Hang had suffered a total casualty loss of around four thousand. On a sixty-kilometer frontline, an average of more than one hundred and thirty died each day; the number of Green Skins killed was also around eighty or so.

The combat loss ratio was 1:1.6, slightly unsightly.

The main reason was that, recently, the Green Skins had acquired some new things—artillery and armed pickups.

Both of these put great pressure on the front lines.

The former directly attacked with firepower. Now, the infantry holding the line occasionally suffered attacks from heavy firepower. The artillery of the Green Skins was potent, and a direct hit meant even fortified positions couldn't withstand it.

And the latter was also troublesome. The armor plates on those armed pickups were rough but indeed quite tough, and they could speed along quickly. Belching clouds of black smoke from their rears, the multiple machine guns on top fired fiercely. Without discussing accuracy, they could carry four or five Green Skins close to the positions.

Usually, a couple of rockets would be enough to damage the vehicle, but not necessarily kill all the Green Skins aboard; just getting troops face-to-face was enough.

Consequently, the face-to-face Green Skins would bring no small number of casualties to the soldiers on the defense line.

But if it were just that, the problem wouldn't be too big.

The soldiers under the Governor's command had not retreated a bit on the frontline.

The artillery of the Green Skins was powerful, but clearly, its range was not as far as that of human cannons. After determining the position of the enemy artillery from their trajectory, the 155mm howitzer positions would often fire three or four rounds of artillery barrages toward that area.

After the bombardment, although it was difficult to confirm the results, the Green Skin's artillery usually fell silent, likely having been swept clean.

As for those newly emerged armed pickups, they could only be dealt with by tubes, by land mines laid by scouts, obstacles, and the like, to block them. They would try to delay their advance as much as possible and then destroy them with fire.

If they managed to transport the Green Skin infantry up front, then it would come down to a melee, but casualties would be high.

The emergence of heavy firepower and 'armored' strength in the enemy was very bad news.

Gu Hang himself was already feeling that something was not quite right.

After he inspected the military production line in Weixing City and returned to the Rubbish Town frontline, the five interstellar warriors who had arrived by vehicle two days earlier immediately sought him out, issuing a warning.

Gu Hang had previously extended an invitation to the Phoenix Battle Group, hoping they would help solve the Green Skin problem outside Rubbish Town.

The Green Skins were old adversaries of the interstellar warriors. Throughout the Phoenix's history, during their century-long penitentiary expedition, they had encountered countless Green Skin opponents.

The 'Cancer of the Universe' wasn't a term thrown around lightly; these enemies truly had a widespread presence throughout the universe. Certain particularly ferocious tribes of Green Skins were capable of sweeping through and destroying several star systems.

The Phoenix responded to the Governor's call, arriving here from their monastery by truck.

The ten Iron Ox trucks assigned to the Phoenix by Gu Hang had been painted in the Phoenix style, predominately red with white edges and patterns, a stark contrast to the Alliance Army's common gray and sandy yellow.

Not only did these ten trucks bring five interstellar warriors, but they also brought a hundred fully-armed young soldiers.

The monastery of the Phoenix had previously taken in two hundred teenagers under the age of nineteen for training as reserves. One hundred of the younger ones stayed in the monastery, continuing their training with Priest Rizzo; the hundred that accompanied Commander Matins to Rubbish Town were generally a bit older.

The Phoenix planned to throw them into battle.

These young soldiers had only received a month of training at the Phoenix monastery and didn't have the external enhancements that Gu Hang possessed. Even with the remarkable ability of the Phoenix to train new recruits, it wouldn't be enough to turn them into elite soldiers within a month.

Indeed, that was the case, but the Phoenix's intention wasn't really to expect these hundred teenagers to make any significant battle achievements.

Essentially, this was a selection process.

They had only one genetic seed in hand, which certainly required selecting the most outstanding, the most likely candidate for successful surgery. Only those who survived on the real battlefield, those who performed the best, could potentially enter the final selection round.

Gu Hang actually had reservations about this.

But as it was something within the battle group's affairs, he didn't feel it was his place to meddle, so he let them be.

Turning back to the present.

Commander Matins and his four brothers found him as soon as he landed at the joint military camp outside Rubbish Town.

Facing the five giants that towered over him by half, Gu Hang felt somewhat nervous.

Matins spoke with a serious tone, "This war, we can't keep fighting it like this."

"What do you mean?"

"We must launch an attack as soon as possible," Schneider spoke up first, "The sooner the better, a full-scale offensive, to quickly annihilate all the Green Skins and completely purify this land with fire."

"Hold on… at least tell me the reason first," said Gu Hang, "I was planning to have the troops continue to show off for a while. The equipment for two garrison divisions hasn't yet arrived, the stockpile of shells isn't sufficient… not to mention, the overall casualty ratio is still within acceptable limits, we estimate

there are about twenty thousand Green Skins in the ruins of the high tower. At this rate of casualties, we'll be able to exterminate those Green Skins at the cost of thirty thousand of our own soldiers."

Schneider, of course, didn't mince words with Gu Hang, "Ha, that's assuming those Green Skins keep running into our defenses until they are all dead. Do you think that's possible?"

Gu Hang rolled his eyes, "Of course I know that's not possible, but the casualty ratio has to be better than if we were to attack. According to normal thinking, we should continue to maintain the defensive, let those Green Skins crash against our lines until they can no longer withstand the casualties and are exhausted. Meanwhile, our side's armaments would be more abundant, and then we could counterattack. Wouldn't that be better?"

"There's no chance of that," Matins said, his tone much more patient than Schneider's, "Green Skins… are a very tough enemy to deal with; they're quite unique. You know they grow from the ground, right?"

"I know, but growing from the ground still requires time to mature, right?"

"You're right, but the Green Skin Tribe is an alien species born for warfare, and the more intense the battle, the faster their tribe grows."

Gu Hang frowned deeply, "You're saying… war, death, might actually cause their numbers to grow inversely?"

This was a counterintuitive piece of information.

Before now, Gu Hang truly did not know that the Green Skins had such a characteristic.

Chapter 185: do you know how expensive orbital strikes are?

"Green Skins are born for war; as long as they keep fighting, the development speed of Green Skin spores within the same tribe will increase, resulting in more and more Green Skin aliens. It's not just about the numbers, their technology also grows rapidly in the process."

Matins was carefully supplementing Gu Hang's knowledge about the 'cancer of the universe.'

"Fortunately, you didn't lose. If they had won a key battle, their growth rate would have escalated even more. In fact, those guys at Rubbish Town already handed those Green Skins a victory, basically stepping on the accelerator of their tribal development."

"Thankfully, this Green Skin Tribe hasn't been developing for long, and their starting point was in the urban ruins, where they say Low Energy Storms often blow through… If it was a warm forested area, with more fertile land, we might be facing millions of Green Skins."

"Facing such an enemy, engaging in an attrition war is not a smart choice. A human soldier takes twenty years from birth to become a qualified warrior; those Green Skins can fight as soon as they emerge from the ground."

"If we don't resolve this issue quickly, we could be facing not just twenty thousand Green Skin Orcs, but double that number of Green Skins, and ten times that number of low-level Green Skin creatures like fart spirits. Their technology could even advance further, with cannons becoming more powerful and reaching further, and armed trucks becoming bigger and more ferocious. It wouldn't be surprising if some beings that could be likened to demons or monsters appeared; sometimes among the Green Skin race, there are beings that rely solely on physical strength and can match a star warrior in combat."

…

After hearing Matins' extensive information about the Green Skins, Gu Hang's face had completely darkened.

Some of his previous plans had to be overturned.

Just as Matins described, the best way to counter such an enemy is to flatten them in one fell swoop, avoiding any attrition war and not hoping to reduce the enemy's numbers. Even if one doesn't flatten them in one go, it's essential to reduce their numbers to a very low level.

Otherwise, the subsequent troubles would be endless.

“I understand what you mean, thank you for the information,” Gu Hang thanked Matins and then made a request, “I will contact the ‘Quintet’ right away. Colonel Yelisia will provide us with orbital strike support. Once the orbital strike firepower cover is in place, we’ll immediately launch an attack. Let’s set it for three days from now.”

Matins nodded, “Three days should be fine.”

“Then it’s settled; we’ll still need your help when the time comes.”

…

Three days was the time Gu Hang needed to distribute equipment to the garrison divisions and spend the grace points to train them to T5 level.

This was a necessary preparation of the troops.

Meanwhile, he also used this time to have an in-depth communication with Yelisia in space.

When Yelisia’s holographic image appeared in front of him, he saw the golden-haired woman captain elegantly slicing a piece of steak and having a glass of red wine on the side.

Gu Hang’s mouth twitched slightly.

These were the supplies he had sent up to the Quintet.

The ‘Quintet’ had its own synthetic starch production capability and had replenished military logistics supplies before departing for Rage Owl Star. Even without any new supplies during the two years of the mission, they wouldn’t starve, but they couldn’t expect to eat too well.

After all, she had helped a lot, so Gu Hang had to show some appreciation.

When he was poor before, Gu Hang would remember to load up the return transport ships with consumer goods after scrounging wool from Yelisia. Now, he would do even more so.

Of course, the Quintet did not dispatch ships specifically for logistical supplies. Otherwise, the cost of the transport ship taking off and landing would not even be worth the food transported…

The last time the transport ship came, it was on serious business.

There was a squad of Battle Nuns from the Saintly Lily who had come down, which was support summoned by Superior Georgette. From the Sisterhood headquarters on Korolya III, twenty Battle Nuns had arrived at Rage Owl Star.

Including the two who had died, there were twenty-nine of them in total.

Superior Georgette had taken issue with the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, and in the previous period, they had finished their investigation within Revival City, capturing some deeply hidden Cult members.

During the previous period, the twenty-nine Battle Nuns had already left Revival City, following the clues they had acquired, and headed north.

Gu Hang hoped they would have good luck.

If they could solve the problem of the Cult on Rage Owl Star by themselves, nothing would be better. And if they needed help, Gu Hang would not be stingy.

After all, they were essentially doing work on his behalf.

And the ship that had brought down the twenty Battle Nuns, on its return journey, also took one of Colonel Yelisia's most valued items: a letter of commendation.

The letter of commendation was personally written by Gu Hang. It essentially expressed his gratitude, in his capacity as the Governor of Rage Owl Star, for Colonel Yelisia's outstanding contribution to

combating and eradicating followers of the Evil God who did not worship The Emperor, as well as the Evil God's projections.

Of course, if the letter were only written by Gu Hang himself, it wouldn't be of much use.

Chapter 186: Do You Know How Expensive Orbital Strikes Are?_2

The commendation letter from the planetary governor can indeed serve as a reference for military leaders to receive honors after actions. In other words, when Yelisia presents this commendation letter and reports it, the Imperial Military will recognize it.

However, the degree of recognition is uncertain.

For a strong governor, or even one of the Foundry Generals who build worlds, a letter is enough for a promotion; for someone like Gu Hang… it's not quite sufficient, lacking in value.

But if the commendation letter also carries the signature and the wax seal of a Starfighter Battle Group commander and a Mother Superior from the Sisterhood, then it's a different story.

Gu Hang wasn't sure just how valuable such a commendation letter was, but at least at that moment, seeing the smiling face of Yelisia, he knew it should be pretty good.

Of course, when the transport ship returned, it wasn't just going to bring up a letter. Although the commendation letter was the most important, it wouldn't do for the cabin to be empty, so it would be good to transport some rare logistical supplies as well.

Just to curry favor with the lady of wealth above.

Inside the package were some red wines, which had been confiscated from the homes of the nobility in Revival City, said to be crafted products from certain areas in Green Valley Region.

As for the steaks, they came from the wild oxen beasts. After the truck production in Weixing City had increased to nearly two hundred units per month, the demand for animal power had greatly decreased.

Not only did the wild oxen used by a large number of merchants in Revival City lose their value of service and were sent back to the pasture to be raised for beef and dairy purposes.

And the steak Yelisia was eating now came from those.

“Colonel, you seem to be in a good mood,”

“Indeed, not bad,” Yelisia replied leisurely as she swallowed the beef and took a small sip of wine, then commented, “However, the quality of your beef is subpar, the texture is too rough; the taste of the wine is also somewhat inferior.”

“Getting choosy, are we?”

“Just a reflection,” Yelisia continued as a server took away the dinnerware, “This is the hardest time I’ve ever had in my life. Actually, I am still grateful for the supplies you sent up, otherwise my collected provisions wouldn’t have lasted two years.”

“…”

Gu Hang coughed lightly twice, not wanting to talk further with Yelisia about these corrupt luxuries, and turned to the matter at hand, “I hope to get support for an orbital strike.”

“What scale?” Yelisia remained unhurried.

“Full force.”

“What?” Yelisia was no longer calm, “What enemy on the surface do you need to face that requires me to carry out a full-force orbital strike?”

“Alien threat.”

Gu Hang’s answer was succinct, while Yelisia’s frown deepened.

“Still those aliens? Has there been some particularly significant change?”

Yelisia asked this because she had been following the alien threat on Rage Owl Star before. Related intelligence, as the war progressed, would be compiled every so often and sent to the starship.

She was clear about the situation on the ground. It was for this reason that she questioned it.

According to the latest situation she had seen before, the fight was in a deadlock, but far from a major crisis.

Gu Hang coughed lightly and said, “We can’t keep having a war of attrition here with those aliens. If we don’t resolve the issue completely, after a while, when a new batch of aliens emerge, we’ll have to face another war on a larger scale, with an enemy that has become even more troublesome, and by then we might not be able to win.”

“I understand the principle, but… do you know how much it costs to fire the ‘Quintet’ at full specs once?”

Gu Hang hadn’t expected Yelisia to bring up this question.

He waited silently for Yelisia to continue speaking. Clearly, this wasn’t really a question aimed at him, but more of a rhetorical one.

Yelisia continued, “The last time you asked me to help with a precision strike, it was with the ‘Scalpel’ shipboard missiles from the ‘Quintet,’ the least powerful and most cost-effective attack method. The price of such a missile is three hundred tax coins; a full-scale barrage consists of over a hundred ‘Scalpels.'”

“Going up one level, there is the ‘Heat Hammer’ Colossal Cannon, a small-scale Colossal Cannon. The cost of one round of ammunition is four thousand tax coins, and a barrage consists of twenty rounds.”

“The highest level is the ‘Wrath of Loyalty’ Colossal Cannon, where a single round costs fifty thousand tax coins, and I have only two such cannons on my ship.”

“Now do you understand how expensive it is?”

The more he listened, the uglier Gu Hang’s expression became.

He knew it was expensive, but he didn’t realize it was this expensive.

The so-called ‘tax coin’ isn’t a conventional concept of currency. It is a tool used by the Imperial Taxation Department to measure the value of resources provided by planets during tax collection. One tax coin roughly equates to the minimum standard annual output of a population on an ordinary world, as valued by the Empire.

To surrender a healthy adult is worth five tax coins; a well-trained soldier with a full set of individual equipment is valued at ten tax coins.

In the Imperial records, Rage Owl Star was taxed at the minimum level — paying ten million tax coins every two years. Moreover, the preferential treatment Gu Hang received meant he only had to pay a quarter of that amount the first time, which was two and a half million tax coins.

And according to Yelisia, the total cost of such a barrage would be two hundred and ten thousand tax coins.

Firing fifty barrages would expend enough ammunition to pay for a full tax payment from Rage Owl Star; twelve barrages, enough for Gu Hang’s first tax payment; four barrages would cost as much as the lives of all the soldiers from the nine division-brigade level units that Gu Hang commanded.

He understood the unspoken message of Colonel Yelisia: An orbital strike is possible, but after it’s done, are the lives of the soldiers you saved worth the cost of my ammunition?

This is the ‘stature’ of a navy person: they calculate the cost of ammunition in terms of human lives.

A single barrage is worth the lives of twenty thousand well-trained soldiers. If you have a gap that can be filled with twenty thousand lives, then don’t ask the esteemed navy masters to bomb it for you.

But…

All of a sudden, Gu Hang wore a smile, deeply understanding one truth: the navy’s money is not my money, but the soldiers who die, those are truly my soldiers!

So he said, “We still need to bomb it.”

Yelisia shook her head helplessly, “I knew you would say that. If you insist, then I’ll help you.”

After all, the navy’s money is not my money either.

Of course, one shouldn’t be too excessive.

Therefore, Yelisia added, “But… you have to agree to two conditions. First is to identify the target. I’ve looked at your original plans, and I can’t let expensive firepower be wasted on an indiscriminate bombardment of the entire city ruins; that would be too costly. You need to give me precise targets to improve the efficiency of the strike; this is for your own good. With such a level of targets, a full-scale attack can only happen once, so you should cherish this opportunity and strive to achieve the best combat results.”

“Secondly, after the battle, you need to provide me a report of the effectiveness. Later, the Military Affairs Department will review these things; the combat results and expenditures need to have a reasonable justification. If the outcome is too outrageous, the Military Affairs Department will come looking for you, and you might be made to bear the costs of the used ammunition. There have been precedents for this and I will be held responsible as well; don’t make this difficult for me.”

“I understand, thank you, Yelisia.”

By thanking her this time, Gu Hang dropped the honorific, sounding more intimate.

He knew that Yelisia really had helped him.

Otherwise, if Yelisia truly treasured her own safety and was unwilling to take on too much responsibility, sticking strictly to regulations, it would be really difficult to get approval for the orbital strike; at most, he would probably be able to finalize some minor token action.

Since she had helped him, Gu Hang was not going to deliberately put her in a difficult position.

Accurately finding the target?

The brothers from the Phoenix Battle Group could lend a hand.

The Starfighters, more elite than any special forces unit, infiltrating behind enemy lines to designate important strategic targets for an easier orbital strike—wasn't that standard practice?

Chapter 187: Offensive Initiative

Mr. Gu's request was promptly accepted by Matins without hesitation.

It really was the kind of task they excelled in— at least one of them.

Interstellar warriors are formidable, sure, but a perpetual weakness is their lack of numbers. In any battle of significant scale or intensity, it would be extremely foolish to commit these elite but scarce interstellar warriors to a head-on fight where attrition is the strategy— they themselves would never accept such an order.

No matter how tough a powered armor is, to be honest, it can't withstand a direct hit from a 155mm howitzer shell; no matter how powerful a bomb gun is, it may penetrate the locally-produced

‘Challenger’ tank with no big deal, but on top-tier battlefields, if it encounters the regular Lion Tanks of the Star Realm Army, much less the Lion King Tanks, it would be like scratching an itch.

They are a scalpel, not meant to be used as a hammer.

Taking advantage of the three days Gu Hang needed to prepare his troops for a counterattack, the five warriors of the Phoenix would infiltrate behind enemy lines to seek out and mark high-value strategic targets.

Joining them were 28 warriors from the ‘Storm Squad.’ They were the elite marine unit from the Quintet, now trained by Gu Hang to T3 level, ensuring the strength of each individual was guaranteed. Even engaging in close quarters combat and facing off against an ordinary green-skinned grunt wouldn’t be a big problem for them.

They would temporarily come under the command of Phoenix, follow orders, and act in coordination.

Without much ado, a total of thirty-three people set out under cover of darkness.

They left from the southernmost end of the entire north-south frontline. To cover their operation, the 4th Infantry Battalion of the 7th Garrison Division stationed there initiated an attack.

From the artillery positions in the rear, a battalion of gunners were allocated. Thirty cannons were pushed forward five kilometers and fired twenty rounds of covering fire in the direction of the infantry battalion’s intended attack.

The first five rounds were rapid fire, and the subsequent fifteen rounds were spaced about three to four minutes apart, maintaining the overall rhythm of the bombardment.

Those greenskins were stunned by the explosions.

In the past, they had been shelled, but generally, artillery would come into play when they launched an attack — the shrimps then would call for artillery support from the rear, and fierce firepower would cover their attack or retreat routes.

The main target was still to break their advance and inflict casualties.

There were also many cases where the shrimp would retaliate after the greenskins' own big guns opened fire.

Firing at one's own position like today wasn't unprecedented, but it was only occasional.

This moment, however, with six hundred heavy artillery shells falling within an hour on a not-so-large area, was certainly something these greenskins stationed here had never experienced before.

At least, the greenskins stationed in this area hadn't seen it.

The orc leader here, named Bone Strength, wasn't killed by the bombing. His fortification was built on top of the ruins of a reinforced concrete building, further reinforced by hauling various building materials, quite sturdy. Unless hit directly by heavy artillery on this particular fortification, shrapnel and shock waves were unlikely to cause any trouble.

However, there weren't many fortifications across the entire position that could match this level of protection. In addition, the shelling was too sudden, and casualties were feared to be significant.

Of course, most casualties occurred early on; those who survived later took cover in various bomb-proof shelters. There would indeed still be considerable losses, but these were within acceptable limits.

Yet even if Bone Strength was clear on this point, he paced back and forth restlessly in his fortification, spewing green-skin profanities.

He knew that the shrimp's inexplicably aggressive shelling mustn't be mere child's play. His green brain could clearly deduce that this was likely the prelude to the shrimp mounting an offensive.

But at the moment, he couldn't run out of his fortification and kick his boys into gear, making them brace for battle.

With artillery falling every few minutes, leaving the fortification could easily get him killed.

If he were killed, he wouldn't be able to fight anymore.

So he had to continue to stew in his fury, hiding.

But soon, the opportunity to fight came.

After the last round of shelling and ten minutes without any new shells falling, he heard gunfire and the shouts of close combat.

He perked up, leading a few boys, and burst out of the fortification.

They reached the ground still warm and smoky from the heavy artillery bombardment.

Looking toward the direction from which the shots were coming, he could vaguely see the approaching shrimp in the not-so-distant place.

The shrimp advanced quickly, constantly splitting off forces to clear every fortification and pile of rubble they passed.

In many places, in Bone Strength's recollection, there were his own boys on guard. However, there were very few places where battles occurred.

In those places without fighting, the shrimp would just go in and come out again.

Bone Strength could guess that the boys he had sent to hold those positions were probably obliterated during the previous artillery strikes. Otherwise, they wouldn't have allowed the shrimp to walk in without any resistance.

How many boys had died?

He didn't know.

He bellowed loudly, "Waaagh!! Boys! Roll out! The shrimp are storming us! It's time to show how tough we are! We can't let the shrimp look down on us!"

Chapter 188: Offensive Initiative _2

"waaagh!!"

Roars of battle echoed from the numerous orc youngsters around, and a crowd of them crawled out from their previous hiding spots. Some even drove out armed pickups that had survived the previous shelling, while others rolled out 'cannons' made from iron barrels strapped together.

However, the overall number appeared to be significantly less than what had been estimated.

Half of them had not come out.

Those damn big booms were indeed formidable.

But no matter!

Even if only half were left, they could still slaughter all those shrimps that dared to come out to fight!

With his subordinates in tow, he charged forward!

…

Observing the situation at the front, Reed Meshako couldn't help but shake his head.

He was formerly a staff sergeant from the original Kodi company and later enlisted as a political officer under Colonel Tadeusz's recruitment. After the reorganization in Rubbish Town, he was assigned to the 7th Garrison Division 4th Regiment as a political officer, his rank jumping directly to captain.

His military rank had risen extremely fast, but this was a common occurrence among the old units that had followed Gu Hang for a longer time. The army expanded rapidly, and as long as the old soldiers ensured loyalty and a willingness to advance, their promotion was swift.

When the rear command center demanded their full cooperation with the Phoenix Battle Group's operation, and Commander Matins ordered a diversionary frontal attack, Meshako carried out the mission resolutely.

He knew their regiment commander was not keen on doing this, even trying his best to disrupt the organization when the adventurers were incorporated into the regular army, stripping the formerly adventurous company commanders of their private ownership over the troops. However, the adventurers' nature was not so easily worn away.

They would instinctively fear such missions that required significant sacrifices, especially when it was to cover someone else's operations.

Yet, this is the difference between soldiers and adventurers.

Under his strong insistence and the military orders, the 4th Infantry Battalion still launched the attack.

Before the battle, whether soldiers or officers, all harbored fear.

In the past, the orcs had cast a vast shadow over them. Even if hundreds of shells had paved the way for them, the inherent fear persisted as they took over.

This was where Reed Meshako felt discontent.

Fortunately, the resistance they faced during the fight was not strong.

The orc troops were clearly stunned by the bombardment, with a large number of orcs dead in their fortifications. The number that could initially mount a defense was small.

Those orcs still displayed a strong combat will. In close exchanges of fire, it often took the lives of two or three human soldiers to kill one orc. If the orcs got too close for combat, and since they were not Beast Slaughter Group soldiers—even with bayonets—they often hesitated to fight.

This wasn't an issue of tactics or military skills but a matter of morale and courage.

But eventually, the 4th Regiment overwhelmed the orcs with their greater numbers.

It turned out that orcs could run away too. When three or five orcs poked their heads out from the fortifications and then saw hundreds of human soldiers, guns drawn, firing at them, they too would turn tail and flee.

Some were shot dead from behind, and such orcs were the most despised.

Soon, the few surviving orc youngsters returned, rallying a large wave of over two hundred orcs behind them.

The orcs howled in scorn at the fleeing youngsters, and those being mocked turned back in anger and fury.

In the exchange of fire, orcs kept falling, as did soldiers.

This was a bloody melee, where the death of one orc often resulted in two or three human soldiers being killed.

Continuing to fight at such an exchange rate, victory was of course inevitable for the human side. Especially as they brought out weapons such as rocket launchers and mortars, and one of the charging armed pickups was blown up halfway there.

All it would take was about five hundred casualties at most.

This was estimated based on the worst-case scenario. In reality, once a certain number of orcs were killed, their threat level drastically decreased, their morale collapsed, and they turned to flee, just like those encountered before.

Persisting in the fight, the humans wouldn't suffer nearly as many losses.

But even so, the first to flinch and hesitate to move forward were the human soldiers.

The sight of their comrades being blown apart by the orcs' powerful firearms chilled them to the bone.

After sustaining about a hundred casualties, they started to show signs of breaking down.

Reed Meshako was furious.

He bellowed at the regimental commander beside him, "Look at these soldiers! It's a disgrace!"

The commander of the 4th Regiment found himself in a dilemma.

He had given orders for the units to maintain the line and push forward, but what could he do if they wouldn't budge?

He dared not talk back; this red cap was an officer assigned directly by the governor, playing a role similar to that of a supervising officer.

Seeing his demeanor, Meshako became even more enraged at the lack of spirit.

"To the front line! Let's go to the front line together! We must lead by example!"

He drew his pistol and yanked the commander along.

The two of them, along with the security company, began to personally push forward.

Meshako knew that as a commander, his greatest responsibility was to direct the battle, not to fight on the front lines. Going to the forefront, even for him, wasn't much different in combat ability than an ordinary soldier.

Chapter 189: Taking the Initiative to Attack _3

But now is a special moment, there's no more commanding to be done. What the soldiers lack is not strategy, not tactics, but courage.

What's needed is for senior officers to lead by example, to put themselves at the front.

While leading the guard company, the battalion commander pressed forward and encountered a unit that was fighting while retreating.

Meisheke was furious. He grabbed the unit commander by the collar and screamed, "The military order given to you was to advance! Advance! Advance again! Who gave you the order to retreat?!"

"I… " The company commander's face turned pale, unable to speak.

Meisheke kicked him in the stomach, knocking him down, and raised his pistol to his head:

"Disobeying orders and showing cowardice in battle is seen as desertion. As an officer, your crimes are even greater!"

"No, no…" The company commander was still trying to argue his case, and the battalion commander standing beside Meisheke also wanted to say something to persuade him.

But Meisheke wasn't interested in listening and pulled the trigger without hesitation.

The bullet went through the head of the officer who had just received the rank of second lieutenant, and his body fell lifelessly.

Then, Meisheke shouted to the squad instructor beside him, who seemed a bit dazed by what he witnessed, "You're in command now! Take your company and follow me!"

The instructor snapped to attention and quickly called out to the troops.

Meisheke waved his hand, signaling for the guard company to follow, and said to the battalion commander beside him, "For the Governor! We are bound to win! You can't continue as before! We are soldiers! Not scavengers searching for scraps in a trash heap!"

"I… I understand."

"Pick up your rifle! Fight like a warrior!"

Watching the battalion commander reluctantly move out, Meisheke picked up the field telephone again and issued orders to every squad instructor in the battalion, strictly ordering them to ensure that the troops were always on the offensive, and those who showed timidity could be executed on the spot.

Afterward, Meisheke fired his pistol into the air and roared to those around him, "Comrades! Charge with me!"

Under his strict commands and after he and the battalion commander led the guard company into battle, the troops' timid situation finally began to reverse. Under the leadership of officers at all levels, especially the political commissars in the instructor system, the troops began to regain an offensive posture.

As the distance between the two sides closed further, the fight quickly became bloodier and more brutal. The Green Skins' advantage in close-combat was being put to good use, and the casualties on the

human side increased. However, the advantages of greater numbers and stronger firepower on the human side were still maintained, along with higher precision in close-range shooting.

Human warriors continued to fall, even among the officers, but the Green Skins were also falling at an even faster rate.

When the 4th battalion's losses reached 15%, meaning over two hundred people were down, there were only about seventy to eighty Green Skins left.

Reed Meshako knew clearly that they were now in a desperate situation.

Because they were too close to retreat, the bloody battle had fully triggered his fighting spirit. His skin turned greener, and his body size even grew slightly during the combat.

"Waaagh!" He bellowed, bursting out of the cover and charging toward the nearest position occupied by human warriors.

Inspired by him, all the living Green Skins entered a frenzied state.

The final charge began.

Reed Meshako, wielding a heavy spear, fired six shots on the charge, killing five soldiers. At the same time, he was hit by at least a hundred bullets. Blood covered his green skin; one of his eyes was blinded, but his remaining single eye grew even more ferocious.

He burst into the position of the infantry platoon, instantly turning into a meat grinder on the battlefield. His heavy chopping knife spun like a whirlwind of death, and in just a short while, he slaughtered all the warriors there.

Despite following combat tactics, arming themselves with bayonets for close combat as he approached, the human warriors were no match for the Green Skins in terms of strength, durability, or even agility. Stabbed by the bayonet seven or eight times, Reed Meshako showed no signs of weakening, and with a backhand strike, he slaughtered all those daring enough to engage him in close combat.

When the courageous had all died, the rest lost their will to fight.

After the Sergeant Major was killed in battle, the few surviving members of the infantry platoon panicked and fled. When the supporting company instructor also had his upper body blown apart by a shot, the entire company began to collapse.

This triggered a chain reaction; the Green Skins, who charged with Reed Meshako and after suffering twenty-odd casualties, broke through the front line of one company. Then, the two companies beside it, caught off guard, began to show signs of collapse in the face of the ferociously charging Green Skins.

Reed Meisheke observed this sign.

He would not allow a victory within reach to slip away again. He immediately led the guard company to the breach, and strictly ordered several nearby companies to do the same.

In his words, stacking corpses would still suffice to kill off the remaining fifty Green Skins.

Reed Meshako also saw the continuously shouting Red Cap; he howled as he charged towards him. He reloaded his heavy spear and fired wildly toward Meisheke's direction.

In a moment, three or four of Meisheke's surrounding warriors were blasted dead, and that unkillable Green Skin leader was rushing straight toward him.

Chapter 190: Offensive Initiative _4

Meisheke's mood was very calm at this moment.

He knew he had made a mistake, having forcefully boosted the morale of the entire battalion, and now he had come too close to the front line, so close that the enemy could charge directly at him. If he were to die here, the morale of the whole battalion could collapse.

Then, it would truly become a joke where thousands were overwhelmed by just dozens of green skins.

Yet, this mistake was also one that had to be made. This troop, newly reorganized from adventurers, had not had sufficient time to instill proper ideological work, and their morale was low. If he had not done so earlier, they might not have been able to fight to this extent.

He knew the odds were against him, but he could not run away, either.

He could only draw his handgun, stand still, his black coat fluttering in the wind.

He stood tall and proud, firing bullets continuously at the green skin charging towards him.

Even in death, he would die standing.

He hoped that his bearing before death would inspire the surrounding soldiers. The enemy was already on their last legs; just one more push and they could wipe them out completely.

The handgun's ammunition did minimal damage to the green skins, offering only a symbolic resistance.

But right then, the sound of booming gunfire came from behind him.

Immediately after, heavy footsteps approached quickly and soon passed by him.

It was a giant in Red Powered Armor.

The Emperor's Angels had arrived.

The gunfire in front, it was obviously from a grenade launcher.

The flying grenades hit three green skins behind the bone leader, each one killed with a single shot.

With the level of a veteran Space Marine, within a distance of tens of meters, there were no wasted shots. The power of the grenade launcher could not be compared to the small barrel of a G9 rifle. A shot hitting the green skin was lethal.

However, the two grenades aimed at the bone leader did not claim his life. He managed to dodge the first one at the last moment—not truly dodging a bullet but making a predictive move based on seeing the Space Marine charging out from behind that red helmet.

As for the grenade that did hit, it landed squarely in his right chest, leaving a gaping hole. The enraged orc chieftain merely paused in stride, showing no sign of weakness, and continued his charge with a howl.

The bone leader had never seen a shrimp of his size—especially one entirely wrapped in red cans—but he could sense this was a formidable foe. He was thrilled to face such a strong opponent!

He raised his thick-bladed cleaver high, slashing at the red-armored giant.

The charging Phoenix Warrior twisted his waist, dodged the slash, and smoothly drew a combat blade, stabbing into the green skin's midsection. With the momentum of the charge, he sliced open the wound, and a large amount of blood mixed with entrails sprayed out.

But the bone leader was still not dead! He even had the strength to counterattack!

He grabbed the Space Marine's arm with one hand, pulling fiercely, and with a trip of his foot, he managed to throw his opponent to the ground.

The bone leader flipped on top, snarling, seemingly oblivious to the pain in his midsection. He pressed one hand against the chin of the Space Marine's helmet, while the other hand raised his thick-backed cleaver high, as if to decapitate the Phoenix this way.

Yet that blow would never land.

In the midst of this, the downed and pinned Phoenix Warrior had rapidly stabbed the bone leader several times in the chest and neck with his combat dagger, ending his life once and for all.

Pushing the corpse aside, the warrior in the red armor stood up, looking around. The battle had all but ended.