**Governor 191**

Chapter 191: The Murder Jar

After Schneider had killed the biggest, greenest orc chieftain, the battle was almost at its end.

His four battle brothers, along with the twenty-eight ‘Storm Squad’ soldiers who were considered quite capable in the eyes of the interstellar warriors, and with the covering fire from the infantry battalion, killed all four or five dozen orcs that had charged with the chieftain.

The abilities of the interstellar warriors need not be mentioned; apart from encountering a genetically-enhanced, somewhat capable green-skinned chieftain that made him exert himself a little, his battle brothers scarcely found any opponents of note.

The ordinary green-skinned brutes stood no chance against the electromagnetic rifles in the hands of the Storm Squad’s special operations soldiers. Unlike the G9 rifles, which they could resist, a dozen or so bullets from these would typically kill them.

Once he was sure that all the orcs had been killed and there were no survivors to leak any information about their own party, he could finally relax.

They hadn’t planned on taking action originally.

The proactive strike by the 4th Infantry Battalion was meant to cover their operations. It would certainly be best to eliminate all the orcs in the area, for the most perfect infiltration is achieved by killing every enemy.

Even if the attack failed, it didn’t really matter. After drawing enough attention, the 33-man special task squad could completely bypass the battlefield from the flank while the front lines were hot, just as stealthily.

In fact, that was their original plan.

However, upon observing the situation on the frontline, the respected commander changed his mind and decided to execute the first strategy: eradicate the enemy.

Schneider knew that their Commander Matins couldn't bear to watch those mortal soldiers dying in droves, especially to cover their mission.

Of course, he didn't object either. After all, as long as they killed every orc so none could run back with news, it was fine. With only a few dozen left, it wouldn't be a hassle to kill them all.

The key point was also to satisfy a thirst for combat.

After the battle, Schneider removed his helmet, revealing his shiny bald head.

He felt a peculiar gaze, so he turned his head and saw that red-hatted soldier staring at him.

Ordinarily, Schneider would disdain and outright ignore these mortals, but at this moment, he couldn't help but remember the red-hatted Tadeusz who had achieved what his dead brother could not.

And the one before him, though he had performed no feats of valor, nevertheless faced danger without fear, maintaining a warrior's dignity in the face of death.

He deserved respect.

Almost involuntarily, he nodded to the red-hatted soldier, then turned and walked away.

Reed Meshako also snapped out of it.

He had actually survived.

Given the combat between that interstellar warrior and the orc, there was no doubt that if it were him, he would have died eight hundred times over.

It seemed that the gap between him, a mere mortal, and those monstrous demons was still vast.

But regardless, they seemed to have won the battle.

Slowly lowering the gun in his hand, he turned to find their commander.

They still needed to sweep the area, and then transport the wounded and even the bodies of dead comrades back, even those whose deaths were particularly gruesome, taking at least the identifiers, such as armbands or breast badges, that symbolized soldier status.

After cleaning up the battlefield, they would retreat.

This position couldn't be held for long. The fortifications made by the orcs were shoddy to begin with, and now they were even more so after the bombardment; moreover, this place was far from other friendly lines and difficult to support.

All these issues meant that they couldn't possibly stand a chance if the orcs counterattacked.

But abandoning this position didn't mean their sortie was in vain.

In addition to providing cover for the special operations squads, the casualties they inflicted on the enemy were considerable.

In this battle, nearly five hundred orcs had died. In contrast, on the human side, the toll was over three hundred and twenty casualties.

This casualty ratio even exceeded their defensive battles.

Of course, there was a special reason for this.

After all, the cost to the human side wasn't just over three hundred lives but also included six hundred rounds of heavy artillery shells.

Had they not recently received a shipment of newly manufactured shells from Weixing City, they would have hated to fire off so many in just one hour.

At least half of the orcs killed were blown up during the initial artillery barrage. Of the remaining two hundred or so, more than fifty were dealt with by the special operations teams, and the real achievements of the 4th Infantry Battalion were just over a hundred orcs.

Yet, a nearly 3:1 exchange rate was still acceptable.

What couldn't be ignored, however, was the inherent risk.

They had won this time, completely annihilating the enemy.

But what if they hadn't won?

If it wasn't for Meshako decisively executing several officers by his iron hand during a moment of wavering morale, mandating that supervisors at all levels maintain discipline, and leading by example at the front to boost morale, they might well have crumbled at that time.

Once collapsed, the death toll during the retreat would likely have skyrocketed. Not only would they fail to outkill the orcs, but during the pursuit, their casualties could have multiplied several times, and if pursued fiercely, even upon returning to their original positions, they might not have been able to stop a total collapse, leading to serious trouble.

Chapter 192: The Murder Jar_2

Fighting is a matter where the winning side always ends up with more spoils.

Besides wiping out a considerable number of Green Skins, they had gained something else: an improvement in the army's spirit and morale.

This had been a somewhat hard-fought battle, but they had won in the end. Although the process had its twists and turns, as long as they won, it bolstered the entire army's morale, combat confidence, and experience. The soldiers who had directly confronted the Green Skins and survived would be less fearful when facing them again.

The shadow that these Green Skins had cast over them during their time as adventurers had been profound.

Any alleviation in their phobia of Green Skins was welcome.

…

While the 4th Infantry Battalion was cleaning up the battlefield, a 33-member special operations squad had already embarked on their journey once more.

From this point onwards, there would be no more friendly forces to cover them.

But that wasn't much needed anymore.

After breaking through the enemy's most concentrated front lines and reaching the rear, within the 60-kilometer-wide and nearly 100-kilometer-deep urban ruins, it was clear that the Green Skins couldn't possibly staff every area with their forces.

On the contrary, with only tens of thousands of them, the area "belonging" to them was full of gaps.

Occasional glimpses of Green Skins and goblins did not mean they could easily spot the traces of the squad.

The space marines' stealth capabilities were unrivaled. Despite being clad in heavy powered armor, when they wished to be silent, their footsteps were indeed soundless. Likewise, the 28 special forces members were just as proficient in the art of stealth.

They would spot the enemy first in most instances; it was rare for them to be discovered.

When operating deep behind enemy lines, they avoided combat as much as possible to reduce the chance of being exposed.

However, if they couldn't avoid a confrontation—for example, if they were actually discovered, or if someone was on their route of advance and bypassing them would take too long—they would then choose to engage.

Even when they engaged, they would strive not to fire their guns.

They would close in quietly, strike swiftly, with combat daggers and military sabers becoming their primary weapons.

Matins' chainsword did not rev its roaring sound, merely relying on its teeth to tear through people was enough.

And truly, there was no target worthy of engaging his chainsaw for.

And so, they operated within the ruins for approximately twenty-four hours, with only a few hours of rest in between.

They pushed as deep as possible and then spread out as much as possible to broaden their reconnaissance.

Unfortunately, the Green Skins were very difficult to communicate with, and since there was no common language, they couldn't capture one for interrogation to obtain the desired information.

But in the afternoon of the second day, they made a significant discovery.

They discovered a staging ground for the Green Skin Tribe.

Located some sixty kilometers deep from the front line, a team from Storm Squad stumbled upon a group of goblins driving trucks and pushing carts, converging on a particular spot.

After relaying the information back, the entire team began moving in that direction, and soon they found the staging ground.

The Green Skins had cleared a large open area where over ten thousand Green Skin creatures were rowdily assembling. One-third were Green Skin younglings, and about twice their number were goblins.

Goblins are also a kind of Green Skin, monstrous creatures that grow from Green Skin spores as well. They are much smaller and weaker than the orc young, cowardly and timid, but not any less cruel. They bully the weak and fear the strong; facing a strong enemy, they quickly disintegrate in morale and scatter unless kept in line by orcs. But when the enemy is weaker than them, or vastly outnumbered, their psychological advantage kicks in, and they become the cruelest executioners, especially fond of torture.

In Green Skin society, goblins often serve as slave laborers, orc servants, or even food.

In this starting position, the mere number of enemies was already substantial. Setting aside those nimble devils, there were more than three thousand orcs alone. This was almost more than any other Green Skin Orcs they would face on the front line.

Moreover, reinforcements continued to stream in from all directions.

As for the final number they could gather, no one knew.

Not to mention, the Green Skins gathered here not only outnumbered others, but their equipment was also very “sophisticated.”

Armed pickups and iron barrel cannons had already been encountered, but Matins and his crew had spotted two other big fellows.

One of them was an armed truck.

It was called a truck, but in reality, its rear cabin was covered with armored plates and provided outward extending firing positions, making the whole back of the truck awkwardly shaped. On top of the cabin was a turret gun, and the front was equipped with a bulldozer blade. Overall, the appearance was one of chaos, wildness, and irrationality.

However, this is the essence of Green Skin technology. No matter how irrational it might seem, if Green Skins believe it to be rational, then it can move and is quite effective.

The other invention, also in the same style, made those present feel somewhat heavy-hearted: it was a “powered armor,” a “war mecha?”

Whatever it was, it had been seen among many of the Green Skin Tribes. Humans called it a “killer can.”

They stuffed a nimble devil or a disabled orc into a metal can. Due to the Green Skins’ staggering technology, this was clearly not something that could be worn or removed at will, but rather something that would fuse with the machine for life.

From the upper and lower sides of the can, mechanical structures extended out as limbs. On the upper limbs, there were melee or ranged weapons attached, and on both sides of the can were large-caliber machine guns.

This contraption had appeared on many battlefields ravaged by Green Skins. They were not the main armored force of the Green-Skin Army, as they had even bigger contraptions. However, when such a three-meter tall device appeared on the battlefield and could maneuver in places where many armored vehicles couldn’t, its level of armor and firepower caused despair among human infantry.

Even interstellar soldiers could not ignore such an adversary. A few shots from the machine guns on the sides of the can were enough to breach powered armor; the twin-barreled, auto-loading rocket launcher it held in one hand also had formidable lethality, and being hit by that large axe was fatal.

Of course, generally speaking, the interstellar soldiers won more often. Each of the five veterans present had destroyed at least five killer cans in their careers.

But those were career achievements, not the result of a single battle. If they were suddenly surrounded, even two or three of them could be overwhelming.

And now, in this still-gathering Green-Skin Army, they had spotted ten killer cans.

With more Green Skins joining, who knew if there would be even more.

The armed trucks comparable to Strider Armored Vehicles, the killer cans equivalent to a beggar's version of powered armor, over three thousand Green Skins gathered with several powerful leaders, or "tough" lads far stronger than the average orc…

Such a force, if directed to the front line for a direct assault, would result in catastrophic consequences.

Unprepared humans would almost certainly be crushed instantly.

Fortunately, they had discovered them.

Now that they were aware of the intelligence, things were easier to handle.

They did not alert the enemy, and after marking the coordinates, they quietly left and conveyed the intelligence to the governor.

They had not brought any communication equipment, nor was it necessary. The powered armor worn by the interstellar soldiers was equipped with the necessary communication modules and was already connected to the frontline command post's wireless communication channel. The communication towers erected at the command post did this job, and during encounters with Green Skins, there was little concern about the threat of eavesdropping on the radio.

What the governor would do with this intelligence was beyond their concern for now.

They received further orders to continue their reconnaissance, following the designated objectives to find the Green Skins' main base, their armories, their "farms," their breeding grounds.

They might have lacked clues before, but now things were manageable.

Two interstellar soldiers were left with a few members of Storm Squad to keep an eye on the large group of Green Skins at the starting position, while the rest followed the route of the converging Green Skins in the opposite direction to search for the source.

## Chapter 193: Orbital Bombardment

After receiving the message, Gu Hang couldn't even enjoy his meal.

There were ten thousand Green Skins, over three thousand of which were proper orcs, and their numbers were still growing.

There was already a disparity in single combat capabilities, with the greatest difference being in their ability to withstand attacks. Now, the enemy also had all sorts of crude, laughable, but absolutely formidable heavy firepower and equipment…

This was already a very huge threat.

Well, Gu Hang had been planning to wait two days to call for orbital bombardment before launching a full counterattack, but now were those Green Skins going to launch a full-scale attack first?

Luckily, this intelligence was gathered in advance. Had they been caught completely unprepared by such an onslaught, there would have been serious trouble.

Gu Hang was considering solutions.

First and foremost, the mobilization of troops must be accelerated.

The troops that were resting at the joint military camp now had to be urgently assembled.

The soldiers currently on the front lines had actually been reduced to about fifty thousand strong. Roughly another fifty thousand were resting and reorganizing in the rear.

Even though the front line was short-handed by half, it was definitely much more stable than when those adventurers from Rubbish Town were stationed there. The soldiers, who had been reorganized and equipped more reliably, and whose military skills had dramatically improved, were much more effective than the adventurers.

But wasn't the plan to prepare for an onslaught, even a full counterattack?

The follow-up troops, of course, needed to be brought forward as a reserve force, ready to be deployed at a moment's notice.

Of course, if they weren't needed at all, that would be for the best.

The orbital strike firepower that had been requested previously from Yelisia was meant to address this kind of situation, wasn't it?

If those Green Skins were scattered, hiding in the ruins of the city, they would be difficult to hit. Orbital strikes may be powerful, but could they reduce an already ruined city to dust? Those Green Skins hiding in the rubble, with their strong vitality; those in the core area of the bombardment would be doomed, buried alive. But those in the peripheral areas might well survive.

Now, however, they had gathered together and even cleared an open space to use as a staging ground for their attack. Wasn't this just setting themselves up to be targeted?

Gu Hang was even tempted to ask Yelisia to first conduct a small-scale, yet more targeted bombardment.

With a few ‘Heat Hammer’ Colossal Cannons and ten ‘Scalpel’ shipborne missiles directed at that staging ground, it might not be possible to kill all the Green Skins assembled there, but taking out ninety percent of them was likely doable.

But after some thought, Gu Hang restrained this tempting impulse.

Haste won’t bring success. To strike now would not maximize benefits.

Yelisia could secure just one chance for bombardment; it had to be timed well.

Be patient, just a little more patient. What he needed to do now was ensure that his troops were ready for any challenge and for taking the offensive before patiently waiting for front-line reports to make his decisions.

…

Deep within the ruins of a tall tower, while on the move, Matins suddenly posed a question to Schneider by his side:

“These Green Skins are not quite right, do you feel it?”

After pondering for a moment, Schneider replied, “They themselves are not a problem, they’re no different from the Green Skins we’ve eliminated in the past.”

“That is the biggest problem.” Matins said, “They shouldn’t be this powerful. Their numbers are not enough, just a few tens of thousands, insufficient to sustain a disaster. If the Green Skin spores landed on this planet due to some reason, took root and sprouted, and then this tribe developed from scratch, by this stage, at this number, they should only be able to maintain a very primitive state of technology. Even the natives of Rubbish Town who gave those Green Skins some intelligence in battle to accelerate their development shouldn’t have allowed them to reach this level of technology so quickly.”

“Are you suggesting that these Green Skins did not develop purely from the local environment?” Schneider’s attitude became more cautious.

If that were the case, and these Green Skins came from a powerful, interstellar tribe, it would be a big problem.

But soon, Schneider dismissed the idea: “It’s unlikely. No reports have ever suggested Rage Owl Star has been attacked by an extraterrestrial force. If a Green Skin tribe with star-traveling capabilities set its sights on this planet, they wouldn’t just send a very small team. Several large warships carrying hundreds of thousands or even millions of Green Skins to rapidly reproduce and inundate the planet—that’s their usual modus operandi.”

Matins agreed with Schneider’s reasoning: “That’s what makes this whole affair contradictory. We must remind our brothers not to treat these Green Skins as mere savage or primitive orcs. They must heighten their vigilance. Losing a brother in the battle at Revival City Outer Power Plant is something I truly do not wish to see again.”

Hearing the squad leader speak this way, the other four also fell silent.

They spoke no further.

Following the Green Skins’ supply routes and troop reinforcements to track down the enemy headquarters was not challenging.

By the evening of the second day of their journey, they had already found their target.

Those Green Skins were, of course, busy preparing for war. Their headquarters were brightly lit, and their factories were bustling.

Chapter 194: Orbital Bombardment_2

Interstellar warriors of Storm Squad didn’t have the capability to infiltrate the enemy’s main base. After all, without the conditions for disguised reconnaissance, cross-species exploration can only go so far.

But it was enough.

They marked the location of the Green-Skin main base, their munitions factory, and then in the surrounding area, they found three large-scale breeding farms. Those huge, tropical plant-like things had grown sturdily amidst the urban ruins.

Just as Matins had told Gu Hang before, this was definitely not an ideal place for the Green Skin Orcs to breed and thrive. Even though these Greens Skins had tried their best to clear a relatively flat area, exposing the soil and diverting waterflows as much as possible, the soil was unsuitable, the light insufficient, and the water resources not abundant enough…

The Green Skins were resilient enough to grow in such an environment, breeding one batch after another.

It was now the 'harvesting' season for the Green Skin plants. They saw with their own eyes, under the lights, the crooked plants with huge seed pods hanging down, something seemed to be wriggling inside, and then suddenly, the pods opened, and a Green Skin creature would fall out.

Such a process kept happening before their eyes.

Most of the time, the creatures that fell out were of varying sizes but similar in form to beasts.

These creatures, known as Skuggs, were a domesticated livestock bred by the Orc herders and had always been part of the Green Skin tribes. These creatures lacked intelligence and were vicious by nature, with sharp teeth and mouths that could open exaggeratedly wide. In fact, in the Green Skins' ecosystem, they served the role of livestock.

Some were used for grooming, some for food, some raised by the Orc kids as pets, and the largest ones could even be ridden into battle.

These Skuggs fed on various kinds of trash.

Skuggs ate what the Orcs wouldn't, and the Orcs ate Skuggs in return.

They, along with fungi, were a major food source for the Orcs.

Besides the Skugg Beasts, the second most numerous were the ‘fart spirits.’

They were the Orcs’ servants, cannon fodder, and also a source of food when necessary.

And fewer in number were the regular Green Skin Orcs.

Whether Skugg Beasts, ‘fart spirits,’ or Orcs, all of them were in an adult state the moment they hit the ground.

This breeding farm was indeed in its harvest season.

If the three breeding farms they found operated with such efficiency and completed their incubation, there would probably be an additional twenty thousand Green Skin Orcs and at least fifty or sixty thousand ‘fart spirits’ within a month.

Matins was grateful that he had seriously warned Gu Hang of the risks involved and was relieved that Gu Hang heeded his warning, not ignoring the threat.

Otherwise, they would have been in big trouble.

What followed was relatively simple.

It was just a matter of marking the coordinates.

They couldn’t be very precise because they were still some distance away from their targets when marking them. Even at that distance, they encountered Green Skins a few times but silently took them out.

Given the disciplinary standards of the Green Skins, losing a few individuals likely wouldn't be noticed—they lose plenty every day just from their internal brawls and revelry.

But even if the markings weren't exactly precise, it didn't matter much. An approximate location would suffice. The Colossal Cannon's area of impact was still very large.

A 'scalpel' missile could almost destroy a small wind farm, not to mention the far more powerful Colossal Cannon and the Wrath of Loyalty, a large-scale Colossal Cannon.

Of course, to increase efficiency, they still assigned different value levels to these places.

The two highest value points were the main base and the departure position where the Green-Skin Army was gathering.

The next priorities were the munitions factory, the breeding farms, and the locations within the Green-Skin Army where the killing jars were positioned. Then, they marked a bunch of places that they couldn't explore thoroughly but suspected were of value.

After completing these tasks, they moved away from the Green Skin main base and then notified Mr. Gu.

Soon after, they received a reply from the governor:

"Leave the area as soon as possible, you have 14 hours to get out of the orbital strike's range. Please ensure your safety, and after the orbital strike is over, confirm the results of the strike."

"Received."

"You've worked hard."

…

After replying to the special task force's message, Gu Hang let out a deep breath.

All preparations were finally complete.

He contacted Yelisia again, provided the relevant strike coordinates, and informed the female colonel that all actions were proceeding as planned.

The orbital strike would arrive as scheduled at 11:00 Terra standard time the next day.

His troops would complete their pre-battle preparations before then, eating a good meal, and after the orbital bombardment ended, they would launch an attack against the enemy in front.

The Green Skin Orc front with which they were faced would not be subjected to overly intense bombardment, only a few 'scalpel' missiles would precisely hit several key points, the Colossal Cannon would not strike here.

The main reason was that the power of the Colossal Cannon was too great, its coverage too broad, and its precision, compared to 'scalpel' missiles, was less reliable. A slight deviation and it could easily cover their own positions as well.

It was better to use a few 'scalpel' blasts, and then leave the rest to their own troops.

Chapter 195: Orbital Bombardment_3

At the front line, Lucy Lee Ko Xi, the commander of the 3rd Independent Regiment who was earnestly striving to regain the title of "Beast Slaughter Group," had just concluded a battle meeting and seen off Colonel Tadeusz, the inspector general of the army's political work.

Colonel Tadeusz had conveyed the Governor's orders to them, announcing in a meeting attended by all military chiefs of staff from company level upwards and political instructors that the 3rd Independent Regiment would be the fist, the vanguard, in the comprehensive counteroffensive at noon the next day.

Their objective was to tear open the Green Skins' defenses right at the middle section of the entire defensive line, completely seize their positions, split the frontline into two, and create a gap for the mechanized three Composite Camps to penetrate.

Afterwards, once the subsequent friendly forces took over the position, and troops were allocated, accompanying one Composite Camp, they were to execute a sweeping movement to the north side, cut off the retreat space of the northern Green Skin Orcs, and complete an encirclement with the forces on the front, thoroughly annihilating the Green Skin Orcs present.

All the commanding officers and warriors silently listened to Tadeusz recounting the battle objectives and demands.

The silence continued.

But this was by no means fear or dread.

Li Kexi could see a fire in the eyes of his subordinates.

And he felt the same way.

They had waited for too long.

"All right, everyone go back," Li Kexi broke the silence. "Return to your companies and get ready. There are 13 hours left until tomorrow noon. The staff will break down tomorrow's assault mission, and by tomorrow morning at the latest, it will be in your hands. This is the battle we have long awaited, and an opportunity we wouldn't even dare to dream of in the past. I have just one request: fight beautifully! We must honor those we have lost, the hatred for which we would lay down our lives to avenge, and the opportunity the Governor has given us!"

"Roar!" The officers stood up thunderously, then returned to their respective troops.

Andre Alexey, the political commissar assigned to the Independent Regiment, was somewhat at a loss. He had just been thinking of using his position as a political officer to boost the morale of the officers, only to find it seemed entirely unnecessary.

Commander Li Kexi patted his shoulder without offering much in the way of explanation.

The warriors of the Beast Slaughter Group had no idea how many of them could truly sleep well.

But they would force themselves to rest properly, all for the sake of showing their best in the battle of the following day.

The night was exceptionally long.

…

No matter how long the dark night, there always comes an end.

As daylight brightened, Li Kexi, who had awakened, went to inspect the front lines of the troops.

He watched the soldiers eat, he observed them checking and maintaining their weapons, he saw officers conversing with the warriors…

All of this strangely settled his anxious heart.

They had done everything they could, only waiting for the order to attack.

The issued pocket watches ticked to eleven o’clock at noon.

The order to attack had not yet been given, but he first saw many red dots vaguely appearing in the sky.

A meteor shower?

No, he quickly dismissed that thought.

These must be part of the powerful strike Colonel Tadeusz had mentioned earlier.

At the time, he had thought that the rear artillery positions would fire relentlessly, but it seemed that wasn't all.

He watched those red meteors streaking across the sky, getting closer and closer, then falling onto the ruins that stretched as far as the eye could see.

Immediately thereafter, two huge, almost city-encompassing spheres of light, suddenly appeared.

Along with those two enormous orbs of light, there were many smaller ones, but because of the obstruction from the ruins, they didn't seem quite as distinct.

The scene felt strangely peculiar, with only brightness and no sound, as if watching a silent film.

But the thing they were waiting for soon arrived.

The earth was shaking.

It was as if there had been an earthquake, with some soldiers, who hadn't secured their footing, even staggering about. Even some of the ruins that had been weakened by artillery fire during previous battles collapsed amidst this tremor.

Fortunately, the fortifications they were hiding in had been specially reinforced, so there were no casualties as a result.

Then came the shockwave, accompanied by a tremendous noise!

It was like a gust of wind blowing through, carrying with it a sensation of scorching heat, causing many to retreat several steps, feeling a heavy pressure in their chests.

Although physically uncomfortable, from Li Kexi down, all the soldiers of the 3rd Independent Regiment felt immensely relieved in their hearts!

The explosion had occurred deep within the ruins of the tall towers, where the Green Skin Orcs were most concentrated!

If the aftermath of the explosion could be felt so clearly from dozens of kilometers away, whether it be the searing heat or the shockwave… what about those Green Skins at the epicenter?

Even if those monsters had much stronger resilience than humans, they could not possibly survive such an onslaught!

As long as they could eliminate the enemies before them, this Green Skin disaster that had spread over several years and had become increasingly severe would end by their hands!

Li Kexi was already eager to command his troops to charge.

But it wasn’t time yet.

The order to attack had still not come.

Instead, a whistling sound came from overhead.

The artillery positions in the rear began to assert their power.

On the joint artillery grounds, a hundred 155mm howitzers were lined up in sequence, barrels pointed towards the sky, firing without interruption.

The production of artillery shells was limited, and Weixing City had to produce a lot to sustain the logistical supply for an army totaling hundreds of thousands, including armored vehicles, bullets, guns, equipment, explosives, hand grenades, rocket launchers, and cannons…

They had been working hard to increase the production of shells, but it still couldn't withstand too intense a consumption.

However, since today had been decided as the day for the final battle, there was no need to conserve anymore.

Hundreds of cannons fired at full speed, raining down shell after shell on the Orc positions at a rate of five hundred rounds per minute.

This was an all-out barrage like never before, with the artillerymen no longer caring about the lifespan of their barrels or the consumption of shells.

They planned to drop 15,000 heavy shells on the Green Skin Orc positions within half an hour, and the total stock of shells left was just under twenty thousand.

The remaining four to five thousand shells were not to be conserved either, but kept in reserve to coordinate with the infantry charge.

While the artillery was firing, Lucy Lee Ko Xi finally received the command to attack.

He impatiently relayed the charge orders to the entire regiment.

More than five thousand soldiers of the 3rd Independent Regiment needed to move within about two hundred meters of the enemy's positions within 25 minutes and stand by. They had five minutes to rest, and at the moment the bombardment ceased, they would launch a full-force attack on the Orc positions.

Chapter 196: The Death Iron Can

The private of the 3rd Infantry Corps, Aéro Rakrosha, had never even in his wildest dreams imagined such a horrific scene unfolding before him.

It could only be described as cataclysmic!

The lowly soldier had no idea about any orbit-strike plans from higher-ups, he only knew that a meteor shower had streaked across the sky and struck the Core Area of the High Tower Ruins in the distance, followed by the earth shattering!

Not to mention the scorching wind that blew, the shockwave, the massive noise… at the very least, just the things he saw with his eyes were enough to astonish him.

It was as if two large, and many small suns had risen from deep within the ruins of the high tower. Then, the High Tower Ruins he had grown so familiar with over the past few years had changed beyond recognition.

Despite being ruins, there were still ‘landmark buildings.’ Many of the city’s skyscrapers had collapsed, but a considerable number remained in place. The high-rise buildings erected by pre-war technology were meant to stand for centuries, and rightly so. No matter how derelict they looked, they simply would not fall. Many battles around these tall structures of the pre-war era, all those bullets and artillery fire, had not managed to bring them down.

Even a 155mm howitzer, hitting those standing buildings, would only scrape off some surface or further scramble the already haphazard structure inside, but a complete collapse had never happened.

But this massive bombardment from the sky not only achieved that, it went ‘overboard.’

Not only the pre-war skyscraper ruins had collapsed, but in the central area, there were no longer any forests of high buildings to be seen. From Lacroix’s viewpoint looking into the depths of the ruins, it was as if some monster had bitten off a huge chunk of the steel jungle, leaving a vast absence.

Before he could recover from the shock, a continuous whistling sound came from overhead.

He was familiar with the sound, having heard it often over the past month.

But he had never heard it this densely.

Before he had time to think further, the command of the platoon leader was passed down level by level, the squad leader ordered to move out, and he quickly gathered his thoughts to follow the troops.

As he advanced toward the front lines, he felt his body heat up. He couldn't tell if it was due to the rapid marching or the excitement bubbling up from the bottom of his heart.

Continuous booming explosions came from the direction he was heading towards. That was the sound of artillery bombardment falling on the Green Skin Orcs' positions.

During the advance, he was still nervous, fearing that an artillery shell might come hurling in or a Green Skin armed pickup might appear. These things had been their nightmare for some time.

But none of that happened.

When he and his comrades arrived a mere hundred or two hundred meters away from the Green Skin Orcs' positions, he clearly understood why there had been no resistance on the way:

The Green Skins had been blown away, what strength did they have left to stop them? Those artillery pieces, those armed pickups, had probably been blown to bits long ago.

He only waited there for five or six minutes, but he had already seen hundreds of shells smash into the positions in front of them.

The intense bombardment made his head numb.

To be honest, Lacroix was still quite fearful at this position.

If those shells deviated slightly, they would land right on their heads; even if they did not hit, being only a hundred or two hundred meters away, he could still clearly feel the power of the explosion.

Even the officers kept tirelessly warning the soldiers below to not let their chests and abdomens touch the ground while lying in wait, and though it might be uncomfortable, to prop up their bodies. This was to avoid the shock wave coming from the ground, which could damage their internal organs.

They stood by in this position for seven minutes. According to the squad leader, they had arrived a bit earlier than the scheduled time. Lacroix didn't understand these details since he didn't even have a watch.

He only knew that now the time had come, it was time to charge.

He was still a bit afraid.

It wasn't fear of the Green Skins, for how many would be left alive after such a bombardment? Even if a good number survived, it was just a matter of shooting it out; he had a gun, and if they got too close, he'd fix bayonets and fight it out.

What he feared was the artillerymen behind him having a shaky hand, which would mean his end.

But he charged anyway. Crossing the two hundred meters, they broke into the Green Skins' positions and quickly sought out all potential defensive points where Green Skins might exist.

Intermittent resistance gunfire emanated.

Clearly, not all of the Green Skins were dead.

In the collapsed houses, in the narrow holes formed by toppled multilayered reinforced concrete, there still lurked some Green Skin Orcs who had survived the artillery strike.

As the human soldiers mounted their attack, they emerged from various places, howling as they counter-charged.

But their numbers were too few.

In front of Lacroix, three appeared. He and his comrades began shooting immediately. The squads in his platoon were not far apart, over thirty guns aimed at these three Green Skins, showering them with concentrated fire.

The Green Skins fired back, but they only managed to get off two shots each before they were hit by nearly a hundred bullets and killed. As for their last stand, they merely managed to break a soldier's leg.

Chapter 197: The Deathly Iron Can_2

The soldier with the broken leg had his comrades dragging him back, where the follow-up logistics support would take over and relay him back to the field hospital in the rear.

The remaining men continued to advance.

The artillery fire from the rear was still ongoing, the intensity had diminished a bit, but the target area of the bombardment shrunk from the full coverage of the green-skinned positions to a smaller scope, roughly covering only about two hundred meters in front of the infantry.

The coordination of infantry and artillery was such that, after they cleared the area, the artillery barrage would extend another two hundred meters forward, and the newly vacant area would be scouted by the infantry as they moved ahead.

This process would repeat four times until they broke through the enemy positions that stretched about eight hundred meters wide.

Truth be told, the only thing Lacroix was genuinely afraid of during the whole operation was his own gunners having shaky hands. The heavy artillery blasting around two hundred meters in front of him was indeed frightful.

As for the green skins?

He had seen green-skinned corpses scattered all over the ground, mutilated beyond recognition, finding an intact body was difficult. Occasionally, a few living ones would pop up, but they were scattered and met with dozens of guns firing at them, posing no real threat.

To be honest, apart from the fear brought by his own artillery, Lacroix's greatest feeling was… a bit of boredom?

Of course, he knew this feeling of his was somewhat absurd.

A bit further ahead, he and his comrades entered a ruin with four walls. The roof of the building was covered with a resting concrete slab, likely hit by a shell, with smoke still billowing out.

There was a fifty-fifty chance that it was empty; the other fifty percent was that it contained green skins mangled beyond human recognition or still alive yet equally disfigured. If they encountered the latter, they would just deliver a few shots to end their lives.

Even so, according to tactical protocols, they still had to go in and make sure it was cleared.

This time, they ran into an unlikely event.

With a loud 'bang' of a gunshot, the first brother to enter had half his face blown open, his helmet was blasted away by the large-caliber green skin weapon, and his body fell backward violently.

Lacroix was second in line.

He instinctively took a step back, opening up a position to raise his gun easily. His G9A assault rifle began to wildly sweep the pitch-dark space inside.

He couldn't see the target, so he fired blindly.

His comrades from the same squad rushed over and, like him, poured bullets inside.

Lacroix was the first to empty his magazine. He deftly straightened the bayonet, then, once the others in his squad had ceased fire, he rushed in first.

In the darkness, he vaguely saw a monstrous figure taller than himself approaching, with a pungent odor.

His mind went blank, but his hands moved in the most standard position, thrusting the bayonet forward.

Immediately, he felt a huge resistance; he had struck something.

He pushed forward desperately, twisting the rifle. The resistance made him step back a few paces, but it quickly lost its strength and was fiercely pushed down by him.

Lacroix fell as well.

He felt his clothes were wet, stained with the stench of fresh blood.

Suddenly, several comrades from his squad rushed in. Someone pulled him up, while others stabbed at the corpse under him with their bayonets.

The green skin was indeed dead.

Upon leaving the narrow bunker, and with the help of light, Lacroix saw that he was indeed in a sorry state, covered in blood.

But it seemed all to be green skin blood; he did not feel injured, only a bit shaky in his arm from overexertion.

As he regained his senses, he was amazed that he had actually managed to kill a green skin with a bayonet!

Although the creature had probably been severely wounded from the earlier gunfire and suffered multiple injuries, it was ultimately he who had delivered the killing blow.

Looking around, he noticed that along with himself, there were only six men left.

The one who had entered before him and had his head shot off was the fourth from their squad to die.

Today, only two had been killed; the other two had died over the past half-month; their squad hadn't been replenished with new soldiers.

He became more alert, and the previous thoughts of 'boredom' had flown far away.

The squad leader came over, patted him on the shoulder, and shouted in his ear, "Good job! But private! We don't have time to rest now! Move out!"

The war, was still harsh.

…

Li Kexi also felt that war was cruel.

The heavy artillery had cleared a wave of enemies for them, especially with such intense fire. The remaining number of the enemy was not much, but during the close-quarters clearance, his soldiers still paid a considerable price.

Of course, it wasn't to the exaggerated extent of Lacroix's infantry squad, which lost six and had two wounded, mainly because they were the vanguard and so their plight was somewhat worse.

The overall casualty rate for the regiment was around 2%. They had lost about a hundred warriors, eliminating over two hundred scattered green skins that emerged.

As for the total death count of green skins in this position, that was harder to estimate. The heavy artillery had been firing for more than an hour; at least five thousand shells had exploded here, the number of dead green skins was at least over five hundred.

Of course, this was an estimated figure, many bodies were too mutilated or buried under the rubble to be precisely counted, so it could only be said that the number was much more than five hundred.

Chapter 198: The Deathly Iron Can_3

The artillery bombardment had now basically ceased, guessing that the gunners had almost exhausted their shells.

However, the target area that their 3rd Infantry Corps needed to conquer had also been cleared by them.

Two Composite Camps from the 1st Extinguishing Wind Brigade swiftly moved through the breach they had created, followed by each moving south and north to start encircling the Green Skin Orcs.

The rest of the allied forces had also begun a full-scale offensive.

Leaving two battalions to hold the position, severing the connection between the Green Skins to the south and north of the front line, while the main force, led by Major Perbov of the 1st Brigade, 1st Battalion, started maneuvering northward.

However, it was the southern part of the Green Skin positions, now divided, that ended the battle first. Not many Green Skins survived there, especially at the far south, which had been previously overrun by the 7th Garrison Division 4th Regiment. The fortifications were almost entirely destroyed, and although the Green Skins recaptured it after the retreat, the quickly rebuilt defenses were clearly subpar, and the artillery had nearly wiped out all the Green Skins there.

Compared to the southern positions, the north theoretically had more troops engaged, with the 3rd Independent Regiment also joining the encirclement of the enemy.

But the Green Skins that were alive there, especially in large numbers, and more importantly, there was a Green Skin leader present.

…

The presence of a powerful leader among the Green Skin Orcs makes a night-and-day difference in their performance.

Without a leader, they would squabble amongst themselves, unable to form a group, recklessly charging without thinking; with a leader, even though they were still mostly reckless and thoughtless, they at least could act in unison.

Roast Axe was such an Orc leader, commanding great influence. He was the second-in-command within the clan, only subordinate to the Big Ripper leader, commanding many strong underlings.

He knew that according to the elders, according to Big Ripper's plan, they were about to launch a full assault on those shrimps. Many big booms, along with many big tanks, big cans, were all ready and Big Ripper had even sent him the second largest one to the front line in advance to calm his mind.

This was bigger than a Murder Can; the elders called this thing the Fear Big Can.

Even though to operate it, it would require sawing off one's legs and integrating them into the machinery, inserting many tubes into one's brain and spine, never to leave it again for life.

But… so what?

With such a powerful thing, one could hack, shoot, and blast with many barrels more exhilaratingly… no Green Skin would want to come out of such a device, right?

Once inside the Fear Big Can, Roast Axe was in constant pain and torment, only able to alleviate it by killing. He couldn't wait to lead his boys and slaughter all those shrimps.

But Big Ripper kept telling him to endure, endure, endure.

Enduring, he endured until the sky-breaking, earth-shattering bombardment came.

Where was more support from the big machines?

Gone, all of it!

What to do now? Up to this point, they were surrounded by shrimps from all directions, and if this continued, even if he and his boys fought bravely, it would all be over.

Under his call, at least four hundred Green Skin Orcs gathered around him.

He led this team of Green Skins to break out towards the east.

On this path, they bore a sense of invincibility, slaying anyone who blocked their way, may it be gods or buddhas.

Roast Axe, now encased within the Fear Big Can, stood four meters tall, much larger and stronger than an ordinary Murder Can, and its armor strength had even surpassed the power armor of a Star Warrior.

Bullets fired at him had very little effect, unable to breach the defense; a group of commanders organized dozens of rocket launchers for a concentrated volley, killing several Green Skins, but Roast Axe, who was the main target, took the bombardment head-on with minimal damage.

That thing even targeted the commander, charging forward, cutting down any soldiers in its way like chopping melons and slicing vegetables, with multibarrel autocannons firing, with wheels of sawtooth blades sweeping, dozens of infantry soldiers butchered along the way.

The commander tried to retreat in the face of imminent danger but failed to do so, with the instructor killed by the autocannon, and the commander himself bisected at the waist by the sawtooth.

The entire battalion was routed, and even that particular breach was difficult to reinforce in the short term.

Thankfully, Major Perbov's battalion had maneuvered into position. But even so, the interception was extremely difficult.

Whether it was the Strider V or the home-produced 'Challenger' Tanks, they were all at risk of being torn apart in the presence of the Fear Big Can!

The autocannons mounted on the armored vehicles had difficulty hitting the Big Can. Despite its wild shape and massive size, its agility was not weak at all, and the gun turrets had less than perfect accuracy. Even with a substantial number of bullets hitting, they merely left small dents on its metallic armor, failing to penetrate.

Plainly put, the caliber was insufficient.

Even the 76mm tank gun of the 'Challenger' Tank seemed inadequate. Mainly, the local artillery technology wasn't up to par, with shell velocity also lacking; despite the caliber, it struggled to penetrate armor.

Of course, the tank's effectiveness was still somewhat better than that of the autocannons.

Unless there was a barrage of hundreds of autocannon rounds concentrated on it, or dozens of successful hits from 76mm tank shells, whereby metal fatigue would rupture the armor of the Fear Big Can, there was no dealing with Roast Axe.

On the other hand, he could approach close to armored vehicles, his massive pincers even capable of grasping the vehicle's head, causing deformation; a few seconds of direct fire from the multibarrel autocannon could breach the armor, killing those inside; and a spray of sparks would fly as the wheel of sawtooth blades cut through the armor plate…

He did it, using various methods, he destroyed two armored vehicles, two tanks.

Infantry pressed forward, again trying to attack with rocket launchers, but could only achieve relatively minor effects, unable to deliver a decisive blow.

To annihilate this terrifying steel behemoth, one must either bombard it with enough firepower after making substantial sacrifices, until it is blown apart. If dripping water can wear away stone, then imagine the effect of thousands upon thousands of various bullets and artillery shells smashing into it.

But the sacrifice required was too great, before the 'Waaagh' force field was destroyed, it was uncertain how many people would die and how many combat vehicles would be damaged on our side.

Another plan was to blast it with 155mm howitzers.

This was a reliable approach; a couple of hits, or even a single direct hit, might well be enough to accomplish the mission of destroying it.

However, this plan would also result in significant casualties—mainly from friendly fire.

But there was no other choice.

If they didn't find a way to deal with it, the human troops wouldn't last until the steel beast was destroyed and would be breached, allowing the orcs to break through.

Perbov gritted his teeth, ordered some of the troops to press forward, and at the same time called for an artillery barrage from the rear.

Many of the soldiers from his First Battalion of the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade were within the targeted area.

When the artillery came down, many of his brothers would be killed in the blast.

His heart bled, but not only could he not allow his warriors to retreat, he strictly ordered them not to fall back.

This was trading the lives of soldiers for tactical gains.

“Let our soldiers pull back.”

Just then, this sentence echoed in Perbov’s mind.

It was the voice of the Governor.

Perbov was stunned for a moment, but quickly came to his senses, altered the orders, and had the soldiers fall back.

As the armored vehicles and infantry began to retreat, hiding in bunkers, the terrifying steel behemoth was about to give chase.

However, suddenly, a strange power caused it to freeze in its tracks.

It wasn’t completely immobilized, but it was as if it had lost its controller, its massive body momentarily halted.

This was Gu Hang’s doing!

The Governor himself had joined the assault team and had arrived on the battlefield.

It wasn’t that he was particularly concerned about his own safety, this was a battle destined for victory, and as a Spiritual Energy user, he wasn’t lacking self-defense capabilities. In this battle, as long as he didn’t wish to die, it was unlikely he would.

Meanwhile, his presence not only boosted the troop's morale but also addressed some special issues.

Like the orc leader they were currently facing.

His Spiritual Energy abilities played an important role!

Gu Hang had no interest in engaging the steel behemoth in a test of pure strength; that would be a foolish move. Although his Spiritual Energy was not weak, to confront such a mechanical monstrosity of steel was folly.

What he controlled was the orc leader inside the iron behemoth itself.

Clearly, as formidable as the orc war machine was, it lacked the Spiritual Energy resistance provided by Interstellar Warrior Powered Armor. Against Spiritual Energy, this large contraption had no defense.

However, the orc leader's 'Waaagh' Force Field was quite formidable. Gu Hang had to use all his might to attack the part of the soul representing the central nervous system through soul cutting.

This was difficult, only slightly easier than killing the soul itself. Gu Hang's strike could only temporarily immobilize it; after about one or two minutes, it would recover.

But, this period was long enough for the 155mm howitzer shells to arrive from the artillery position in the rear.

Chapter 200: it's so big, so green

The axe-wielding warrior, along with the dreadful iron tank he was piloting, was blown to death by fifty descending 155mm howitzer shells.

The dense barrage smashed down; just as he regained power, he had no time to escape the blast zone.

Even if his armor was extremely strong, it couldn't withstand such intensive artillery bombardment.

Of course, in this process, collateral damage was inevitable.

Within two minutes, quite a few of our soldiers couldn't make it to a safe place in time. Even if they found cover on the spot, being too close to the explosion meant they still couldn't avoid death.

But this was a necessary price to pay.

Gu Hang's proactive strike merely minimized this cost.

Saving a hundred or two hundred soldiers was, of course, valuable.

The death of the axe-wielding warrior also signaled that the Green Skin Orcs' front, which had been confronting the human forces for over a month, had completely collapsed.

Furthermore, with their morale shattered, the Green Skins had no path of escape.

With human forces encircling them from all sides, even if they could fly or burrow, escape was still no easy feat.

And this was precisely Gu Hang's goal.

What he wanted was not just a defeat, but an uncompromising annihilation.

Although the casualties, on the whole, were not few, with more than a thousand soldiers likely wounded or killed in the full assault, the victory achieved was at least four thousand Green Skins annihilated. Among the enemies, 70% perished under the initial rain of artillery fire.

It was at this time that Gu Hang saw a new change in his “Event” panel.

[Event: Green Skin Threat]

[Mysteriously appearing on this planet, the Green Skin Orcs had grown into a formidable threat over the years. But under your leadership, the valiant warriors not only held off the Green Skin Orcs’ incursions but, with orbital bombardments, artillery cover, and full-scale assaults, annihilated their main force. Yet, whether it’s the intelligence gathered from the front or your own feeling, these Green Skin Orcs seem unusual. They don’t appear to be wild orcs independently evolving on Rage Owl Star, nor do they seem like space orcs invading from beyond the stars.]

[Phase 1 Objective: Completed]

[Phase 1 Reward: T5-level additional troop training option – Beast Slaughter Group, obtained]

[Phase 2 Objective: Ascertain the cause of the Green Skins’ rise.]

[Phase 2 Reward: Important intelligence data]

…

The reward for the first phase of the “Green Skin Threat” event had been distributed in the “Event” panel.

Gu Hang was now able to see the “Beast Slaughter Group” training option among the additional troop types on the “Troop Card” interface. As long as the unit is T5 or above, by spending some extra grace, they could add some special attack effects against the Green Skin Orcs.

As for the ‘Beast Slayer’ Trait, that the 3rd Independent Regiment got for free, it could be counted as part of the rewards for the first phase, saving him sixty points of grace.

The second phase, on the other hand, was something Gu Hang intended to do anyway. But he was somewhat intrigued by the reward of so-called “important intelligence data.”

What could it be?

He would find out in time.

After briefly checking the updated event information, Gu Hang no longer paid attention to it.

The situation on the battlefield was still the foremost priority.

After collapsing the main resistance of the Green Skin Orcs, the bulk of the troops took a rest on the spot, and at 5 p.m., they unifiedly consumed the dinner supplied by the logistics, rested for another hour and a half, and departed at 6:30 p.m. toward the depths of the Tower Ruins.

This was not considered rash.

There were likely still a few Green Skins surviving in this area, but they were no longer of significance.

It wasn’t feasible to completely ignore them, as subsequent forces would still need to fulfill their missions deep within the Tower Ruins, and logistics supplies also had to be transported through this area, so the security of this place still needed to be safeguarded.

Therefore, Gu Hang left behind the Sixth and Seventh Garrison Divisions, one to the north and one to the south, responsible for continuing to eliminate any possible surviving scattered Green Skins within the area and to serve as a reserve force to ensure the safety of the supply line.

Let’s put aside the mopping-up task for a moment; it wasn’t difficult anymore.

And the main force advancing deeper faced no real difficulties either.

The previous orbital bombardment was no joke. Under such a scale of strikes, very few Green Skins could have survived.

Especially the most crucial targets: the departure positions of the Green Skin offensive forces and their main camp had been the focus of the strikes.

Other areas received lighter firepower, but there were inherently fewer Green Skins there to begin with.

As the troops advanced, indeed they still occasionally encountered some isolated Green Skins, but they posed no threat.

Of course, for the sake of safety and future progress, every twenty kilometers traveled, one Garrison Division would still be left behind.

While ensuring supply routes, they also had to take on the duty of eliminating the local Green Skin Orcs.

Fast forward to nearly midnight that same day, the troops arrived at the rallying point of the Green Skin Orcs, which had been reported by the interstellar warriors.

According to the latest intelligence before the orbit bombardment, this place was meant to have gathered over 4000 Green Skin Orcs and three times that number of cannon fodder grunts, along with a significantly larger number of heavy-duty equipment, more sophisticated than anything encountered before.

However, now all that was left was a vast crater and a vast expanse of wreckage.

In the center of the Green Skin rendezvous lay an immense crater, empty. Atop this massive crater, logically enough to contain thousands of individuals, there was now no trace to be found.