Governor 201

Chapter 201: It's So Big, So Green_2

The very definition of 'obliteration'.

On the outskirts of the crater, some suspicious debris began to appear.

Looking at the scraps, one could roughly guess that they probably belonged to the bodies or equipment pieces of Green Skin Orcs.

But that was just conjecture.

Pieces without any discernible shape, stuff that had melted and then cooled down, were all there was to speculate with.

Further away, there were parts that could be identified as belonging to something before destruction, like fingers, halves of thighs, and in these areas, the bodies tended to be more concentrated.

Even further out, one could see some individual pieces of complete equipment wreckage, such as overturned, charred and tattered trucks, immobilized killing machines, and relatively intact scorched corpses.

The Green Skin Orcs, once boasting with pride and ready to depart to annihilate everything, had suffered a catastrophic blow here.

It was uncertain whether any Green Skin Orcs survived on the fringes of the bombardment zone, but even if there were any, they were certainly few and no doubt they would have already fled.

Gu Hang was quite satisfied with the effects of the strike.

However, there was one slight unease troubling him: why had the space marines not reported the effects of the strike to him before?

This was not supposed to happen.

The special operations team had marked the targets for the strike more than a dozen hours ago and left the range that could be affected by the orbital strike. They had more than ten hours to evacuate, which should not have been a problem.

Even, there was no need to retreat so far, just maintaining a certain distance and ensuring their own positions were not marked for orbital strike would suffice to avoid fire from space, and naturally, they would be safe.

After the orbital strike had ended and the magnetic field for wireless communication stabilized, they had a conversation with Gu Hang, reporting their safety, indicating they were not affected by the orbital bombardment, and upon Gu Hang's request, they went to the two most important targets: the assembly area of the Green-Skin Army and their headquarters, to investigate the impact of the orbital strike.

In all logic, given their distance, they should have been able to report back very quickly.

Yet, the reality was the large force that Gu Hang led had already witnessed the situation at the Green Skin Orc assembly area, but the special operations team, which should have reported back by now, had not transmitted any message.

It was now midnight, far into the night. Every officer had been involved in a battle since eleven in the morning, continuously pushing through the ruins, clearing out Green Skin Orcs. For thirteen hours, apart from a short rest at lunch, there had been no time for respite, and they were all very tired by now.

It also wasn't good to keep the large force moving.

He found a communications soldier and sent out a radio communication request to the Phoenix Battle Group.

There was no response.

His feeling of unease grew.

He called Perbov over and arranged for his forces to move toward the direction of the reported Green Skin Orc headquarters for reconnaissance at break of dawn the following day, after getting some rest. If they encountered Green Skin Orcs along the way, they didn't necessarily have to clear them out unless it was convenient; the main mission was to find traces of the special operations team.

Gu Hang was quite anxious.

Although there were five space marines in the action team, theoretically, there shouldn't be any major problems, but…

During the conflict with the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, they had lost a space marine, not to mention fighting Green Skin Orcs.

Especially since these Green Skin Orcs seemed slightly different from the wild ones that developed independently from spores.

Wild Green Skin Orcs and space Green Skins were both Green Skins, with not much difference from physical structure to social form, except that the latter developed more robustly, with a higher level of technology, powerful Orc Warlords, and even an Orc Clan overlord.

The most terrifying orc disaster in the legends occurred seven thousand years ago, nearly destroying the entire Human Empire.

However, excluding that kind of powerful space orc clan, the ones that developed independently on certain planets without becoming a galactic-scale threat were called wild orcs.

The process of Green Skin infection spreading to another planet is difficult to trace. During one interstellar voyage, invisible Green Skin spores on some cargo might be taken aboard a spaceship. As the cargo is unloaded and lands on the ground, or is blown away by the wind and finds a suitable environment, it begins to take root and blossom, producing the first Skugg Beast. This ferocious little beast, in its hunting, fighting, when injured, during excretion, or upon death… secretions, the splitting spores give rise to more Skugg Beasts, impish critters, and eventually Orc juveniles.

Generally, when the Green Skin ecosystem on a planet has not fully unfolded, the Green Skins exist in a primitive tribal state. They have neither technology to speak of nor any sort of organizational structure—they are essentially just a group of wild beasts with relatively high intelligence.

They will fight each other, continuously struggling for power. After all, fighting is in the nature of Green Skin Orcs, and it doesn't really matter to them whether their opponents are of the same tribe or not.

Through the battles, they will select a Green Skin chief, who becomes the leader of the tribe. The Green Skins forming the tribe will start fighting against anything nearby under the chief's leadership. If they can't find opponents, they will split and then start fighting themselves.

During this process, their numbers would slowly spiral upwards. Many Green Skin Orcs would die in internal conflicts, but despite fluctuations, the overall population continued to grow. At the same time, as more battles were fought and more Orcs were present, so their so-called 'Waaagh' Force Field became increasingly potent.

This force field was intricately related to Spiritual Energy yet not quite the same; akin to some kind of 'idealist technology,' it would make their tribal strength grow stronger, and their technology would inexplicably advance. Various weapons and equipment 'devised' by the Orcs themselves and usable only by them would one day enable them to embark on a journey to the Star Sea.

Of course, without external interference, this process would be incredibly lengthy.

However, with external forces at play, such as if they consumed enough brains from other species or witnessed sufficient warfare technology from humans or other intelligent races, then the sparked Goblin Technicians, sly young Orc tech geniuses, and various other technically adept Greenskins would rapidly accelerate the process.

By this standard, in the ruins of Rage Owl Star's tower, the Orc Clan that numbered merely in the tens of thousands shouldn't have developed killer cans or terrify iron tanks. They had guns, they had thermal weapons, and that could be deemed as fast enough progress.

Similarly, the reports from Rubbish Town in the past never mentioned large-scale wars launched among substantial Green Skin factions.

This isn't quite consistent with the situation of wild Green Skins.

But it's even less equivalent to spacefaring Green Skins.

If a Green Skin Tribe capable of crossing the Star Sea should set its eyes on Rage Owl Star, then it's time to call it a night, for they would be unstoppable.

The appearance of the Green Skin Orcs at the ruins of Rage Owl Star was indeed an exceptional case.

It could also be that humanity's research on the ecology of Green Skin Orcs was still inadequate, something that even the knowledge that Gu Hang had frantically been catching up on lately failed to elucidate.

For this very reason, he felt concerned about the current situation of the special operations team.

With such an unusually distinct Green-skin Orc Tribe, who could know whether an incident could arise that could catch even the star warriors off-guard?

The Emperor's Death Angels often lived up to their demi-godly reputation; but amidst the combat against the numerous ghouls and demons of the universe, sometimes they would die in droves.

Green Skins were one of those many 'ghouls and demons.'

…

It wasn't that Gu Hang was a jinx, but the special operations team really did run into major trouble.

Setting the clock back to eleven in the morning, after the orbital strike hit, they indeed were unharmed.

They patiently waited for some time, after the lingering effects of the bombardment dissipated and radio communications were restored, they reported back to the governor that they were safe. Then, following the orders of the governor, they made their way to the site of the orbital bombardment.

The primary investigation site was actually the gathering place and the main base of the Green Skin Orcs.

They went to the main base first.

There, the scene was almost identical to where they set out from, also a huge crater with surrounding buildings completely leveled. The difference lay in the massacre here where there were many more goblin sages and orc artisans among the wreckage of Green Skin structures.

That was about it.

They wandered around the area of the strike, assessing the effects of the assault, while also keeping an eye out for any survivors nearby.

The Green Skin Armory confirmed destroyed;

Green Skin camp confirmed destroyed;

Three Green Skin Spawning Farms confirmed destroyed;

And it has to be said, Green Skins were terrifyingly tenacious. Even an apocalyptic level of bombardment—that which was more intense than a nuclear strike—couldn't take down those who were farther from the blast center, especially those who, at the time of the bombardment, happened to be in more robust shelters.

Thankfully, their numbers were not many, and they were scattered.

Without being detected, they didn’t waste time exterminating them. Of course, if it was convenient, they’d take them down.

Due to the nature of Green Skin Orcs, as long as their leader was killed in the bombardment and if none of the surviving Orcs stepped up as a leader, they would revert to ‘intelligent beasts,’ acting solely on instinct and fighting among themselves until a new leader emerged.

During this time, they were at their weakest. If humans seized this opportunity, they could completely wipe them out.

Then, with thorough cleaning of every inch of land the Orcs had tread upon, the Orc crisis could be considered resolved.

Of course, due to their tenacity and spore-based propagation, one must never let their guard down regarding the Orc threat. For a long time to come, this planet must remain vigilant, keep monitoring the places once afflicted by the Green Skin calamity, and periodically eradicate any suspicious plant life.

But as long as they didn’t grow complacent and carried out the empire’s regulations diligently, any problems that did arise would be minor, mostly nipped in the bud before they could escalate into a major crisis.

However, just as they were relaxing a bit, a roar reached them from afar.

Startled at first, they quickly realized it probably wasn’t because their presence had been detected.

It sounded more like a Green Skin Orc rallying its comrades with a battle cry.

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Communications were basically by yelling, a bit amusing, but no one could muster a laugh now.

The emergence of this situation meant that in this area, there still existed an orc leader with considerable appeal.

And it was unlikely that this leader had just emerged from a recent fight. On one hand, such things didn't happen so quickly; on the other hand, a newly risen boss wouldn't have this kind of charisma.

So, the answer seemed obvious: under the previous, formidable orbital bombardment, a powerful leader of the Green Skin Orcs had not perished.

Nobody knew whether it was sheer luck, being outside the core area of the bombing, or some other reason, but clearly, it was not good news.

They decided to go and check the situation out.

If a large number of Green Skin Orcs had already gathered under its call, then it was best to report the news to the Governor and then assign someone to monitor the situation.

But if the number of gathered Green Skins was still small, Matins and the other four star warriors planned to take action and kill that Green Skin leader.

Decapitation Tactics were among the most effective strategies against Green Skin Orcs.

A grand 'waaagh', even if it spanned across Star Sea during a campaign, needed a strong orc warlord to organize and initiate it. Only a sufficiently powerful leader could unite the Green Skins.

But likewise, as soon as their leader was killed, the remaining Green Skins would quickly disperse, and they normally had to fight among themselves until more than half were dead.

They had no concept of uniting against a common enemy to save their race from extinction.

Even in a specific battle, the death of a squad leader could greatly shake the entire squad; the death of a commanding leader during a campaign could lead the entire fight toward collapse…

When facing Green Skins, finding the biggest, greenest, and strongest one and then slaughtering it was the best approach.

So, who was best suited for such a task on the battlefield?

Of course, it was the star warriors.

In past wars, whenever the Phoenix fought against Green Skins, they regularly carried out similar missions five or six, or even seven or eight, times in a single campaign.

Now, they were simply revisiting an old craft.

Even the star warriors felt a touch of nostalgia.

However, when they silently arrived on the scene and saw the Green Skins that had gathered there, they dismissed the idea of a surprise attack.

The number was greater than they had anticipated.

There were easily more than a thousand orc youngsters. And it wasn't just light infantry; there were battle trucks and killer cans, AT LEAST fifty pieces accounted for among various kinds of heavy equipment.

Moreover, stray Green Skins were continuously converging at the location.

The number gathered surprised even Matins.

Why were there so many?

While discussing, they came up with a plausible conjecture:

It was possible that this orc leader had been leading the troops he gathered toward the rally point. Then the orbital bombardment happened en route.

The most important targets of the bombardment were the main camp and the rally point, which suffered the most violent, unavoidable strikes; but they, being halfway between the two, were fortunate enough to narrowly escape the disaster.

There were certainly many Green Skins who had died, and from what Matins and his team could see, many of the orcs bore injuries. After all, this round of orbital bombardment didn't consist of just two Great Macro Cannons; there were also twenty smaller Colossal Cannons and hundreds of orbital missiles raining down everywhere, and those devices were extremely lethal.

But overall, over a thousand Green Skins had survived.

Executing the Decapitation Tactics had become difficult.

It wasn't just the large number of enemies that was the issue, but the Green Skin orc leader itself warranted attention:

It was huge. It was very green.

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If there had been a reliable ally force drawing attention at the front, Phoenix's five starfighters might have had a chance at success. But at the moment, the only allies by their side were the 28 soldiers of Storm Squad.

Although they were also elite, asking them, all 28 of them, to face off against an enemy fifty times their number and distract them for the starfighters… that was impossible, even if they were all killed, it couldn't be done.

Moreover, even if they could draw the enemy's attention at the front, launching a successful decapitation strike would be very difficult.

The Green Skin leader looked very strong.

He was clad in heavy-duty equipment, his entire stature reaching up to three meters. His heat weapons and cold arms, after modifications, seemed all exaggerated. His heavy armor was certainly not something that could be easily broken through.

Matins and his team were experienced and well-informed, and after evaluating the monster's strength, they concluded that not even a veteran starfighter could take it down in a one-on-one fight. Only the five of them, attacking simultaneously, could ensure a swift, no-hassle kill. But any minor issue in the process or delay, and with the constant reinforcement of Green Skins, they might get trapped and unable to come out.

Forget it, forget it.

Focus on surveillance, and wait for Mr. Gu to arrive with the main forces. By then, with a large army pressing forward fully, it would be much easier for the five of them to make a move in the chaos of battle.

There was no need to be adventurous now.

However, as they dampened their efforts, the Green Skins seemed to have discovered them.

The conspicuous Orc leader cast his gaze towards their hiding place from afar.

Matins furrowed his brows.

"Why were we discovered?"

He was truly perplexed.

Had his senses deteriorated from not having fought against the Green Skins for a while?

But upon careful consideration, their actions seemed flawless, and the elites of Storm Squad also did a good job. Logically, they shouldn't have been so easily detected.

"I don't know how they discovered us," said Schneider, "but I do know we're in trouble."

Get ready for combat… combat my ass!

Thirty men against a thousand well-equipped orcs led by a boss was a suicide mission.

While the distance between both sides was still great, running away was the most sensible option!

However, during their escape, they soon realized what had revealed their position.

It was, of course, another Green Skin Orc, standing right beside the Orc boss. His hunched figure did not look tall, nor was it equipped with any exaggerated weapons; it looked quite ordinary. The unusual part was the silver-gray metal rod in his hand, which was not originally a product of Green Skin technology. However, on its upper part, it was decorated with beast teeth, multicolored paint, and filled with the style of the Green Skin Orcs.

The old orc pointed his scepter towards the location of the starfighters.

An intuition of imminent danger made them immediately start to dodge.

Just then, a red laser beam shot towards them.

The starfighters were unharmed, but the beam penetrated the bodies of two Storm Squad soldiers.

The bulletproof alloy steel plates beneath their uniforms barely served any purpose; both soldiers had fist-sized, penetrating wounds burnt through them.

The beam, after passing through the two men, extended far into the distance until it hit a distant ruined wall and disappeared from sight.

The two soldiers collapsed to the ground, weakly convulsing and struggling on the earth.

They weren't dead yet, but death was certain.

No one could save them, and during a retreat, it was impossible to bring along two wounded who would inevitably die within minutes.

This couldn't really be considered abandoning comrades, but morale inevitably dropped during the escape.

Even without the burden, their escape was far from smooth.

The hunched old orc continually released beams from his hand, firing every few minutes.

The highly penetrating energy beam was something not even the starfighters could ignore. A direct hit by two beams would damage the power armor; three could be fatal.

Even without hitting the same spot, two hits would weaken the armor's overall defense due to structural changes, allowing the third to be deadly.

Fortunately, the old orc's attack range was extremely far, still deadly even over two thousand meters away.

However, he lacked high-magnification aiming scopes and the ability to aim shots. Although the beam didn't suffer from trajectory deviation over long distances, if he couldn't aim properly it was all for naught. The reason the first shot was fatal was because the team had not had the chance to fully disperse their formation, and they were too close to each other; a random shot was likely to hit, which resulted in the fatal blows to the two Storm Squad soldiers.

Now, as they were on the move and had dispersed their formation further, hitting them was not so easy.

Furthermore, they weren't without the means to fight back.

Explosive guns, the electromagnetic rifles in the hands of Storm Corps, had the capability to kill enemies at a distance of two thousand meters—although there would be significant attenuation, a hit would still be lethal.

T3 class soldiers were already reliable in shooting accuracy, not to mention the starfighters who could not be evaluated simply by the 'T' rating, and even had built-in combat assistance systems in their power armor to help them aim and shoot more accurately.

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Even though their firearms were not the sniper models specially designed for long-range kills, they could still pose a threat to the old orc at a distance of two kilometers.

However, they did not succeed in shooting it dead, killing only a few unlucky Green Skins who got in the way.

The old orc was quite cunning, too. Upon realizing he had become a target, he didn't stubbornly exchange fire with the interstellar warriors of the Storm Corps. Instead, he took cover behind the Orc Warlord.

That was a large shield; even a grenade rifle couldn't damage the armor on him at a distance of two kilometers, let alone harm the old orc hiding behind him.

But similarly, while taking cover might have spared him from being killed by grenade rifles or electromagnetic rifles, he also couldn't continue to pose a threat to the fleeing humans.

Nevertheless, the situation for the human side was hardly any better.

A considerable part of the Green-Skin Army had started to move.

Armored trucks and killer cans were chasing them. Even the Orc Warlord had personally joined the fray.

Bullets were fired at them over a two-kilometer gap relentlessly.

The Green Skins' shoddy firearms made a racket, but their bullets couldn't even travel the two-kilometer distance, falling to the ground halfway, not to mention having any accuracy.

But the Green Skins were not left without weapons that could threaten them at this distance.

Setting aside the tin barrel cannons, which lacked precision and were like using a cannon to swat a mosquito and actually had to hit, the heavy machine guns on the armed trucks and the Multibarrel Autocannon mounted on the killer cans could still be threatening beyond two kilometers.

The precision of the Green Skin Orcs' weapons was hard to predict, but when bullets came flying in a dense stream, as long as the general direction was correct, the bullets would still be lethal at two kilometers. With their vast numbers, even random shots were threatening enough.

Members of the Storm Squad kept falling during the retreat.

At this moment, turning around to return fire was not particularly useful. They could neither kill all the enemies nor fend them off.

They could only keep running.

Of course, escape was actually impossible.

If the interstellar warriors ran at full speed, they might have a chance, but the elite soldiers of the Storm Squad were certain to be caught.

But even for the interstellar warriors, the chance of escape was slim. After all, running at full speed meant exposing their backs to the enemy, and if there was one place where the Mecha were weakest, it was definitely the back.

To die with one's back to the enemy was undoubtedly a great disgrace for an interstellar warrior.

And even if they decided to forsake honor and abandon their comrades to flee with all their might to preserve the fire of the battle group, the outcome might not be any better.

Until they had completely left the enemy's attack range and evaded pursuit, it was likely that someone among them would fall, paying who knows how many lives in order to escape, with no chance to recover their genetic seeds.

Now, although they were still retreating, sometimes they faced the enemy while firing and moving backward, and other times they took shelter behind a slope or the ruins of a building, temporarily stopping the bullets from hitting them…

Retreating in such a manner, they obviously couldn't run fast.

On the contrary, even if the path was rugged, those armed trucks with their six wheels were at least mobile. Even if some areas were inaccessible to wheels and they had to detour, they wouldn't slow down much.

As for the killer cans—those walking Mecha—there were even fewer issues.

Matins and Schneider combined their efforts to take down a killer can with concentrated fire from their grenade rifles at a distance of over a thousand meters, but that hardly quenched their thirst.

While fighting and retreating, they could only do their utmost to delay the enemy's pursuit. They also couldn't run in a straight line—they had to avoid incoming fire and also be on guard not to be outflanked by the armed trucks taking detours.

They were fully aware that being caught up to was now inevitable.

But that didn’t mean they were utterly hopeless.

Although they didn’t speak to each other, Matins believed that his comrades probably shared his thoughts: they were looking for a defensible location to hold out until reinforcements arrived.

Although they didn’t know how long they would have to wait, this option seemed more reliable than running.

Of course, they also had to be prepared for the worst-case scenario: total annihilation.

But what of it? War is like that.

Especially when facing an Orc Clan that had surpassed the level of ordinary wild Green Skins—who knew whether a mishap or a victory would come first?

Along the way, they indeed found some locations conducive to defense: there were several large, sturdy buildings with three or four stories.

Even though this place was no longer the central target zone for orbital strikes, those buildings had stood for a century without collapsing and had weathered the quake-like aftershocks of near-orbital bombardment without falling. This proved that the pre-war structures were sufficiently robust.

Taking refuge in the high-rise buildings and fighting inside, the armed trucks would struggle to enter, and the killer cans would find movement difficult. They would only need to defend a section in front of them and wouldn’t have to face bullets coming from all directions as in an open field.

But those high-rises were still not the best choice.

They were worried that those Green Skins, if they made use of explosives in a targeted manner, would be able to blow up their location, and they might face attacks from all sides—especially if the enemy used ladders to climb up.

Matins and his group were still searching for a more suitable location to hold their ground.

Despite no one knowing whether the last abandoned high-rise, which seemed defensible, was the best spot they could find next, or if the next would be even worse, they had to keep searching in order to maximize their defensive advantage.

This time, The Emperor seemed to have heard their loyal prayers, and their luck suddenly changed for the better.

A soldier discovered an underground space amidst the ruins of a building.

As for defending, this kind of basement was well-suited. Although there was still the danger of collapse, if it was deep and sturdy enough, the risk of being buried would be smaller than having a high-rise blown up.

And as for other aspects, it was nearly all advantages.

There was only one entrance, which made it easy to defend; the inner space was more restricted, reducing the number of enemies they would face, preventing the enemy from leveraging their numerical superiority; in such limited space, not even a killing jar would fit, which was even better.

If worst came to worst, they could seal the entrance. Though they wouldn't be able to get out themselves, at least there would be no worries about being overtaken for a significant time. After staying a day, when Mr. Gu's army arrived, the outside might be much safer, and they could dig themselves out in power armor with their bare hands—maybe even make their way out in a few days.

In any case, it was better than waiting to die.

The only concern was whether the vertical depth of the underground space was sufficient.

If it was just a small basement, once they entered and enemies rushed in, getting trapped with no room to maneuver would also be very dangerous.

However, just by briefly passing by the underground entrance, Matins dismissed this concern: This wasn't any kind of basement; it was an underground research facility!

You could tell just by the thick, solid circular iron door at the entrance.

In the past, this iron door must have been power-driven, as it would have been impossible to close or open by human strength alone. Now, though, it was merely ajar, its power mechanism long ineffective.

Without any room for hesitation, Matins chose to enter.

Five interstellar warriors and 21 surviving soldiers from the Storm Squad stepped into the underground space.

At Matins's signal, a squad of elite soldiers ventured deeper to explore. They needed to understand the layout, to know where to fall back if the fighting turned unfavorable; moreover, they also needed to ascertain if there were other entrances or exits, for a possible escape or to guard, preventing the Green Skins from discovering them and attacking from behind.

The rest remained about twenty meters inside the entrance, hurriedly gathering any materials they could find—broken bricks, building materials… in short, quickly constructing a defensive position.

They were to hold the entrance, delay the enemy as long as possible, and inflict casualties.

But they didn't have much time at all. Only two minutes later, enemies appeared at the entrance.

It was just a few Green Skins, apparently dismounted from an armored truck that couldn't pass through.

No sooner had they shown their heads than they were mercilessly killed.

Within the thirty-meter range of the entrance, the interstellar warriors and elite soldiers of the Storm Squad were accurate with their shots. What was critical was that their weapons were far from weak compared to the G9 series rifles. Bomb guns could kill Green Skin brats with one shot, and electromagnetic rifles only took a few more.

In other words, if those Green Skins only tried to storm in using infantry, they were likely to die without capturing the place.

The interstellar warriors each had nearly three hundred rounds; the Storm Squad soldiers had at least one hundred eighty rounds each.

Used sparingly and accurately, they might be able to hold on.

The Green Skin Orcs understood this point as well—Even if they didn't, after the killing jars couldn't make it through, and they had gathered metal barrel cannons to bombard the entrance, with twenty lads rushing in and none coming out alive, it became clear.

They stopped sending more men to die, which gave Matins and the others a chance to catch their breath.

But he also knew this was the calm before the storm.

It was deep into the night, yet they dared not rest.

They attempted to contact Mr. Gu, but the wireless communication had been cut off.

It was likely that the Green Skins had the technology to block communication signals.

In any case, they didn't have many options now; they had to hold on with the natural advantage of the location.

…

The Orc Elder Gorgon glared angrily at the flesh-tearing figure before him, much stronger and larger than himself, wishing he could kill him.

But that was not an option.

He was no longer a match for the flesh-tearer.

He couldn't even stand by and watch the flesh-tearer go to his death.

He knew those hiding were 'cans'. In his distant memory, he had seen these cans before, and they killed Orc youngsters as easily as Orcs slaughtered little devils.

The flesh-tearer was already the strongest warrior in the tribe, but according to his old memories, he judged that if the flesh-tearer charged in recklessly, he might kill one or two cans, but he would ultimately die there.

The flesh-tearer couldn't die. If he did, the more than a thousand youngsters that had just been regrouped would immediately plunge back into collapse. Below him were five or six Orc chiefs of equal rank, all following the flesh-tearer because he was stronger and greener. If the flesh-tearer died, a bloody struggle would undoubtedly ensue among them, and they would fight with their followers, not caring about anything else until only one remained.

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If it were usual times, Gorgon wouldn't mind these things, but not now.

He still needed the clan to continue existing.

He could only plead earnestly once more, "Why won't you listen to me? When have I ever deceived you?"

“Nothing will do!” Tearing Flesh was still so stubborn, “I must kill all those shrimp! I’ll only leave after I’ve killed them all! All my boys are dead, the munitions factory is gone, the farm is gone, but I haven’t personally killed a single shrimp! This is absolutely unacceptable!”

“But we’ll all die here!” Gorgon growled, “Those shrimp have already killed Broil Axe, wiped out all the boys in front, and they are coming to kill us! We must leave now, this isn’t the time to fight! Once we have more boys, more big guns, then we’ll come back and kill these shrimp!”

Pausing for a moment, the Orc Elder Gorgon pointed to the barely visible tunnel entrance in the dark night, continuing, “Years ago, I was dug out from there, and after I personally killed the few shrimp who had dug me out, I carefully inspected the place. It’s very sturdy, only accessible from the front entrance, but with those canned goods guarding it, even you couldn’t break through…”

At this point, Gorgon suddenly fell silent.

He saw that Tearing Flesh’s eyes filled with brutality were staring at him.

It was as if he had made a mistake, he had just told the strongest boss in the tribe, you can’t do it.

And this was something most Orc bosses would never believe.

The enormous Tearing Flesh looked down at the decrepit Gorgon.

Tearing Flesh said, “I’m the boss, I don’t have to listen to you. I’m the biggest in the tribe, the greenest, there’s nothing I can’t kill.”

With that, his mechanized arm grasped Gorgon’s throat, lifting his frail body up: “You’re too old, too weak, I’ve had enough of your words. I’ll keep your head and let you watch with your own eyes how I tear those shrimp to pieces.”

Gorgon hissed as if he wanted to say something, but ultimately couldn’t utter a word.

Tearing Flesh didn't want to listen to him anymore, his mechanized arm just tightened, twisting Gorgon's throat.

The light in Gorgon's eyes quickly faded.

In that moment, he remembered many things.

He was originally just an ordinary craftsman boy from the Iron-Tooth Clan. He was born on a warm planet where his clan had completely conquered the place, and the remaining shrimp were corralled as food, as slaves, as tools of amusement…

Then, the shrimp came.

The clan's battleship was destroyed, lots of canned goods fell from the sky, together with many shrimp, they raided and destroyed the planet's anti-orbit cannon. Then using incessant artillery fire, they purged the entire planet again and again.

All the Green Skin Orcs he knew died, and he was lucky to survive.

But afterwards, he was captured.

And after being transferred around, he ended up here, locked in that underground research facility nearby, for who knows how many years.

He was dissected, but the tenacious life force of the Green Skin Orcs allowed him to survive time and again after simple stitching; he was injected with all sorts of strange liquids, used as a guinea pig for various experiments…

But suddenly one day, everything stopped.

He was stuffed into a cold storage unit, it was very cold, and he soon lost consciousness.

When he regained consciousness, there were a few ragged shrimp standing in front of him. They had never seen a creature like himself, but once he had regained his strength, he broke out of the glass sarcophagus that held him and slaughtered all those shrimp.

But he had forgotten many things, how to make cannons, how to make killer cans… only recently had he started to remember these.

Then, he walked out and encountered many monsters. He fought those beasts, hunted them for food, and in the process, he bled.

Wherever his blood was shed, within a year, some green plants started to grow, Skugg beasts, farts, and other Green Skin Orcs gradually began to emerge.

“`

He was happy, he wasn’t alone anymore. There were people to fight with, to accompany him in battle.

He still remembered, among the new lads that appeared, there was one he fancied most, called Ripper.

The lad didn’t let him down and became the first leader.

Together they gathered all the lads, and Gorgon, following the memory of the clan from the past, established their own tribe and gave it the same name as before—Iron-Tooth Clan.

Over the years, the tribe’s numbers kept growing; they began to expand outward until they encountered many tiny shrimps.

He was delighted, for fighting with shrimps was the most fun.

As they fought, the tribe would grow stronger. The lads went to battle, to die, and then those who survived grew bigger, greener; even the dead would sprout more Green Skin Orcs…until there were more and more of them, stronger and stronger, and then Ripper could bring about a great ‘Waaagh,’

and the Iron-Tooth Clan would sweep across the entire planet, turning it into a place just like the one he was born on.

A little over a month ago, tougher shrimps appeared.

Gorgon was not worried; on the contrary, he was even more excited. Amidst the intense battles, the 'Waaagh' force field grew denser, Ripper grew bigger, and as he reveled in it, he even recalled many technologies he had once forgotten, making killing cans, terror iron cans, and even crafting a set of warlord armor for Ripper.

Only…why did something like what destroyed the Iron-Tooth Clan before begin to fall from the sky again?

Gorgon couldn't fathom it.

If only we could make big ships that fly outside the planet too.

This was his last thought.

And the last sound he heard was Ripper's roar of fury.

Then, his consciousness faded into darkness.

…

Matins and Schneider wore solemn expressions when they saw Ripper.

At such close range, they could finally confirm that this was an Orc Warlord.

From their past combat experience, they clearly understood the level of strength this creature could possess:

Average interstellar warriors couldn’t last three blows in front of an Orc Warlord; to defeat one in a duel, at least a squad champion was needed.

And at this moment, with the arrival of this Orc Warlord, countless Green Skin Orcs began to swarm in, too numerous to count in the moment, restricted only by the narrow entrance that prevented them all from squeezing through at once.

Matins and Schneider exchanged a glance, and what they saw in each other’s eyes was not panic, but excitement.

Opportunity had come!

They weren’t afraid of the Orc Warlord’s appearance, because its appearance meant a great opportunity!

To kill an Orc Warlord required the intervention of a squad champion.

Isn’t that a coincidence?

Squad champions, there are two right here.

Chapter 208: Death of the Interstellar Warrior

Interstellar warriors, of course, have their strengths and weaknesses.

Apart from weapons, power armor models, and other hardware configurations, an individual’s strength cannot be overlooked.

Veteran soldiers can take on two, even three new soldiers without much trouble; the champion of a platoon is the strongest among a hundred warriors.

Matins and his companion Schneider both were such champions.

Of course, theoretically, the strongest member of a battle group should be the group's champion or its leader, but Matins had been temporarily promoted after the battle group was nearly annihilated. His true strength was at the level of a platoon champion.

Even so, he had a chance against an Orc Warlord.

If it were a warlord who had control over an entire planet, that might be very difficult; but the one at hand was far from that level.

Moreover, his armor, while looking fierce, had probably not yet reached the level equivalent to the Terminator Model Armor among interstellar warriors, so there was a chance of victory.

The issue now was to create an opportunity for a one-on-one combat.

This was difficult, but not entirely impossible.

Many green skins had surged in, and the entrance became very crowded. The Orc Warlord, along with his mechanically enhanced armor, was only a little smaller than a killing can, and was quite squeezed in the underground entrance corridor. Behind and in front of him were more killing cans streaming in as well.

Interstellar warriors, the soldiers of the Storm Corps, were already firing with all their might.

There was no need to worry too much about accuracy; the entrance was clogged with green skins, and even a blind man, holding his gun and firing towards their roar, could hit the enemy accurately.

However, as this continued, a lot of green skins died, but their ammunition was running out rapidly.

Especially after the frontline green skins were almost dead, what they faced now were killing cans that nearly blocked the entrance solidly, having to bend their mechanical knees, slowly and clumsily moving forward.

If killing cans wanted to come in, that meant pure brute forcing. Their body size was only slightly smaller than the height and width of the entrance. They could squeeze in, but they couldn't use their limbs freely at all.

Especially since there were many green skin youngsters following them, if they raised their multibarrel autocannons to open fire, it's difficult to say how many human soldiers they could kill. But surely not many green skins standing in front of it would survive.

But…do green skins care about such things?

The first one to open fire was not the squeezing killing cans, but the flesh rippers. They struggled to find a gap behind the killing cans to thrust their large guns out and then opened fire towards the front.

The killing can, squeezed and uncomfortable, was hit by the blaster gun and in agony, also went berserk and followed with fire from its multibarrel cannon.

Under the intense firepower, neither the interstellar warriors nor the elite of the Storm Corps could risk poking their heads out.

Too close—if the helmet of a power armor was hit by large-caliber autocannon at a distance of twenty to thirty meters in rapid succession, it would still get blown off.

They could only hunker down.

Fortunately, cover made from various metal scrap and rubble was not so easily destroyed.

But even so, they eventually chose to abandon this position.

The killing can, straining to reach their previous location, forcefully pushed some obstacles aside, finally freeing up some space for movement.

However, the next moment, a violent explosion occurred right there!

The thick red light rolled over, and the killing can was immediately immobilized.

Ordinary explosives, of course, would not easily destroy a killing can. But if it were the thermite grenades commonly used by the interstellar warriors, that would be a different story.

The metal-built body of the killing can, hit by a thermite grenade hidden beside the obstacles and hard to spot, was blown into two pieces.

The instantly elevated extreme temperature was unbearable even for armored metal. In an instant, the armor plates began to melt and fray.

If the thermite grenade had been a bit larger, turning the killing can into molten iron was also a possibility.

Of course, that would have been somewhat overkill. The current extent was enough to induce its destruction. Not only did the armored body lose its ability to fight, the shaved-off imp inside, with limbs removed and tubes plugged into its brain, was already scorched to death.

This mini thermite grenade was one of the remaining supplies of the battle group. Similar disposable equipment was still available, but the more they used, the less they had, and it was impossible to resupply on the godforsaken Rage Owl Star.

Yet, the interstellar warriors couldn’t afford to grieve their losses.

High-value equipment was meant to be used at times like this.

Moreover, frankly, the most precious thing in the Phoenix Battle Group was the lives of its warriors.

In their minds, they counted the time.

The extremely high temperature from the thermite bomb would not last long. With rapid decay, the interstellar warriors knew exactly that after 6.72 seconds, the temperature would no longer be able to penetrate the power armor they wore and cause any harm.

And that was precisely their moment to act.

Five interstellar warriors struck simultaneously at that time.

Three stood firm, their blaster guns already switched from accurate single-shot mode to full-speed firing mode. The last full magazine, loaded in advance, poured out countless bombs in an extremely short span of time.

These bombs, almost all of them, went past the destroyed killing can, hammering towards the Orc Warlord behind it.

Chapter 209: The Death of the Interstellar Warrior_2

Aside from the three of them, with Schneider in the front and Matins a bit behind on the flank, the two former champions of the Phoenix Battle Group, now the strongest individuals in hand-to-hand combat within the battalion, sprinted towards the Orc Warlord.

Their speed burst to an extreme in an instant, following the bombs, as they charged at the Orc Warlord.

Nearly all the bombs hit the Orc Warlord.

His ultra-heavy armor, which not even a space warrior’s grenade gun could penetrate, failed to inflict direct damage on the orc chief behind. Yet, with dozens, if not hundreds of bombs, the diamond-tipped projectiles clinking against it unrelentingly, he still felt a significant impact.

Not to mention, the bombs would explode a second time, causing additional damage.

After nearly a hundred miniature explosions, even the toughest flesh and thickest armor could not help but become dizzy and uncontrollably staggered backward.

During this time, his body, far stronger than that of an average space warrior, was still capable of counterattacking at the critical moment.

He struggled to lift his spear and fired forward without aiming.

In a split second, about a dozen large-caliber bullets fired off.

The power of this weapon's caliber was certainly no less formidable than that of the grenade guns in the hands of the space warriors.

More crucially, even though he didn't aim, the narrow terrain was fair to everyone. The space warriors were not small in stature either.

Two-thirds of the bullets still hit their targets.

Schneider took four hits, with his thick, curved shoulder armor deflecting three, but one still penetrated where the shoulder met the chest armor.

There was armor there too, of course, but it was relatively weak and the bullet struck at a good angle.

This shot injured Schneider.

But his stride only faltered for a moment, then he continued to rush forward without any reduction in speed.

Behind the two men, one of the most unlucky brothers-in-arms took two shots to the helmet.

He grunted and fell to the ground. Three or four men from the Storm Corps tried to pull the fallen warrior back but failed to succeed.

Even with their strength enhanced to T3 level, far surpassing that of an ordinary person, three or four men could not hope to drag a fully-armed space warrior.

At this moment, Matins and Schneider had both reached the front of the Orc Warlord.

Schneider took a slight leap, raising his striking position, and his combat knife accurately stabbed into a fissure where the orc's armor joined.

It pierced through.

Schneider could hear the Orc Warlord let out a deep roar of pain, evidently hurt, and his body was even brought to the ground by the force of Schneider's thrust.

But this only incited the orc's ferocity.

His metal-coated arm bent inward, and the autocannon mounted on his wrist aimed at Schneider.

With one more pull of the trigger, a storm-like barrage from the autocannon would unleash countless rounds in an instant, all of which would hit Schneider at close range. Even with his powered armor, he could not avoid serious injury.

But at that moment, Matins arrived.

His chainsword struck down hard from the other side, hitting a weak joint on the arm, with the chainsaw's power turned up to the maximum, sparks flying. He felt a massive resistance but gritted his teeth, pressing down hard with the chainsword.

A moment later, the gun-mounted hand was severed.

Schneider was somewhat unsatisfied.

Matins indeed saved him, but in his view, this was also a wasted opportunity. If Matins had chosen a more lethal spot, it might have been possible to kill this formidable foe directly. Although he would pay for it with serious injury or even death, the calculation under his cold combat will deemed it still worthwhile.

However, Schneider said nothing about it, not because his life was saved, but because at this moment in the fight, the slightest change could be the difference between life or death.

The Orc Warlord had only lost an arm; he wasn't dead yet.

Without his spear, the brute still had a massive cleaver welded to his other hand.

The greatsword suddenly slashed toward Schneider, and Schneider freed one hand to seize its arm, wrestling with it, while his other hand tightly gripped the dagger plunged into his battle armor, drawing it outward along the trajectory of force, aiming to enlarge the wound, hoping to reach vital organs.

At the same time, Matins, who had lopped off the hand of the Orc Warlord and was covered in blood inside his helmet, lifted the chainsaw once more; this time, he aimed for the neck, the fleshy part. The gap between his heavy helmet and his breastplate was the best point of entry.

However, the entire battle process, though extremely swift, did have its delays.

When the massive body of the Orc Warlord fell, the enemies who had been blocked behind had a clear line of fire to launch their attack on the two of them.

The crude firearms in the hands of individual orc brats could be temporarily ignored. Although the firepower of the green-skinned guns was generally high, it was unrealistic to expect to injure a star warrior with just a few shots.

But the weaponry in the hands of the killer cans was different.

The multibarrel autocannon opened fire.

Schneider was hit several times, which affected the strength of his grip on the green warlord's arm. The large, ruthless sword slashed across his lower back.

Chunks of his tough armor were blown away, blood splattered.

The flesh-tearer still planned to pull out the greatsword for another blow, aiming to completely sever the shrimp can in half at the waist.

But at that moment, Matin's chainsaw sword arrived.

The fury of the Phoenix Battalion Leader was immense, all vented through that one sword strike.

With the burst of firelight, the chainsaw tore through the gap between the helmet and the breastplate, the enormous volume of blood spurting out due to the motion of the chainsaw, like a fountain.

Just as Matins had previously severed the Warlord's forearm, this time he also cut off the opponent's head.

Immediately afterward, Matins didn't check on Schneider's condition but pulled out his chainsaw sword and, despite the fire from the killer cans' autocannon, charged forward.

The killer can seemed slightly larger than the Orc Warlord and bore a range of frightening close-combat weapons. However, in terms of armor strength and power output, it couldn't compare with a genuine Orc Warlord. Moreover, with the confined space limiting movement, its combat effectiveness was further reduced.

Matins, in his rage, had also been injured by the autocannon, but still quickly dismantled the orcish walking mecha.

At the same time, the other two star warriors also charged out, and the three began a frenzied slaughter of those orcs who lacked the cover of heavy equipment. In the narrow space, the three were like highly efficient killing machines, and those green-skinned brutes had no power to fight back against chainsaw swords and combat blades.

The elite soldiers of the Storm Corps at the rear wanted to help, but they found it unnecessary when they raised their guns; the green-skins they targeted often ended up slain the next moment.

The soldiers looked at each other and, in the end, lowered their weapons.

Better to stand down and avoid friendly fire.

But in truth, the star warriors didn't kill that many green-skins at the entrance.

After another twenty or so were dead, the remaining live orcs had all fled.

Orcs weren't always endlessly courageous, especially after the death of their leader, their morale would collapse, and they would flee.

The retreating green-skins ran, all the while bellowing some language. Although it was hard to understand, one could guess they were saying their boss was dead.

Matins, panting, did not lead the charge out.

He was furious, but still rational.

In this place, they could utilize the terrain to kill countless green-skins. Out there, in the open, they couldn't withstand dozens of killer cans and armed trucks to annihilate thousands of orcs.

They could only retreat, dragging Schneider and the star warrior wounded in the head to safety.

At this moment, the noise from outside also became audible.

Having lost their strongest leader, the green-skins predictably showcased their traditional skill—beginning to fight amongst themselves.

Chapter 210: I saw it

Interstellar warriors are not invincible; there are too many strange and terrifying things in this universe.

Actually, if those greenskins had been a bit more strategic and, in particular, if that leader Tear Meat hadn't been so impatient to lead the charge, but instead kept sending murder cans with ordinary greenskin kids or even fart spirits to consume the ammunition and pave a way, and then had Tear Meat lead enough troops for a decisive, final blow, Matins and the others' ultimate fate might have been total annihilation.

Ultimately, there were too few interstellar warriors, and their weapons and equipment were too light infantry-oriented. If they had had more heat guns, plasma guns, heavy explosives, or micro heat bombs, or if they had traded their combat blades and chainsaw swords for power weapons…

Perhaps the battle would have been easier, and the cost not so great.

The two fallen interstellar warriors lay quietly on the ground, while the remaining three huddled next to them.

The elites of the Storm Corps did not dare to come close; they naturally left space for these superhuman warriors.

Today's battle, after those who had undergone Mr. Gu's special training and felt strong, clearly recognized the gap between themselves and the real superhuman warriors. Without these five interstellar warriors, relying on themselves alone, they probably would have been crushed like chicks by that Orc Warlord.

However, even such powerful demigods have their moments of death.

The warrior who was shot in the head had breathed his last. The first shot from the large-caliber machine gun had deformed his helmet, and the refined ceramic steel material could not withstand such a bombardment; the second shot went through the helmet whose defense was greatly reduced after deformation, causing fatal damage to the brain tissue.

Schneider was not yet dead, but…

If they had had a Pharmacist and a Dreadnought Mech, he might have been able to change his identity, find a new way to continue living, and keep fighting for The Emperor.

But they had none of these things.

Schneider knew what was coming. He understood the condition of his body better than anyone else.

With half his waist sliced open and multiple vital organs destructively damaged, the fact that he had not yet died and was even temporarily conscious was already a testament to the robust vitality of an interstellar warrior.

He lay half-reclined on the ground, his helmet long since removed, and the fresh blood bubbling from his mouth soiled his beard and half his face.

Yet his expression was very calm.

In contrast, Matins and the other two Phoenixes appeared much more sorrowful.

It was then that Schneider spoke up, “Why such a look?”

His voice was weak and strained. Excessive blood loss and organ destruction had allowed a great deal of blood to fill his lungs, making even breathing difficult, let alone speaking.

But from his voice, one couldn’t hear too much pain; he sounded very calm.

The warriors beside him did not speak, nor did they stop Schneider from continuing. Logically, since he was nearly certain to die, they felt it was only right to let him speak his last words.

“Don’t look so sad; isn’t this our destiny? Is there really any interstellar warrior who can serve a certain term and retire peacefully? Dying on the battlefield is our inevitable end; it comes for all of us eventually.”

“My only regret is that I won’t get to see the revival of our war group.”

“Matins, to be honest, I have never accepted you as the leader of the war group. I’m stronger than you, more ruthless, more decisive, more like a tough warrior, yet the leader chose you to succeed him. Even now, it still bothers me.”

“Since you became the leader, I’ve disagreed with almost every decision you’ve made. Sometimes I genuinely thought those decisions were indecisive and weak. But other times… well, I admit it was just because I couldn’t get over it, intentionally opposing you, like this time coming to Rage Owl Star to seek help from Mr. Gu.”

“On our way to Rage Owl Star, we encountered so many worlds where no one truly wanted to help us. This was one of our few options. Although Mr. Gu doesn’t even have full control over his own world, and although this world is so barren, at least everything started to look hopeful.”

“Now that I’m about to die, I must confront my inner feelings and tell you honestly: I acknowledge this Mr. Gu; I believe he really can help our war group to revive.”

“Matins, I know that since we’ve arrived at Rage Owl Star until now, we’ve already lost three brothers, including myself. This might shake your heart, after all, you’ve never been one to hold steady. But I need to tell you, don’t waver, don’t hesitate. Since we’ve made our choice, we must stand firm and keep going.”

“I…”

Matins was at a loss for words.

The person who knows you best is your competitor, and he had to admit that Schneider had indeed seen into his heart.

He did feel lost and shaken.

How long had they been on this planet? Merely two months, yet three out of seven brothers had died, including Schneider, a warrior even more seasoned than himself.

The problems on this planet were far more severe than he had anticipated. A native Evil God who had already fallen into Hell, an orc tribe that had produced a Warlord… these enemies were ones he had never considered before arriving at this star.

With things continuing this way, could the four remaining members of the war group endure until the moment of Revival City's rebirth?

What if Revival City's rebirth never arrives, and the war group perishes here?

What he hadn't expected was that the person urging him to stay resolute would be Schneider.

They say that a man's final words are often his good ones, and perhaps these were Schneider's true thoughts.

But why had he undergone such a change? Matins wanted to ask, but he was somewhat afraid to speak.

Schneider, however, seemed to see right through to the thoughts in his heart:

"I've seen Mr. Gu's troops, that army under his command. If he was able to train such a formidable army in such a short time, with heroes inside it that even I have to acknowledge, what's not to believe?"

Matins remained puzzled.

Schneider was right, but those so-called brave soldiers… truth be told, in their long history of fighting, they had seen many such units of elite troops from various empires working together in combat.

Is it really that significant?

The blood-covered Schneider, however, revealed a faint smile. He struggled to raise his hand and gestured with a crook of his finger.

Matins leaned down, bringing his ear close to Schneider's mouth.

Between the movements of his lips, Matins heard news that shocked him:

"I've been to that Secret Research Institute in Weixing City, I've seen… many black boxes."