Chapter 23 - Chapter 23: Chapter 23, The Captain’s Thoughts

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The battle by the river bend had ended.

The serfs, who had been shivering in the crude shacks and communal bunks next door, were driven out. A low-ranking officer from the Abandoned Cave Company announced to them that they had been liberated by the Planetary Governor and had gained their freedom.

Upon hearing these words, the serfs showed no reaction. These people had never considered freedom to be anything of value; they didn’t even understand what freedom meant.

Did freedom refer to the precarious life of wandering the wastelands in the past? Did it mean the biting cold and hunger when trying to eke out a living at the foot of Revival City?

They were quite free back then, free to do as they pleased, but there was no food or clothes, and every day they would see dead people— starved, sick, or killed by robbers... all sorts.

Especially in winter, it was most difficult to endure.

Compared to those times, they were quite satisfied with their current life. Although the food was poor and the work was hard, they were laborers in the fields, and their masters would not let them starve to death—at least not until they lost the ability to work.

Now, a group claiming to be subordinates of the Planetary Governor had arrived, and after a flurry of fighting, it seemed their masters were finished, and they had been liberated, regained their freedom.

But they were at a loss.

Ah? I’m free?

They were nearly moved to tears.

However, the next announcement put their minds at ease somewhat.

They didn’t know what was good about freedom, but at least they knew bread was a good thing.

A large supply of food was distributed. The serfs—who, oh, were now free people—devoured the food ravenously, having been accustomed to going half-fed every day.

While they were eating, someone announced the next set of arrangements to them.

They were no longer serfs but free citizens under the Planetary Governor’s jurisdiction. The Governor himself would personally take charge of the entire Mantan River Valley Manor, which required a large number of agricultural workers. They would be provided with room and board, and in addition, a modest bonus that would grow with production. They were free to come and go as they pleased, and those who wished to stay were welcome to take up employment.

Only a fool would not stay.

Instantly, the panic, confusion, and helplessness in the serfs’ hearts all but dissipated.

They didn’t need to understand anything more; knowing that they wouldn’t be starving or braving the cold winds was enough for them.

After they had eaten their fill, it was time for them to go out and work. Corpses had to be collected and burnt, fences destroyed during the war had to be repaired, and trampled or blasted fields had to be sorted out, to save as much of the harvest as possible.

The entire manor was bustling with activity.

After Yan Fangxu had more or less finished making arrangements, there wasn’t much else for him to do.

He gazed at the rolling hills across the river bend, lost in thought.

Using the spiritual energy user he had just encountered, or rather, the cultist, as a reference, he pondered his own future.

When he was assigned to the surface as a guard for the Planetary Governor, he originally thought his prospects had dimmed.

He remembered the day the governor was about to leave the starship and descend to the surface, seeking armed protection from Captain Yelisia. The general lady initially planned to give the governor three hundred mechanical servants, a perfunctory gesture at best.

But who would have thought that on that day, he, out of boredom, would shoot the breeze with a colleague and mention the joke about an inexperienced woman being promoted to captain and general at warp speed?

More importantly, the captain overheard it.

Before the Divine Emperor, he actually didn't have much of an issue with the female captain in his heart; it's just that his colleagues all joked about it, and he joined in casually.

But why did the captain hear it exactly when he started to speak?

Dammit!

And just coincidentally, the governor named Gu Hang was complaining that three hundred mechanical servants was a bit too few; thus, with a grand gesture, Yelisia allowed him to take thirty Navy Marine Corps soldiers with him, joining the governor's command.

Amidst the jubilant cheering and Schadenfreude of his colleagues, the young Navy Marine Corps captain could only lead thirty men down to the surface.

He was in despair, seeing life as bleak.

Everyone knew that the governors of Rage Owl Star were consumables every two years. As a mere captain who had offended the captain and was cast down to the surface, it amounted to exile. Even if he protected Mr. Governor well, the latter was bound to be executed for failing to submit taxes eventually. He would also waste two fruitless years on Rage Owl Star, making no progress.

But he still had to fulfill his duties. On one hand was the sense of responsibility as a soldier; on the other was the fact that it was one thing for the governor to be executed by the Department of Taxation, but quite another if he died under his protection, which would greatly increase his accountability.

As for the lord governor ultimately managing the taxes and securing the position of Planetary Governor, leading the planet's revival, and later being grateful for his minor help from early on, becoming his backer and enabling his meteoric rise?

He had dreamed of that, but when awake, he dared not think about it.

Of course, he hoped the future would be like that, but it was too improbable, especially since His Excellency the governor was entertaining wildly impractical hopes. He wasn't planning to start by quickly taking over the alliance's government to find a way to get the taxes but was thinking about developing his territory from scratch... Divine Emperor above, where would you find the time for that?

On second thought, what did it matter to him? After all, it wasn't himself who would be executed when the time came.

Then, as time went on, he began to feel more lively. Thoughts that only surfaced in his dreams when he first landed on the planet started to sporadically bubble up during his waking moments.

Could Gu Hang really succeed?

The reason for thinking this way was certainly not just because Governor Gu Hang always appeared in control. He had seen many posers; he did not know, nor did he want to confirm, whether the governor was one of them.

He didn't want to judge by attitude; he only believed in facts.

The fact was that the governor was a rare spiritual energy user who would join the soldiers in combat. They had won two battles and taken two camps. These results were not significant enough to save anyone's life, but the governor was indeed pushing his plans forward.

Moreover, Lord Governor somehow acquired two Black Box Manufacturing Machines. Those magical devices, the Empire Mechanical Church would probably pay a hefty sum to purchase.

These performances gave him more confidence in the lord governor, beyond just a sense of duty, especially regarding those two black boxes.

It seemed, might there be some hope after all?

And today, he met a spiritual energy user with the governor. At first, he thought that Wohan was just an ordinary spiritual energy user, but according to the governor's judgment, he was a member of a Heretic Cult.

Cults, heresies... these make for very good enemies. If that so-called 'Primal Owlbeast Sect' was firmly identified as a Heretic Cult, then the credit for eliminating them would not be small.

But he still had doubts. Was it really a 'cult'?

Was it some fabrication by the lord governor, a pretext to seek more assistance, or was it real?

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I've been caught off-guard; chapters 22/23 were supposed to be for tomorrow, I set the timer wrong...

Consider it an extra update for today, guys! Two more will come as usual tomorrow.

My manuscript buffer took a hit...

If you haven't read chapter 22, you can go back and check; it's already up.