Governor 231

Chapter 231: The Death of the Military Governor (6k, please subscribe!)_4

Heh, isn't that a way down?

The metal structure there had turned red, the power of the melter cannon was fierce.

After a little while, when the temperature wasn't so high, he carefully approached the side of the large hole with an approximate diameter of 1.2 meters.

The hole wasn't this large at the beginning, it just melted to this size in a matter of seconds.

He poked his head out of the hole and took a glance downward, spotting a starship trooper clad in red powered armor, with a skull helmet, lying at the foot of a gigantic steel Green Skin, and another trooper, who seemed to be chopping with a chainsaw sword but was blocked by a hand.

He recognized them, the two starship troopers belonged to the Phoenix Battle Group. Though he had only caught a glimpse of them from afar on the battlefield outside Rubbish Town, the impression they left was simply too profound.

But even such starship troopers were embroiled in a tough battle, how terrifying was that immense Green Skin giant?

However, it seemed that the giant had met his match. One of his hands was held up with an axe, unable to chop down, the other blocked the chainsaw sword…

Witnessing this scene, Lacroix hesitated for a second, or maybe two.

Then, he made a decision.

I’m really not cut out to be an officer, just a soldier.

And as a soldier, what should I do now?

He took out the personal melter bomb he had picked up earlier, tore off the adhesive protective cover on the back, and disengaged the safety, seeing a countdown with red numbers appear.

Next, he leaped down through the hole with the bomb in his arms, landing right on the shoulder of the Green Skin Orc.

His weight of seventy to eighty kilograms falling on the massive Green Skin didn’t make him budge an inch. Of course, he hadn’t expected to squash his opponent to death with a landing blow, but he acted quickly, sticking the personal melter bomb onto the giant’s bloody chest, then lost his balance and tumbled down from its shoulder, crashing to the ground in disarray.

While still dazed, he felt a tremendous force from behind his neck, as a large hand grabbed the collar of his clothes and dragged him backward on the run; amidst the whirling chaos, he also saw the previously fallen starship trooper at the feet of the Green Skin giant being pulled back by an invisible force, flying away.

After a while, he heard an explosion.

So this is the sound of a melter bomb exploding? First came a crackling sound, followed by a dull thud, and then a bubbling noise…

When the force pulling his collar ceased, he ignored the pain of his raw back, half rose to his feet, and looked into the distance. He could see the steel giant turned a fiery red color. Its limbs and head were still intact, but inside the previously destroyed chest armor, it appeared as if there was a continually burning red sun, emitting light outward.

The power of the melter bomb triggered an extremely high temperature that expanded outwards. The steel armor on the body of the Beastman Overlord was considered one of the most advanced technological marvels of the Iron-Tooth Clan, not so easily melted, but its flesh and blood were another story.

In an instant, its chest and abdominal cavities were almost incinerated.

The giant's huge body twitched futilely a few times and then fell still.

Lacroix stared at the scene, somewhat dumbfounded.

Suddenly, his view was obstructed by a large shadow.

Looking up, he saw the person who had just dragged him back by the collar—the starship trooper brandishing the chainsaw sword.

The trooper patted his head and said, "You're a hero. Can you tell me what you were thinking before you jumped?"

"Uh…"

Lacroix was still a bit stunned, and he didn't know how to answer the question.

What was he thinking the moment before the jump? He wasn't thinking anything, but his mind wasn't blank either. If he had to give an answer, it would be when he rode the transport ship, gazing back at his home Rage Owl Star in the starry space, and when on the Quintet, lying in an extremely narrow and confined cabin, his thoughts always meandered to that utterly insignificant question:

"I was thinking about the value of life."

He answered the trooper's question quite seriously.

Chapter 232: Naval Battle Settlement

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When Gu Hang opened his eyes again, dozens of minutes had passed, and the battle at the crossroads had ended.

The soldier from the 3rd Independent Regiment, who had descended from the sky and used a thermite bomb from who knows where to kill the Beastman Overlord, prompted Gu Hang to release the telekinetic control over Kuangya. Instead, he employed Spiritual Energy to pull the priest, who was barely hanging on to life and unconscious, forcefully to the rear to prevent him from being affected by the thermite bomb blast.

At the same time, he also saw Matins, while retreating swiftly, did not forget to drag that heroic soldier back with him.

Next, he witnessed Kuangya melting from the chest up, where his armor had completely failed, and then the orc was burned through from the inside out.

Although many Green Skin Orcs were still alive on the battlefield when Kuangya died, their threat level dropped dramatically once their strongest leader was dead, which is characteristic of Green Skin Orcs. Without their leader, they began to disperse and fight on their own. Moreover, Kuangya’s influence on the Green Skin Orc assault group was immense; without him to withstand countless attacks and kill various infantry and armored units, the remaining Greens Skins, even the Murder Can and the Dread Iron Can, fell far behind in combat strength.

The armored personnel carriers began to advance slowly in the eight-meter-wide corridor, with the infantry orderly using them as cover and a firepower platform to attack the enemy. An infantry battalion that had flanked from the south side of the intersection caught the Green Skins, now in disarray and weakened in their will to fight, off guard. The rocket launchers fired round after round, with the explosions’ destructive power magnified in the narrow passage.

Moreover, even though Gu Hang himself could no longer maintain his combat strength due to the overload of Spiritual Energy, and Priest Rizzo was in the same condition, there were still three starship warriors left. They turned into super soldiers on the battlefield, taking on a role similar to that previously played by Genie Kuangya.

Perhaps, even Matins, the nominal leader of the battle group, only had the prowess of a squad champion and was badly equipped, far from the strength of the Beastman Overlord. However, they had the advantage of being three men and, compared to the Green Skin Overlord, they were more calculated, rational, and very adept at coordinating with the Mortal Troops in combat.

They would not use their powered suits to directly withstand the enemy's fiercest firepower; they knew when to step in and help the infantry when they encountered difficult situations.

Overall, the battle was essentially over, and they had won the final victory.

Although the troops under Gu Hang's command also suffered tremendous casualties, it was still fine because they won.

Having witnessed this moment, he felt relieved enough to pass out.

The excessive use of Spiritual Energy had left him with a splitting headache.

However, he didn't faint for long. It was just for dozens of minutes, which didn't really affect anything significant.

Upon waking up again, he felt much better. Although still a little shaky and not daring to use Spiritual Energy, fearing it would make his head hurt more, he could at least move normally without any major problems.

At this moment, the battle was essentially over, and his soldiers were clearing the battlefield.

The Green Skins who hadn't completely died were finished off with a few gunshots or had their brains thoroughly scrambled with a bayonet thrust into their heads;

If they encountered their comrades-in-arms, the bodies were properly collected; for those blown too badly to even separate from each other's corpses, they could only bring back a head. If even the head couldn't be brought back, then there was nothing more to be done.

However, one thing was certain to be retrieved—the soldier's armband, which bore the number of the soldier's unit and their own soldier number.

Through this, one could identify the soldier's identity from the military administrative structure set up by Tadeusz.

All the soldiers who died bravely deserved to be remembered.

Then Gu Hang found the corpse of the Green Skin Overlord; he called Matins over and asked him for a favor: to sever the orc overlord's head.

The head hadn't been completely burned by the thermite bomb, which was good.

Carrying the head, he went to the starship's bridge command center, accompanied by two starship warriors.

As for the other two starship warriors… Rizzo had already been taken to receive treatment by another warrior.

…

Quintet's bridge command center.

Yelisia was still mostly focused on commanding the starship in battle. She had to constantly monitor the movements of enemy ships and keep an eye on the Quintet's overall condition.

However, during this process, part of her mind was always on the battle that had broken out inside the starship.

After the Navy Marine Corps assembled their main force in an attempt to stop the enemy's advance but ended up getting wiped out, a great panic had already enveloped her.

What she feared most was that in the midst of battle, her starship would explode from the inside.

Yelisia knew that Gu Hang's troops had the support of four starship warriors. Of course, she had high hopes for these Angels of The Emperor.

Yet, thinking rationally, could four starship warriors really win against a Beastman Overlord?

She dared not ponder too deeply on this question, fearing that the result would be too desperate to bear.

Chapter 233: Naval Battle Settlement_2

She could only focus all her attention on commanding the naval battle.

During this time, she had destroyed another Green-Skin Destroyer, and an Escort Ship of the Green Skins had been blown up by the firepower from the Beautiful Lady.

Of the two Escort Ships in the Beautiful Lady Convoy that had been invaded by jumpers, one had returned to normal, while the other had its Void Shield shut down and was subsequently destroyed.

But overall, the enemy still had one Destroyer and two Escort Ships left.

The remaining strength, even just by the Quintet alone, was more than enough to wipe them all out.

Under normal circumstances, such as during drills at school in the past simulations, she would be opening champagne by now, celebrating victory with her colleagues in the command team.

But she dared not now.

On one hand, this was the first real naval battle she faced; she dared not take it lightly, not until all the Green-Skinned Warships were truly destroyed.

The stakes of this battle were immeasurably higher than any drill or simulation she had experienced before.

On the other hand, the huge threat inside the Starship had not been resolved.

And just then, news arrived.

Gu Hang was back and headed straight to the bridge.

“So what’s the exact situation? Did we win or not?” Yelisia asked.

“I…I don’t know.” The naval officer who delivered the message was sweating profusely, “Mr. Gu didn’t say.”

Yelisia slapped her hand, wanting to curse.

Rationally, if they hadn’t won, Gu Hang wouldn’t dare to come over playing coy like this.

It must be a victory.

But without a confirmed message, how could she feel at ease?

In the end, she could only say resentfully, “Let him in.”

No sooner had she spoken than, just a minute later, the door to the bridge command center opened.

Immediately after, a huge head rolled in, like a wheel tumbling in.

Yelisia was startled, the thick stench of blood filling her nostrils almost made her vomit.

She was a military officer, a captain; she had seen her share of dead bodies, but… as someone of her noble status, she rarely set foot on the bloody battlefield herself. Most of the brutal battles were represented before her as reports, a string of numbers, at most some footage to view.

There was no need for someone like her, a high-born noble from a naval family, an esteemed Imperial Navy Commodore, to personally risk her life, was there? Even the service pistol at her waist was merely ceremonial.

But even so, she did not scream.

She braced herself, carefully examining the head that had rolled to the front of her command table.

It was the head of the Beastman Overlord.

She was certain of it.

Looking up, she saw Gu Hang with a pale face but a proud smile, accompanied by two Star Warriors, striding forward.

Standing before the Overlord's head, Gu Hang said to Yelisia on the command platform, "I told you, this is the start of our path to glory."

Yelisia's face also bloomed with a brilliant smile, the blood's foul scent in her mouth and nose turned sweet.

She would welcome the bloody scent of such an important enemy, even if unpleasant, wanting to savor it more.

"Mr. Gu, you are a hero."

It seemed she no longer minded that Gu Hang had subtly threatened her with the Rage Owl Star Troops boarding the ship before the battle.

It was not her magnanimity, but rather victory could overshadow all discord.

The war was won, the benefits to her were incalculable. She not only didn't mind Gu Hang's earlier threats, but from the bottom of her heart, she was grateful that Mr. Gu helped her to strengthen her resolve.

If she had missed out on this merit, that would have been a great pity.

…

The death of the Beastman Overlord was a significant piece of good news. She finally didn't need to worry that, amid the fighting, her own starship would explode from the inside out.

Had it not been for the ongoing space naval battle outside the starship, with Green Skin ships still charging, she certainly would have prepared a welcoming ceremony in line for the soon-to-return Gu Hang.

Now she could finally devote all her attention to commanding the naval battle. With the unease swept from her mind, she commanded the fight with a buoyant spirit and a settled heart, feeling even the gunfire became more accurate and fierce.

In contrast, upon noticing that the fighting inside the 'Quintet' had calmed and the entire ship was no longer in chaos or affected by disorganized combat, the remaining few ships of the Green Skin Fleet seemed to realize that their leader had really gotten themselves into trouble this time.

Despite the lack of concrete news, they still started to show hesitation. They didn't flee but stopped charging, hesitantly exchanging fire with the Quintet and the Beautiful Lady that had caught up from behind at a certain distance.

This was obviously a losing strategy.

After another main destroyer was destroyed, the remaining three Green-Skin Frigates lost even the courage to continue fighting and directly chose to flee.

But by the time they thought of escaping, it was already too late to run away.

The Quintet chased after them, taking advantage of the long-range firepower to start picking them off one by one.

In the end, as the three Green-Skin Frigates activated their jump drives, desperately trying to escape into the Star Realm Tunnel, their propulsion failed, their Shield System failed, and they were all blown up before the jump could even begin.

Destroying Green Skin ships was not a painful ordeal.

The Green Skin Orcs' starships were usable only to them. For humans, even if captured, they were just a pile of junk, totally inoperable and beyond understanding how such a heap of rubble could navigate stably through space.

After all of the Green Skin warships were eliminated, combat results popped up in Gu Hang's view.

[A resounding victory, earned 1401 points of grace]

[Naval part: Lost 2, Destroyed 12]

[Beautiful Lady Convoy (Allied): Lost 2, Destroyed 2]

[Imperial Navy (Allied): Lost 0, Destroyed 10]

[Ground combat part: Lost 13,468, Killed 2,623]

[Beautiful Lady Convoy (Allied): Lost 5,569, Killed 823]

[Imperial Navy (Allied): Lost 3,763, Killed 508]

[Phoenix Battle Group (Allied): Lost 0, Killed 63]

[Rage Owl Star Troops: Lost 4,136, Killed 1,229]

…

This battle's settlement page was a bit special, with the naval part being settled separately, and the destruction of ships had almost nothing to do with Gu Hang.

However, the ground combat was more closely related to him.

The damage from the orcs' boarding and combat was substantial. Those who boarded were elite forces. The reason the Beautiful Lady Convoy suffered over five thousand losses was that an Escort Ship had been nearly massacred after being boarded. As the fight dragged on, many sailors were as good as unarmed, so the casualties were bound to be high.

The Quintet had elite ground forces and numerous armed sailors. But the biggest loss came during the attack led by Genie Kuangya, as too many people died without inflicting significant casualties on the Green Skins.

Only Gu Hang's battle yielded a relatively better casualty ratio, mainly because heavy firepower couldn't be used. He could only fight the Green Skins hand-to-hand, which was a disadvantage, coupled with the many extra casualties paid to kill the Beastman Overlord.

The battle was actually quite short-lived, especially when compared to the nearly two-month battle at the High Tower Ruins, where the annihilation of the Green Skin Tribe took place. This battle, particularly the ground combat, probably only lasted a few hours in total.

But the intensity of the battle was immense.

Based on Gu Hang's estimates, just looking at the Green Skins killed, the awarded grace points should be in the hundreds. Even if those Green Skins were more elite, with quite a several killing machines and terror tanks and the like, they shouldn't be in the thousands.

That was according to the ratio worked out in the settlement of the battle at the High Tower Ruins. In that two-month campaign, his forces killed fifteen thousand Green Skins and only earned a little over two thousand grace points.

However, this time the thousand or so kills earned thousands of grace points.

The biggest difference was probably due to that Beastman Overlord's head.

At this point, Gu Hang still had to feel fortunate that the one who got the final kill was Lacroix, one of his soldiers.

If the final kill had been taken by Matins, then the victory would've been credited to the allied forces that didn't award grace points, and the settlement would probably result in many fewer grace points.

"I must award that lad a heavy medal!"

Chapter 234: Victory and the Fruits of Victory are Not Always the Same Thing

As Wang Jiarong sat on the spaceship heading towards the Quintet, the sensation of surviving a disastrous ordeal still lingered in her mind.

When the Green Skin Orcs' fleet emerged from the jumping point, she really felt everything was over, with the probability of escaping being less than one percent.

The appearance of the "Quintet" was truly a deliverance from fate.

Upon calming down, she knew this was no coincidence.

The universe being so vast, it would be extremely coincidental for the Quintet to happen to be jumping away from the Rage Owl Star System to Korolya via the Star Realm Tunnel and then happen to encounter their Beautiful Lady Convoy leaving the Star Realm Tunnel, only to be caught up to by the Green Skins… How low would that probability be?

It must have been that the "Quintet" received some information, then deliberately waited here. They already knew about the Green Skin Orcs' fleet appearing; this could also explain why the Quintet was in stealth mode, then using the element of surprise, fired its weapons full force, instantly destroying an enemy mainline destroyer.

She had no intention of blaming the Imperial Navy.

Communication becomes extremely difficult when inside the Star Realm Tunnel, which is normal.

Upon boarding the ship and meeting Colonel Yelisia, Wang Jiarong quickly stepped forward and embraced the female captain.

"Colonel Yelisia, sister, thank you so much. If not for you, I would have been doomed this time."

Her gratitude was sincere.

There was a reason she called her "sister." They both knew each other, having mixed in the upper circles of Capital Wing Star in the Star Sector Capital when they were younger, so they had some interaction.

As they grew older, both had their own life experiences. Like most of the Fufana Family's offspring, Yelisia went to the Naval Academy, and with her direct lineage and outstanding achievements, she became a representative of the younger generation, the youngest captain.

Wang Jiarong, on the other hand, did not belong to a particularly powerful family, but had a very formidable aunt who married into the Gu Family.

Tianma the Gu Clan was rooted in the Tianma Star Sector, and their reputation had spread across several neighboring Star Sectors in recent years, mainly because they were an important member of the Empire Commerce Guild, owning several large-scale interstellar caravans and many smaller ones, with considerable financial strength.

With her aunt's connections, and also investing some money from her own family as shares, she used the Gu Commercial Fleet's name to establish her own small caravan, which had been quite successful over the years.

Since everyone had grown up and embarked on their own paths, Wang Jiarong and Yelisia hadn't seen or contacted each other for many years.

Unexpectedly, by a twist of fate, they met here today, and their respective identities matched up perfectly: the Imperial Merchant Fleet was raided by alien pirates, and the Imperial Navy quickly stepped in to rescue the merchant fleet from peril.

After a brief embrace and another use of "sister" to try and bring them closer, Wang Jiarong gestured to her entourage who accompanied her here, bringing forward three cases.

"A modest gift, as a token of appreciation," said Wang Jiarong with a light smile, "and when we return to Flying Wing Star, a more generous gift will be sent to express our thanks."

She knew how to conduct herself.

Although fighting pirates and aliens was the duty of the Imperial Navy, she was rescued after all, and obligations needed to be fulfilled.

This was also a way of developing closer ties.

"This is our duty as soldiers," Yelisia said while accepting the gifts without any ceremony.

Of course, she didn't open the cases right there and then.

There was no need to; it would seem too petty.

She also trusted that Wang Jiarong wouldn't be so clueless.

After chatting briefly, Wang Jiarong's gaze naturally turned to Gu Hang, who was standing by her side.

"Cousin."

"Hmm," Gu Hang responded with a nod.

The interaction between them was somewhat cold.

This shouldn't be.

In Gu Hang's memory, there was indeed an image of this cousin.

Her aunt, who married into the Gu Clan, was Gu Hang's biological mother.

When he was younger, his father died early, so he didn't play much with his Gu Family cousins and instead spent more time with his maternal uncle's daughter, Wang Jiarong. The two had a fairly good relationship.

Wang Jiarong's original trading route did not include Rage Owl Star. She came here because Gu Hang contacted her through the Quintet's communication system. She then brought a batch of goods that Gu Hang specifically requested, along with some typical bulk merchandise, planning to make a trip to the remote Rage Owl Star System.

She had even made up her mind that for this trip, she wouldn't earn anything and was just doing her cousin a favor.

If it weren't for the close relationship and the connection of having an aunt/mother, who would do such a thing?

But unexpectedly, instead of not making a profit, she was now at a significant loss.

Losing two escort ships, with the remaining two including Beautiful Lady, all had significant damage, and repairing the ships would also cost a considerable amount of money.

This loss was not something a small business venture could compare to.

To earn back this money, she would probably have to run for many years.

For this reason, Gu Hang could understand why Wang Jiarong didn't show him any favorable expression.

They may have had a good relationship, but this trip to the Rage Owl Star System had cost her too much.

Gu Hang did feel guilty.

But not much.

Upon reflection, he couldn't blame himself. He wasn't intentionally trying to trip up his cousin. He had no idea about the Green Skin Fleet approaching when he sent out the invitation.

Chapter 235: Victory and the Fruits of Victory are Not Always the Same Thing_2

This is like asking a friend to give you a lift in a taxi, and then there's an accident. You can't blame the passenger for wanting a ride, can you? Plus, I did my best to rescue the people in the car.

I'm not a Prophet. Who could have predicted that calling a convoy would result in a Green Skin Fleet lying in wait in the Star Realm Tunnel?

If it were just ordinary pirates, it would have been fine. Typical pirates might have a few shoddy ships at best. Her convoy had three escort ships, and including the firepower of the Beautiful Lady itself, handling small-time pirates would have been a piece of cake.

However, by pirate standards, the Green-Skinned Fleet that appeared was enormous. It would take terrible luck to encounter such trouble.

Furthermore, upon receiving the intelligence, Gu Hang immediately began thinking of a solution. This was certainly to save his own planet, but also to rescue his cousin's convoy.

I can't be blamed for what happened. I tried hard to find a solution when things went awry, and I indeed saved you.

Thinking about it at this level, most of Gu Hang's guilt dissipated.

Still, it was only right to compensate my cousin for her losses.

When Wang Jiarong boarded the ship, Yelisia and Gu Hang welcomed her. After their initial interaction, they moved to a reception room to continue their in-depth discussion on post-war matters.

In the reception room, there was a table with three chairs around it where the three of them sat.

There was no particular arrangement regarding the seating order signaling any hierarchy.

Yet, it was Gu Hang who spoke first, "The war has ended, but the matters after the war are equally important. Victory doesn't erase the losses. We need to seek the dividends of our victory, not let the victory become a scar."

He made an opening statement.

The two others found his words reasonable.

Victory is one thing, the fruits of victory another.

Don’t think that winning means you can enjoy the spoils. There are plenty of cases where victories end up costing more than defeats.

This battle in particular.

Fighting the Green Skins, there was no option to capture warships. All twelve Green-Skinned warships became space debris, with practically zero loot. The Beautiful Lady Convoy lost two ships, and the Quintet’s repairs would cost a great deal. Even Gu Hang, with the smallest losses, had over four thousand soldiers killed or wounded and at least forty Strider Combat Vehicles destroyed—this is roughly the monthly output of Gu Hang’s munitions factory.

If we can’t find other ways to reap the fruits of victory, then even a win would come at a blood loss.

Also, there was an unspoken implication: the fruits of victory had not only to be sought out but also divided among them.

Gu Hang spoke logically, and Wang Jiarong agreed.

However, she found it somewhat strange that her cousin was acting as if he was the one in charge, hosting the meeting.

What was more critical was that Yelisia didn’t seem to have any objection and listened intently.

“This incident was not an accident,” Gu Hang continued. “It was a premeditated, planned invasion by the Iron-Tooth Clan against the Tianma Star Sector. It included deploying spores to Rage Owl Star, attempting to infect the entire planet with greenery and use it as a springboard for invading the Tianma Star Sector. I thwarted their ground actions on the planet, and with the help of the Imperial Navy, destroyed the vanguard clan the Iron-Tooth Clan had cultivated on Rage Owl Star during the last governor’s term…”

“The Iron-Tooth Clan, unwilling to accept defeat, dispatched their main fleet, consisting of four destroyers and twelve escort ships, complete with a large contingent of ground troops, attempting a forceful invasion of Rage Owl Star. I intercepted the intelligence, the Quintet contacted the nearby Beautiful Lady Convoy, and under the authority granted by the War Act, temporarily requisitioned the convoy’s ships. We lured the Green Skin alien fleet into a pre-set ambush location and near the jump point of Tunnel One in the Rage Owl Star System, we conducted a successful annihilation battle. The entire Green Skin Fleet was eliminated, and the Beastman Overlord was beheaded.”

Gu Hang was telling a story.

The two ladies beside him listened more and more intently as he spoke.

Now, what they were discussing was the information soon to be reported to the Star Sector Government, to the Imperial Military Department.

Lying was out of the question. Inventing facts, exaggerating triumphs, concealing losses…These factual matters could not be falsified. You could gamble on the Star Sector Government not caring, or bet that the Imperial Military Department wouldn’t spot the discrepancies, but if you gamble and lose, you end up with nothing.

However, Gu Hang’s statement was not afraid of scrutiny.

On the specific facts, there was no fabrication. Indeed, a crisis of green-skinned beings proliferating occurred on Rage Owl Star, and the size of the Green Skin Tribe had indeed reached tens of thousands, with technological advancements reaching the level of possessing Killer Cans and Iron Fear Cans, and even the emergence of Green-Skinned Warlords.

Who could say that such a Green-Skin Army was a wild, primitive Green Skin?

Even if one were to perform genetic sequencing, it would undoubtedly be from the Iron-Tooth Clan.

The Iron-Tooth Clan, a large space Orc Clan within the Star Sea that has some renown, majorly operates in the Eastern Cosmos Domain. Their most famous deed is the destruction of over fifty Empire Worlds

across three star sectors. To date, they still hold those territories and have not been eradicated, with the war between humans and them ongoing.

Afterwards, the configuration and scale of the Green Skin Fleet with 4+8 was also entirety true. The ‘Quintet’ indeed pulled in the Beautiful Lady Convoy and entirely annihilated that fleet around the transition area of the Rage Owl Star System.

The general account of the engagement was factually correct, entirely based on reality. But this narrative, in comparison, was much more appealing than the bare facts.

The discovery of Green Skin proliferation on Rage Owl Star was due to biological research prior to the world’s destruction; local Green Skins sending messages into space which were picked up by the Green Skin Fleet; that marauding fleet ventured to this area; the Beautiful Lady Convoy happened upon them and got involved, accidentally attacked, then rescued by the ‘Quintet’…

What does this mean?

According to Gu Hang’s statement, everyone benefited.

The whole event was magnified into a major assault on the Tianma Star Sector by the Iron-Tooth Clan, with the vanguard defeated. This was a great military achievement, far greater than annihilating a group of Green Skin pirates.

Especially pleased with this narrative was Wang Jiarong.

Her convoy, by changing its banner, was not merely a victim or a rescued party, but became a convoy drafted to coordinate with the Imperial Navy’s operations.

And under the relevant laws, she could report her losses to the Empire Commerce Guild and the Military Affairs Department to receive certain compensations.

It's not as if she would directly receive replacement Escort Ships for the two destroyed ones, but at the very least she would receive a considerable sum of money, as well as perks such as higher-level qualifications for ship purchases, ship-buying discounts, tax breaks, and compensation…

Especially when it comes to ship-buying qualifications. Large starships aren't something one can buy whenever they wish; the Empire Government has strict restrictions on this. If handled well, she could obtain the qualifications to buy a destroyer or even a cruiser-grade vessel, and just that qualification alone, even if she doesn't use it personally and decides to sell it, would be a substantial income.

All of these taken together, it's quite possible not only to recover all her losses but also to make a hefty profit!

At the same time, Yelisia was set to gain the most profit.

Or in other words, in this battle her and her 'Quintet' were undeniably the main force. No matter how the spoils of victory were divided, she wouldn't miss out on taking the biggest share.

The Iron-Tooth Clan's vanguard fleet invading the Tianma Star Sector, consisting of twelve naval ships, was completely obliterated by her leading a small convoy. She was the supreme commander, the absolute main force in battle; her decisive judgment, extraordinary strategy, and impressive military achievements were all out in the open.

She advantageously thwarted the Beastmen's assault and inflicted a devastating blow on the Orc naval forces.

The 'Quintet' took damage? What of it? The Military Affairs Department would pay for the repairs, which could hardly be considered her responsibility, but rather a merit.

With the Fufana Family's influence in the Imperial Navy, she was set to be promoted to a rising star general.

With just her military academy and drill performances, she could become a provisional general, a starship captain. Now, with her stunning wartime achievement laid bare, her rapid promotion to a true general was certain. Even more so, this would pave the way for even further advancement in her future.

A promotion to major general within a year, then with a few more years and ample experience, aspiring to take the position of Fleet Commander for the Tianma Fleet was not beyond hope.

And Gu Hang could also reap considerable benefits by virtue of eradicating the surface vanguard, providing important intelligence, and participating in the star battle to solve the Beastman Overlord—all being three significant merits.

Chapter 236: Gu Hang's Past

Compared to those two ladies, what Gu Hang could obtain was relatively little.

But he was content.

The Iron-Tooth Clan's raiding fleet was originally targeting Rage Owl Star. By involving the Beautiful Lady Convoy and the Imperial Navy, it was like solving a massive problem for him, one that he couldn't have resolved by himself.

That was the biggest gain.

And the thousands of grace points seemed like an incidental benefit, taken for granted.

However, Gu Hang would still strive to secure more additional rights for himself.

Eliminating the surface vanguard, providing important intelligence, taking part in space battles to take down the Beastman Overlord… The Planetary Defense Force of Rage Owl Star made such a great contribution in this war and suffered heavy losses; shouldn't the Military Affairs Department consider issuing some more advanced equipment to cope with the possible future wars?

Even more, Gu Hang was contemplating something:

Now, with definitive intelligence involving a giant like the Iron-Tooth Clan possibly launching a massive attack on Tianma Star Sector, they have de facto sent out a vanguard fleet.

Thus, the Empire needs to strengthen the defense forces on Rage Owl Star, right?

In addition to stationing a starship, deploying a certain number of land forces, stationing an actual Star Realm Army Corps would be quite reasonable, right?

Oh, the Star Realm Army is stretched thin? Can't temporarily draw a sufficient force?

No worries! I, Gu Hang, the Planetary Governor of the Empire, The Emperor's most loyal subject, will certainly take on the Empire's worries.

This matter, leave it to Rage Owl Star.

As the Planetary Governor, Gu Hang will fully support the construction of the Star Realm Army.

With just ten million tax currency, a group army of hundreds of thousands, equipped with various heavy weapons, can be established on Rage Owl Star.

The people and the equipment will all come from the planet.

And Governor Gu Hang, due to his outstanding performance in the last war, could become the corps commander of this Star Realm Army.

But this point is very difficult to arrange. A Planetary Governor doubling as a Star Realm Army corps commander is not unprecedented, but it's quite rare.

If that doesn't work out, Gu Hang could also settle for promoting Tadeusz to that position.

And since they're establishing a new corps, the Empire will certainly provide funding.

Ten million tax currency, isn't that perfect?

Rage Owl Star was supposed to pay an Imperial tax in a year and a half anyway.

The Imperial tax quota for Rage Owl Star is at the lowest bracket. With the planet's population officially set at 50 million by the Imperial Taxation Department, it was obligated to pay an Imperial levy of five million tax currency per year, paid biennially, totaling ten million at a time.

For his first tax payment, Gu Hang only needed to pay a quarter, thanks to a concession from the Star Sector Government. Of course, the Department of Taxation wouldn't acknowledge this deal; in essence, the additional 7.5 million was paid by the Star Sector Government on behalf of Rage Owl Star to the Imperial Taxation Department.

So, the Star Sector Government's 7.5 million tax currency shouldn't be given to the Department of Taxation anymore, but should instead make a detour to my hands, directly to me, plus the 2.5 million tax currency that Rage Owl Star itself has to pay, adding up to ten million. It's very reasonable to establish a group army of over 500,000, equipped with various heavy weapons, on Rage Owl Star.

When the time comes, Gu Hang would shove all of his troops under his command into it.

After all, constructing the army was always on the agenda, and it's a major support effort. With the Imperial tax covering the cost, it's a win-win. The soldiers are my men, the officers are my men, the highest commander is my man, and the troops are stationed on the planet; at the end of the day, who gets to call the shots?

It's just a change of name.

Of course, it's not entirely without drawbacks.

The Star Realm Army is different from the Planetary Defense Force. The latter is completely subject to the Governor and only deals with internal planetary matters. The former, on the other hand, must obey orders from the Military Affairs Department. Today, if the orders are to garrison Rage Owl Star, then Gu

Hang could still use his influence to keep the entire force under control. But tomorrow, for all we know, a dispatch order might arrive, possibly sending troops to fill in on some difficult battlefield.

Could he refuse to accept the orders?

But such things are uncertain.

Not to mention that the likelihood of it happening isn't particularly high, even if I don't transform the forces into the Star Realm Army, when there's a real need, the Military Affairs Department could invoke special emergency statutes to conscript the Planetary Defense Forces into the Star Realm Army. Gu Hang wouldn't be able to stop that either.

Instead of that, it would be better to turn them into the Star Realm Army. If they are to be taken away, then so be it; after all… the money for forming the army, or the people involved, can be considered as purchased by the Empire with allocated tax funds.

Consider it as paying the normal tax, what would Gu Hang lose?

It's definitely more reliable than having the Planetary Defense Forces conscripted without any compensation.

Of course, all of the above are still just Gu Hang's ideas.

To turn them into reality, there's still a long way to go.

He said to the two ladies, "This is essentially about converting the reality of military victory into tangible political success, and then into corresponding economic benefits. Since everyone agrees with the approach I've suggested, what remains is to resolve some minor details."

Yelisia agreed, adding, "The overall facts are not a problem, but there are two important nuances. First, what exactly is in the intelligence I intercepted; and second, the matter of Yelisia drafting the Beautiful Lady Convoy into battle in the name of the Imperial Navy needs real evidence."

Wang Jiarong said, “The latter issue is relatively easy to resolve. Sister Yelisia, you can sign a retroactive conscription order on paper, claiming it was signed afterward; at the same time, we need to create a communication record that shows I accepted the Navy’s conscription from the start of the battle, and all actions taken after emerging from the warp point were aimed at luring the Green Skin Fleet into the predetermined battle location.”

Chapter 237: Gu Hang’s Past_2

Gu Hang similarly said, “I’ll handle the interception of relevant intelligence in the ruins on the surface.”

They began to meticulously discuss how to patch things up and ensure all details could withstand scrutiny.

In truth, most of this work was likely futile. As long as there were no issues with the broader facts, these details would probably not be scrutinized by the Military Affairs Department. If they had to deploy specialized inspection teams to verify every detail of each battle, they couldn’t possibly keep up with the countless wars happening across the stars at every moment, even if the Military Affairs Department worked to death.

Sometimes, even when the Military Affairs Department knew there might be issues somewhere, they couldn’t be bothered to deal with them.

As long as things were more or less accurate, without fabricating military achievements or inventing facts in major matters, that was sufficient.

As for what happened after reporting their achievements, the three of them tacitly refrained from discussing further.

How Wang Jiarong would operate to compensate for her losses, and perhaps even make a large profit, was a matter for her and the Gu Family backing her.

How Yelisia and the Fufana Family behind her would package her as a star of the Imperial Navy was their concern too.

And for Gu Hang himself, to turn the things he envisioned into reality, he had to find his own way.

These matters didn't need to be communicated with each other. With their major contributions confirmed, how they seized political advantages was down to their own skills.

…

Gu Hang had a lengthy in-depth conversation with the two ladies.

They said there were only some details that needed to be supplemented, but even these details had to be perfected.

The Imperial Military Department had only a very small likelihood of checking, and even if they did check, they probably wouldn't be too thorough; as long as they confirmed that a group of Green Skins had been slaughtered on the surface, that twelve Green Skin ships had been destroyed at the jump point, and that the severed head indeed belonged to a Beastman Overlord, that would be the end of it.

But even for that tiny probability, they wanted to do things as well as possible, to avoid even the slightest chance of mishap.

Once they had agreed on everything, what remained was for each of them to execute their parts.

And after Yelisia left first, only Gu Hang and Wang Jiarong, the siblings, were left in the small drawing room.

They fell silent for a while.

Actually, by this time, Wang Jiarong was no longer so upset about the losses.

Though the merchant fleet was registered in her name, it was essentially the property of the Gu Commercial Firm. She was the commander, a shareholder, and a leader. It wasn't her fault that they

suffered such significant losses; they were targeted by an overwhelming force of pirates, so her guilt would not be particularly heavy.

Her status within the firm would decline, and her own investment would take a big hit, which was to be expected, but it wouldn't ruin her completely.

Moreover, following the new explanation given by her cousin, she might well turn her losses into profits, even a substantial one, so everything would be recovered.

The incident itself couldn't entirely be blamed on her cousin.

With several factors combined, she really couldn't stay mad at her cousin, who she had grown up with since childhood.

But she couldn't seem too intimate either.

The main reason was another matter.

She sighed and said, "Cousin, actually… Auntie really misses you."

"Oh," Gu Hang replied with a word.

He had no other implications. From the memories of his former self, he could envision the figure of a beautiful woman. However, in his perception, the former self's deep feelings for his mother were quite ambivalent.

Love, of course, was there, but also some resentment.

Honestly, he wasn't too interested in dealing with the previous family squabbles. The things he sifted from the memories always seemed separated by a veil, a layer of cloth. They were clearly there, but the feelings were not profound. It was like watching a movie; the story was clear and even emotionally impactful, but it didn't feel like it happened to him.

Of course, he couldn't sever ties with them.

These things were etched in his mind, in his memory, indelible. Additionally, his ascent to the role of Planetary Governor was entirely due to his family's status, an identity he couldn't shed even if he wanted to.

The contradiction of feeling detached, yet unable to cut ties, manifested in his behavior as a nonchalant "Oh."

Wang Jiarong on the other side, however, misunderstood.

She sighed again, "Cousin, you can't blame auntie, she… sigh, anyway, it was your mistake this time. You shouldn't have agreed when Mister Pei Desi nominated you to become the Governor of Rage Owl Star, it has put the Gu Clan in a particularly passive position."

Gu Hang's heart stirred.

Was there more to the story?

In his memory, he was one of the core members of the Gu Family's generation; his grandfather had been the previous leader of the family, and his father should have taken his place but had died shortly after Gu Hang was born. Currently, the Gu Family didn't have a true leader.

His mother, Mrs. Wang Qi, on the other hand, was quite capable—that was Gu Hang's assessment of the beautiful woman in his memories.

A woman who, after marrying into the family and losing her husband shortly after giving birth, managed to preserve a significant amount of benefits for her own little family in the subsequent internal family struggles and became a significant force within the Gu Commercial Firm.

This was no easy feat.

However, in devoting herself wholeheartedly to her career, she inevitably neglected her son.

In the memories of his previous life, his relationship with his mother was rather indifferent; they rarely interacted, and with strict discipline, coupled with various rumors within the family, the implicit isolation by his kin, mediocre achievements, and lack of recognition… these things all contributed to the resentment at the core of his former self.

Then, a few months ago, he encountered the Star Sector leader, Mister Luo Ang Pei Desi, at an upper-class gathering.

The gap between the two was vast. One was the leader of a Star Sector, and the other just a rich second generation. But Pei Desi took the time to talk with Gu Hang carefully during a toast exchange.

According to the memories and feelings of his former self, he felt respected. Mister Pei Desi, with a cordial and gentle demeanor, praised him, recognized his yet unseen potential, and expressed hope for his future. They then talked about Rage Owl Star, saying they hoped a member of the Gu Family could take on the role of governor to solve this longstanding problem for the Star Sector.

His predecessor was not completely foolish; he could see that the Star Sector leader was somewhat conning him.

But he accepted the offer without hesitation.

From his perspective: Rage Owl Star was the source of the Tianma Star Sector, which had not paid enough Imperial Tax since its return to the Empire, constantly requiring the Star Sector Government to cover the shortfall. The decision to rebuild Rage Owl Star was made by Mister Pei Desi, and marked the expansion of the Tianma Star Sector into a ninth world, beyond the original eight.

Reclaiming territory was the main achievement that Pei Desi reported to the higher regional government when he had first become the Star Sector leader.

The nature of a Star Sector leader and a Planetary Governor, akin to a local emperor, were different. The latter was more like a lord, holding sway over military, political, and financial matters, ensuring loyalty

with Imperial Tax collection, making it difficult to challenge them; the former was more like a bureaucrat, a politician needing achievements and stories to embellish their portfolio, requiring the support of powerful Planetary Governors to secure their position as the head of the Star Sector.

However, the story of reclaiming the old land that he had told when he first took office had, unexpectedly, turned into a burden years later, mired in decades of struggle.

This wasn't merely due to the abysmal conditions and challenges in Rage Owl Star itself, but also because political rivals within the Star Sector were constantly holding things back, causing endless problems for the reconstruction efforts.

Pei Desi had had enough of this situation and was determined to resolve it.

He hoped to unite the Fufana Family and the Gu Family to tackle this problem head-on.

The Pei Desi brothers, the Fufana Family, and the Gu Family formed a solid triad within the Tianma Star Sector.

The Fufanas represented the Imperial Navy, while the Gus brought substantial financial strength. Moreover, with one Pei Desi brother serving as the Flying Wing Star Governor and the other as the political influence of the Star Sector leader, they had the complete capability to thoroughly develop Rage Owl Star.

The former Gu Hang believed himself to be the most capable person in the Gu Family identified by Mister Pei Desi.

Even fearing unexpected turns, such as another family member stealing the governorship from him, he kept silent until the appointment letter was in his hands.

And then, he bitterly experienced a slap in the face from his mother.

Chapter 238: definitely next time

Gu Hang was certain that his predecessor's greatest resentment towards his mother stemmed from that slap.

He remembered how Mrs. Wang Qi, gasping for breath after hitting him, said with immense disappointment, "How could I have a son like you? Incompetent, foolish, clueless. If it were just that, I could still ensure you a lifetime of riches. But you have the audacity to harbor ambitions that your abilities cannot back. You really aren't even one ten-thousandth of your father. You disappoint me so much."

Those words pierced his heart deeply.

His mother looked down on him.

This filled him with anger and resentment, so much so that he took a personal attendant with him and took office alone.

But he wasn't going there just to die—at least that's what he thought before.

According to his predecessor's understanding, under normal circumstances, he truly was the one meant to save Rage Owl Star from disaster.

It's true that many governors before him had died, and failing to complete the Imperial Tax collection could cost a scion of the Gu Clan his life—such was a fundamental rule of the Empire.

But he wasn't afraid.

What were those previous governors? Mere rotten fish and shrimp?

But I, Gu Hang, am the pride of destiny!

Driven by political self-interest, the Star Sector's head honcho was determined to develop Rage Owl Star; Fufana offered full support, and the navy allocated a cruiser to be stationed at Rage Owl Star, so

there wasn't much to worry about military-wise. Combined with the financial power of the Gu Family, wasn't this task bound to succeed?

Doesn't get the old lady's support?

If she doesn't support it, so be it; the Gu Family isn't dictated by Wang Qi, there are many other uncles and elders.

What's this about the Tianma Star Sector Iron Triangle?

Moreover, the appointment letter had already been issued; in the Central Empire, he was already a registered Planetary Governor—there was no turning back on this matter.

He couldn't go back on it after that slap from his mother either. As Gu Hang perused the memories, he could clearly sense that his predecessor had a thought: if I really am to die, then I'll just fulfil Mother's desires. If such a useless son dies, you'd probably be very happy.

The events that followed, Gu Hang was well aware of: he had traveled through time and space, taking the place of his predecessor on his way to his new position.

During the nearly one month journey from Flying Wing Star to Rage Owl Star aboard the starship, and the five or six months of striving to establish himself on the surface, the Gu Family had indeed hardened their hearts and hadn't provided a single penny in that half a year.

That's how things stood.

At this moment, as Gu Hang replayed the entire incident in his mind, it was quite clear that his predecessor had been set up.

The few sentences his mother scolded him with weren't really a big deal.

Mainly because Gu Hang didn't feel it personally. If you're scolded, you're scolded. After all, she wasn't scolding me… Oh, turns out she was scolding me, so, never mind.

The problem with his predecessor was significant. He could see something deeper, but not enough.

He saw that behind this incident, Pei Desi had schemed from his own political interests. He saw that the coalition of the three was strong and could resolve the issue but was too blindly confident.

Why would Pei Desi, as the chief head of the Star Sector, start his plan from someone who was relatively a nobody?

According to Gu Hang's judgment, it was very likely that Pei Desi hadn't managed to get the Gu Clan on board at all. The combined effort of the three families was probably a figment of the predecessor's imagination.

By roping in his naive predecessor, Pei Desi could incidentally drag the Gu Family into the mess. Once a core family member became a governor and the Imperial appointment was decreed, it was a done deal—you wouldn't seriously leave him unsupported, would you?

Especially Mrs. Wang Qi, this was her only son, and given her status as a widow, which was quite awkward—decades after her husband's death, her connection to the Gu Family relied on this son bearing the Gu name. By all accounts, she couldn't accept her son's failure and subsequent death as governor. Not to mention the issue of kinship, without Gu Hang, how could she directly control a branch of the Gu Commercial Firm?

A split in the family? The others in the Gu Clan would never allow it, there would be a bloodbath.

Unexpectedly, whether the Gu Family or Wang Qi herself, they truly had steeled their hearts and gave no support, leading to Pei Desi's plan to manipulate the Gu Family into backing Rage Owl Star's reclamation not only falling through but also creating huge conflict between them—this was deduced by Gu Hang himself, without any intelligence to back it up.

However, at its root, Gu Hang didn't understand: logically, the Gu Clan, supposed to be staunch supporters of Pei Desi, why would they abandon the stance of the so-called 'Iron Triangle' and not support Pei Desi's redevelopment of Rage Owl Star?

On this matter, Gu Hang lacked sufficient information to analyze further.

But according to his cousin, she might know something.

After some thought, Gu Hang decided to be direct.

He said, "In the days since my arrival at Rage Owl Star, I've achieved some results. In my spare time, I've also reflected on the whole affair. I know I've made a subtle mistake. I shouldn't have come here. But what I've never understood is, why didn't you—oh, I mean we, the Gu Clan—support Pei Desi in rebuilding Rage Owl Star?"

After Gu Hang finished speaking, Wang Jiarong looked at her cousin with considerable surprise.

Based on what she knew about her cousin, most of whatever she said would likely be wasted breath, and might even provoke annoyance. She felt obliged to speak up and offer advice because of her intermediary role.

Chapter 239: Next Time For Sure_2

But the reaction of his cousin didn't seem to show any dislike; in fact, he seemed to be listening sincerely.

This was not at all how he remembered his cousin to be.

Of course, Wang Jiarong was pleased about it.

She saw a glimmer of hope for solving the problem between her aunt and cousin.

If it were possible to mend the relationship between the two, it would be a good deed not only in terms of family relations but more importantly, the biggest issue with her aunt's power within the Gu Family was a matter of legitimacy.

Her cousin was the most natural leader of this family force, her aunt's control over it was legitimized first by her late husband, and second by Gu Hang.

The problem, however, was that, after all, her husband was deceased, and the longer he had been dead, the weaker the legitimacy of this splinter force from the family would be; plus, with her son Gu Hang, who not only had a strained relationship with her but also had accepted a task likely to get him killed…

But if the two could work together, this issue could be largely resolved.

As a result, Wang Jiarong became more serious in her conversation.

She pondered carefully and said, "I don't actually understand the business behind it all that clearly, I can only share with you my understanding."

"First, this is a losing deal, or rather, the investment cycle is too long, and the return too slow. We are in the business of trade, not a heavy-asset industry. Although the price of a spaceship is very high, fully-owned purchases are rare; most often it is a pooled investment, a joint purchase. Moreover, once a fully owned starship is bought, it can be put into operation immediately and start generating income, often paying for itself in a few years."

"But the reconstruction of a desolate planet requires such a huge investment, far greater than even a large starship. And it demands many years, continuous input, with returns that are unknown years in the future. Pouring a large amount of capital and resources into one planet would create a very heavy burden on the family and could even affect normal operations. Moreover, behind the high investment and long cycle, there is high risk—Rage Owl Star has been struggling for so many years without success, who knows if this time will be any different?"

"High investment, high risk, long cycle… these characteristics combined make the family completely uninterested in a normal investment."

“If it were as Mister Pei Desi said, that the Tianma Iron Triangle worked together, it would have been different with the other two families sharing the cost, but the reality is different. The Fufana Family contributed a cruiser, which they encouraged the Imperial Navy to dispatch as part of a mission, so they didn’t spend a penny themselves, and at most, the cruiser will stay at Rage Owl Star for two years.”

“Mister Pei Desi, the leader, has provided a Planetary Governor appointment letter, as well as political support. In theory, the value of this letter is incredibly high, equivalent to receiving an entire planet; unfortunately, it’s for Rage Owl Star, a place where whoever becomes governor is bound to meet their demise.”

“They gave these things but expect the Gu Family to pay almost the entire cost of reconstructing the planet.”

“No matter how others might measure the value difference between these three things, at the very least, the internal sentiment within the Gu Clan is one of dissatisfaction, feeling that it’s completely inequitable.”

After hearing all this, Gu Hang understood quite a bit better.

Certainly, if it was supposedly a joint effort by the three families, but you two contribute just that little and expect me to be the sucker—if Gu Hang were the family head, he wouldn’t be willing to agree either.

Wang Jiarong paused, then continued to reveal the second reason:

“And moreover, the Gu Clan has been recently repairing relations with the Fatches Family. They are the real power in the Tianma Star Sector, and in the eight major worlds of the sector, three of the governors are from the Fatches Family. They have a conflict with Mister Pei Desi and previously also had a bad relationship with us, but it has improved lately. To conduct business, we cannot ignore the Fatches Family’s three planets.”

“But they have significant interests on Rage Owl Star. You’ve been on this planet for a while now, I don’t know if you’ve heard of Blackbird Heavy Industries? This company on Rage Owl Star is essentially controlled by the Fatches Family. Before Rage Owl Star was reclaimed as an Empire World, it was a ‘no-man’s planet’ exempt from taxes, and the Fatches Family was interested in maintaining this status. They

could operate everything on the planet through Blackbird Heavy Industries without restriction and without paying taxes."

"Even, it's reasonable to suspect that they have moved a lot of their own three planets' output to Blackbird Heavy Industries, taking advantage of the special nature of Rage Owl Star to avoid taxes. Of course, this is pure speculation without evidence; otherwise, Mister Pei Desi would have used this point to finish them off a long time ago."

"Recapturing Rage Owl Star is an action of Mister Pei Desi against the Fatches Family, a battlefield in their political struggle. The Gu Family, at a critical point in mending relations with the Fatches Family, your coming here interrupted the process, destroying the family's long-term efforts and sending the relations back into the freezer."

Gu Hang nodded again, indicating that he understood.

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"Approximately these two aspects," Wang Jiarong said, "so I say, the thing you did this time, cousin, not only did aunt get very angry, everyone in the Gu Family is actually quite annoyed. Your arrival here has put even more pressure on aunt. It's not that she really doesn't want to help you, she has no choice, otherwise it would be hard to explain to the family internally. And… haven't I come?"

"Thank you," Gu Hang nodded lightly, "Your arrival was crucial. However, did my mother send you here? Or did she approve of this?"

"Umm… That's not the case, I came on my own." Wang Jiarong's face turned a bit embarrassed, but she quickly made up for it, "But aunt must have tacitly agreed, otherwise she would have contacted me by now and not let me come."

"Heh, tacitly agreed." Gu Hang maintained a polite smile on his face and didn't mock any further.

Wang Jiarong sighed, knowing that reconciling the relationship between mother and son was not that simple; she had also tried for many years with no effect, not to mention there was now an even greater conflict between the two.

Being his cousin/niece is too tough.

“Anyway, cousin, you might want to contact auntie when you have some time. Real-time communication is quite costly, and I don’t have the means here, but Quintet should have a way, just make a reservation in advance, then…”

“Forget it, forget it,” Gu Hang hastily interrupted, “Stop, let’s leave it at that. Lately, I don’t even know what to say to her.”

“You can’t just leave it at this, can you?”

“Next time for sure.”

…

Under his cousin’s regretful gaze, he ended the conversation.

He had other matters to attend to.

His troops under his command had suffered heavy casualties during their confrontation with the Green Skins who boarded Quintet.

Of the total twenty thousand people on the starship, more than four thousand were killed or wounded, exceeding a 20% casualty rate.

As the commander, Gu Hang had to go and visit the warriors.

It was also a way to win over people’s hearts, proving that the Planetary Governor genuinely cared about his comrades.

Anyway, it was better than doing nothing on the starship.

Additionally, he went to visit Rizzo.

That was only proper, as the starfighter had risked his life for him many times.

The Priest of Phoenix was in relatively good condition. It was tough taking three axe blows from the Beastman Overlord, but luckily none hit his vital parts directly—a blow to the shoulder, one to the breastplate, causing severe injuries, but at least the power armor reduced the damage. It's just that his armor set was likely beyond repair.

Gu Hang also consoled the old Priest.

"This time, the trader convoy I invited brought some new power armor, which I had someone personally purchase for you. Get well soon, and don't worry about not having power armor to wear; you'll get a brand new set!"

After speaking, Gu Hang even turned to Matins, "Commander of the warriors, you also get a share. Among the special items purchased, not only is there regular power armor for the future members of the warrior troop, but there is also a set of Terminator Power Armor, specially prepared for you, as a token of thanks for the support the troop has provided during this time."

Chapter 240: You Can't Bear to Leave Me, Can you?

Hearing about the new power armor, which included a set of Terminator Armor, Matins was also moved.

Terminator-type power armor boasts far superior performance compared to ordinary power armor.

With thicker armor, a more robust internal power system, and the ability to be equipped with heavier weaponry, it serves as a formidable long-to-mid-range fire support platform, as well as excels in close-quarters combat, offering unmatched advantages. Even the hefty pauldrons house a pair of mini shield generators, further enhancing the capabilities of the Terminator Armor.

In the days when the Phoenix Battle Group was still prosperous, among a thousand members, there were just a few dozen sets of Terminator Armor.

The Terminator Armor has two drawbacks compared to ordinary tactical armor:

First, it is expensive, and significantly more so.

Second, it is not very flexible.

Once you don the Terminator, stealthy, silent operations become quite difficult. Weighing three to four times more than ordinary armor and equipped with a shield generator, even with a neural interface and electronic muscle bundles, the Terminator Armor still hampers agility.

However, given the stronger firepower, greater strength, thicker armor, and the addition of an energy shield, the loss of some agility is wholly acceptable.

Matins couldn't help feeling sentimental: If he had had a set of Terminator Armor in that battle on the surface, Schneider wouldn't have died.

Stronger equipment is not only for one's own benefit but also to protect more of your combat brothers at your side.

Besides, he noticed that Gu Hang mentioned other power armors in his speech.

Clearly, this was to prepare for the future expansion of combat troops. They could theoretically add three members using the genetic seeds of the three brothers who had died in battle. Matins had been worried about the power armor issue before, especially since Schneider's suit was so badly damaged that it was beyond repair.

Now, there was no need to worry.

“Thank you,” he said to Gu Hang.

Gu Hang waved his hand, “I should be thanking you all.”

…

Inspecting the troops, visiting injured soldiers, and checking in on the Phoenix Battle Group, which played a crucial role.

This was what Gu Hang did on his way back to Rage Owl Star’s orbit aboard the starship.

The journey home, even by starship, took several days.

Midway through, he received a new system message: another month had passed, and the monthly fixed grace points had been distributed.

This time, the grace points increased slightly from the previous month, reaching 678 points.

The main growth came from the newly incorporated Rubbish Town. One hundred thousand workers and scavengers, totaling two hundred thousand people, contributed to a monthly grace revenue of 55 points.

There was still much room for growth. Rubbish Town had virtually ground to a halt in the last month due to the war; scavenging, raw material processing, and service industries had largely stopped, so productivity had not been fully tapped, resulting in many people but few grace points.

Now that the war had ceased, the related production was recovering, and it was expected that this figure would eventually see a significant increase.

In addition, Weixing City, Revival City, and other sporadic camps that had been reclaimed and retained, contributed some as well, totaling the number mentioned.

Once this month's 'salary' was deposited, even after deducting the 500 grace points Gu Hang had spent to raise his level to LV5, his current grace points still amounted to a substantial 4658 points!

He had only one thought: to rush back and construct the Architectural System that he had unlocked but not yet built; to draw the technology that needed to be drawn.

After spending these four thousand-plus points, the development of his territory would reach a new level.

He had never been so wealthy!

He even thought back to those conversations with his cousin.

The investment from the Gu Family?

Not necessary at all.

Why would a badass need to spend real money?

I, Gu Hang, have developed my planet to this stage all by my own efforts!

Technology panel, let's draw!

Construction panel, let's build!

To be honest, after learning all about his predecessor's life, his mother, his family, and the various politicking within the Star Sector Government from his cousin, Gu Hang didn't have many emotional reactions; he harbored neither hope nor disappointment.

At least in terms of his own development, he had never counted on help from others.

He was doing just fine on his own, with those Black Boxes that would make anyone from the Sect of Mechanics drool with envy; Gu Hang really wasn't afraid of anything else.

Just give me time and don't throw too much of a wrench in the works.

However, the problem also lay here.

Not counting on support or help from others is one thing, but not having unexpected issues is another.

His identity, the reasons for his taking office, the political machinations of various forces converging on Rage Owl Star—these were all inescapable vortices.

If he wished to develop undisturbed, Gu Hang, as the governor, couldn't afford to ignore everything.

He had to be clear about the political ecosystem he was facing.

And the information brought by Wang Jiarong provided him with significant insights.

As the leader of a mighty Star Sector, Pei Desi, needed to subdue the Fatches Family, the local power. The two factions were engaged in political strife over Rage Owl Star. The Gu Clan was initially considered part of Pei Desi's camp, and now it hadn't quite reached the point of jumping ship, but at the very least, they did not want to be so tightly bound anymore and sought to mend relations with the local power.