Governor 291

Chapter 291: Whistling In

Jason Morgan was now somewhat panicked.

At the committee meeting, inspiring morale and making those wavering members stay put didn't seem wrong to him.

But Crook Manor, as the nominal headquarters of the Mutual Aid Society, was now also the gathering place of numerous committee members. If it were really breached, there would be serious trouble.

Without a doubt, the Mutual Aid Society would fall into organizational chaos. Even if the Central Group Army were to come down south later and resolve the issue, it would take time for the Mutual Aid Society to rebuild and function effectively in its logistical role.

That would disrupt the entire plan.

However, the carnage he had just witnessed through the telescope, and the countless soldiers now retreating from the collapsed third defense line to the fourth, left Morgan speechless.

Could he say that the militia warriors hadn't fought fiercely?

Obviously not.

They understood that their homes and families in the refugee camps were right behind them. Everyone had barely survived the journey to safety here; they were conscripted as militia to defend hope.

If they fought, their families would survive; if they defended well, their families might have a chance to get to the Twin Cities and receive proper Union Citizen benefits; if they fought, those who wanted to stay in the Green Valley Region could have their own land…

Their will to fight was unquestionable.

However, the enemy's vast numbers and fierce firepower were objective facts, not something willpower alone could reverse.

Morgan had personally seen the various new types of advanced mutant beasts that military observers had introduced to him. To be honest, his legs were still weak.

Had it not been for his experience in the Green Valley Region where he had already seen many Aberrant Beasts, plus the education he had received at Loyal Heir Academy, if he were still the lowly clerk he once was in Revival City, the sight of those monsters would likely have knocked him out cold at first glance.

Yet the militia warriors had withstood significant casualties, managing to hold off from yesterday afternoon until now.

Just now, three hundred men had died before his very eyes.

The military observer sighed, "Actually, that's relatively good. This morning, when the sun had just risen and the enemy launched their first major attack—after they deployed many specially mutated high-level biochemical beasts for the first time—we were caught off guard, and lost over a thousand men at the first defense line. Following that, another five hundred at the second defense line."

Jason Morgan remained silent.

Here at Crook Manor, there were a total of five thousand soldiers, and by now, one thousand eight hundred had been lost.

The observer continued with a bitter smile, "In just one morning, we lost three defense lines; there's only one left and then it's the walls of Crook Manor. If this place falls, there will be a clear path to the two refugee camps behind, with no defensible position left…"

He didn't finish his sentence.

It was time to consider evacuation, moving people out.

Even if they couldn't evacuate everyone, and could only move a small portion, leaving the rest to fend for themselves was better than standing firm here, only to be defeated later, with hundreds of thousands potentially lost.

Jason Morgan understood the implication in the military observer's words.

However, that was a consideration purely from a military perspective.

Jason had to think about the political issues.

He had just quelled some signs of unrest within the Mutual Aid Society due to the actions of the Alliance Headquarters. But now, the imminent destruction of the Mutual Aid Society's headquarters and the Beiqing Valley Region's largest plantation—along with the tens of thousands in the refugee camps—a full-scale evacuation amidst panic, not knowing how many would die in the chaos…

What would be the political cost?

The ensuing collateral effects would have a very negative impact on the Governor's plans to reclaim the entire Green Valley Region.

He rubbed his forehead and asked, "When will the remaining five thousand people summoned from the refugee camp arrive?"

The observer sighed, understanding that Jason Morgan still wanted to defend.

He wanted it too.

Perhaps it was better this way—to be decisive rather than vacillating.

He provided an answer, "They'll be here before noon."

Jason Morgan exhaled with relief, “At least we have our first piece of good news… Now, we need a second piece. As far as I know, the vanguard of the Central Group Army heading south is Major Perbov’s troops. Can we get in touch with them? I need to know if they can change their route and head to Crook Manor first. If they can, how long do we need to hold out before they arrive?”

“We’ve already made contact. The Central Group Army is already aware of our dire situation and has ordered us to hold out as long as possible. Also, the orders for support have been sent to the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade. But…”

Upon hearing the first part, Jason Morgan breathed a sigh of relief.

That was certainly good news.

Support meant that holding out had meaning.

But the word ‘but’ that followed made his heart race.

True to form, what came after that word was never promising:

“The Central Group Army just started heading south yesterday. Even if the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade is the avant-garde, there’s a distance of over four hundred kilometers from the southern border of the Central Province here, and at the fastest, it will take them three days to arrive. Actually, the order we received from the Central Group Army is to hold out until dark tomorrow.”

“Until dark tomorrow…” Jason Morgan pondered, “With the five thousand militia arriving by noon, can we make it?”

Chapter 292: Roaring Arrival_2

“We… can only say we’ve done our utmost, the enemy won’t completely occupy Crook Manor before my death.”

“Okay, I understand,”

Jason Morgan turned and left.

He didn't return to the manor. Instead, he took a megaphone and announced the harsh reality to the nearly two thousand soldiers guarding the last line of defense outside Crook Manor's walls.

The core message, of course, was that the soldiers had to hold on until nightfall tomorrow. He promised them that help from the alliance would definitely arrive before darkness fell.

This assertion had meaning.

The morale of the soldiers was tangibly boosted.

Winning the battle on their own, beating back the aberrant beasts, might be difficult, but if it was just holding out until nightfall, then… wasn't there a glimmer of hope?

The shadow of three defeats lifted somewhat.

Having a strong will to fight is one thing, but fear of death is another. Suffering over 35% casualties without deserting was already fitting for a militia; the fact that a few words from Jason Morgan could inspire them was partly thanks to the rousing techniques and rhetoric he had learned, but more importantly, it was because the militia really was reliable.

However, despite this, the restored morale didn't last long.

When the enemy attacked again, the acidic bombs lobbed by biochemical artillery from ten kilometers away once again exploded upon their position, the militia couldn't help but waver uncontrollably.

If facing biochemical gas shells, the soldiers could temporarily wrap their faces tightly with cloth and hide behind fortifications, praying the corroding bombs wouldn't land right on them, then when biochemical artillery fire temporarily ceased, and the enemy began their frontal assault, their remaining strength was not enough to hold back any longer.

Full-fledged Pus Spewers weren't the ones Gu Hang had encountered at the edge of the forest near Weixing City, those pulled out early by the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect with a range of only fifty meters. The Pus Spewers now appearing in front had the capability to hit targets with a viscous stream within a range of two hundred meters.

They had negligible penetrating power, but their severe corrosiveness couldn't be blocked by the militia's mere cloth uniforms after contact.

Those with quick reflexes, whose skin remained untouched, could save their lives by swiftly stripping off their clothes; those slower, however, soon found their uniforms corroding and sticking to their skin, then they faced a pain intense enough to rob them of their combat ability, but not quickly enough to kill.

As more undead dogs broke through the lines, the militia couldn't hold back any more.

The fourth defensive line lasted three hours after the enemy bombardment began; it held only thirty minutes after the frontal assault commenced.

Collapse, happened for the fourth time.

And this time, it was even more disastrous.

The enemy had clearly committed significant forces to the attack. During the rout, the undead dogs that broke through became even more terrifying killers.

These quadrupedal beast-shaped monsters were far superior in speed, agility, and flexibility. They'd fall after a couple of shots, but the zombies, quick to hop and swerve, weren't so easy to hit. When overtaken swiftly by these creatures weighing thirty to forty kilograms, the soldiers were often quickly bitten to death.

Jason Morgan, observing the situation from a watchtower within Crook Manor's wall, had his face entirely ashen.

Just now, when the enemy launched a full-scale attack, he wanted to stay at the outer defense line to boost morale, but he was forcibly pulled back by the military observer beside him who fought desperately to do so.

When necessary, that person would have no problems with such actions.

That's the admirable tradition of the Red Hats—lead by example to inspire troops.

However, the collapse of the fourth line was not an issue of morale.

Never mind whether Jason Morgan staying there could indeed enable everyone to conquer the fear of death and face the battle fearlessly, even if he could achieve that against all odds, it would be meaningless.

It would only lead to the annihilation of all soldiers on that line.

Now, by pulling back, they could rely on the stronger defense of Crook Manor's wall to hold a bit longer.

That meant Jason Morgan couldn't die on the front line.

If he died, it would be a severe blow to morale.

Mr. Morgan, having realized this, could only return in bitterness, watching from the tower as the militia outside the wall kept falling, his heart in agony.

Except for those who had already fled inside the walls, almost all those still outside had been sentenced to death. Morgan couldn't even open the doors to let the surviving militia in, lest the wave of aberrant creatures might surge straight through.

Reinforcements trickling into Crook Manor from the rear were positioned atop the walls to shoot outside, helping to alleviate the pressure on the militia troops below. Those below were instructed to hold their positions and promised that they could enter after temporarily repelling the enemy's attack.

Of course, it was despairing.

“What’s this about repelling the enemy’s attack?”

By now, anyone could tell that the Aberrant Beasts’ momentum was fierce; how could we repel them?

Isn’t it obvious they’re sending us to our deaths?

Many anxious militiamen even started cursing aloud at the foot of the city.

But in the end, the worst-case scenario did not unfold.

The militiamen below, knowing full well that they had been effectively abandoned, did not choose to shoot at their comrades on the walls at this critical juncture.

There was no infighting; instead, they turned around and fought desperately against the ever-closer enemy.

First, they tried to coordinate with the friendly forces on the walls, shooting down the zombie dogs; later on, they strived to exchange fire with the approaching Pus Spewers at a distance of two hundred meters.

During this period, the enemy’s bio-artillery unleashed its power once more. The main firepower was still focused inside Crook Manor, but occasionally, bio-artillery shells would land outside, striking the remaining militiamen and causing casualties.

More and more people were dying.

At this time, even Jason Morgan had no more guilt for the decision that in essence sent the soldiers who hadn’t made it into the city to their deaths. He had been pulled down from the lookout tower. A few

minutes later, the lookout tower where he had been standing was hit by a bio-artillery shell, collapsing amidst rapid corrosion.

It wasn't just there that got destroyed; those walls, though solid in appearance and even capable of bearing soldiers to fire outward, were essentially wooden structures. Under the bombardment of the bio-artillery, they had begun to breach, with the incoming tide of Aberrant Beasts becoming more and more visible through the gaps.

What was said before?

Holding out until tomorrow night?

We won't make it through this evening!

Forget about evening—if we don't fight well enough, and the militiamen's morale slips any further, we might not even hold until noon!

Jason Morgan's heart had turned to ice.

Endless pain surged up within him.

He did not fear death now; he even longed for it.

If Crook Manor were breached, he would rather die right here than live a cowardly life.

This wasn't some training that had brainwashed him; it was his own heart, which couldn't get past that hurdle.

To watch with his own eyes as the refugee camp he had built with all his efforts over the past two months got destroyed, to see the 400,000 Green Valley refugees, who had finally found hope to live because of his efforts, get slaughtered by these Aberrant Beasts…

He couldn’t do it.

Compared to witnessing that scene, dying here was an easier choice.

He pulled out his sidearm and said to the military observer next to him, “I want to go to the front line to fight. If I have to die, I want to die in battle.”

This time, no one tried to stop him; instead, they also pulled out their guns, “I’ll go with you.”

The two of them, along with a few guards, started to move forward.

And just as they were prepared to die, they both heard a whistling sound from the sky.

Looking up, they saw three white streaks cutting through the clouds.

Squinting for a closer look, it seemed to be three green aircraft.

Flashes of light appeared, and six streaks of light flashed by. Soon after, from a distance that felt far away, a dull boom was heard.

The sound wasn’t particularly distinct, as they were on a battlefield where the noise of gunfire was endless.

However, they distinctly felt something: The enemy’s bio-artillery fire seemed to have stopped to some extent.

Chapter 293: Allied Air Force, Ace Pilot Requests to Enter the Battle!

“Ace pilot, requesting to engage!”

“Enemy spotted at twelve o’clock!”

“Commencing bombing!”

Kuchi’s excited and sharp voice kept echoing in the flight squadron’s channel.

Some wanted to complain, but in the end, there was silence on the channel.

There wasn’t much to say; everyone had long been familiar with what kind of temperament this comrade usually had.

The Allied Air Force had just begun construction and had handed over a total of eighteen aircraft. Three aircraft formed a group, making six small squadrons, barely constituting an air squadron.

Eighteen pilots, part of whom were picked from the rudimentary ranks of the Old Alliance Air Force and the rest were simply young people selected from the military.

The Wind Falcons, equipped with Anti-Gravity Engines and assisted by a primary and a secondary servo-skull, were not exceptionally difficult to fly. Of course, ‘not difficult’ refers to the basics; it wasn’t hard to fly the aircraft, take-off and landing were not an issue, vertical takeoffs and landings were possible, and with the help of servo-skulls, crashing wasn’t typical.

However, while it was easy to start flying, not falling out of the sky was one thing, but mastering it was extremely hard. The lateral and longitudinal translational capabilities, the extremely high flying speed, the complex fire control systems, the physical endurance under high-speed flight…

To fly the Wind Falcon well was indeed not easy, even with the relentless assistance of the servo-skulls.

Yet, among the people who could barely fly the planes into the sky with the help of the servo-skulls, with less than twenty hours of flying experience each, there was an oddity like Kuchi.

His flying time was not much different from the others, but everyone had to admit, there truly were such things as geniuses in this world. Although his personality was not very reliable, he just flew bolder than anyone when in the cockpit, performing all kinds of exaggerated maneuvers as if second nature.

At first, the instructor critiqued him with a manual in hand, but later they gave up—the instructor was a novice as well, with about the same flight time as everyone else, and only had a hundred or so hours of propeller aircraft experience from back when he served in the Old Alliance Air Force.

The many moves that little Kuchi, who self-proclaimed as an ‘ace pilot,’ performed, were simply beyond his capability.

Thus, they let him be, at most reminding him not to pull any stunts during missions and to carry out his duties earnestly.

At this moment, this was the Allied Air Force’s first official mission since its establishment.

Except for Kuchi, everyone felt a bit nervous.

Fortunately, the enemies the Allied Air Force was currently facing probably didn’t require them to engage in any kind of air-to-air combat or dogfight, the kind of high-difficulty maneuvers with the aircraft.

Following the navigation and with the aid of the servo-skulls, they arrived at the target site. They fired the six heavy missiles carried by the Wind Falcons, then flew over the enemy, opened the bomb bay, and dropped their bombs, thus basically completing their mission.

Those confident in themselves flew the Wind Falcons in another loop, hovering and striking the ground with the aircraft’s twin-linked autocannons and laser rotary cannons, conducting direct strikes on ground enemies; those less confident, worried about hitting allied troops or making themselves dizzy with the maneuvers, hurried back, rearming with weapons and ammunition, and checking if there were further tasks where they could be of use.

The first to arrive at the battlefield and enter the attack range was Kuchi.

His flight formation, three Wind Falcons, rapidly depleted their mounts of six heavy missiles.

Their targets were the enemy’s bio-artillery troops.

Those creatures, looking like giants with their upper bodies raised and huge mouths open as if to roar bio-artillery shells into the sky, were caught unawares by the heavy missile strikes.

Clearly, these bio-artillery creatures weren't prepared for a bombing; their formation wasn't very tight, but nearly a hundred bio-artilleries were essentially stationed at the same position.

Three Wind Falcons, with a total of eighteen heavy missiles, wiped out a third of the bio-artillerists.

These living bio-cannons were in disarray.

Some still instinctively directed their firepower towards Crook Manor in the distance, but others seemed to cower, beginning to wriggle their massive bodies in an attempt to flee.

But they failed to escape.

Their mobility and agility were indeed not commendable.

What was more, they had encountered an outrageous pilot.

Kuchi called out, instructing the two wingmen in his group to bomb the enemy's concentrated position as planned.

As for himself, he reduced the flight altitude and dove toward those bio-artillery troops.

The ten kilometers from Crook Manor to the enemy bio-artillery's position took just one minute for the Wind Falcons at their speed.

During this process, Kuchi dropped his bombs, showering down on the enemies gathering to attack Crook Manor. He also brought those bio-artilleries within the firing range of his cannons.

The range of the autocannons and laser cannons was, of course, not that short. However, Kuchi, determined to seek a more effective and precise strike outcome, descended to a very low flight altitude.

The Wind Falcon he piloted, colored in shades of aqua blue, began to spew flames of death.

The red laser cannon fire, along with the roaring autocannons, carved a lethal path on the ground. Three bio-artilleries were blasted into pulp along a straight line of attack.

Chapter 294: Allied Air Force, Ace Pilot Requests to Enter the Battle!_2

The laser cannon melted away a part of their massive bodies; 40mm kinetic cannon shells turned the rest into a mushy mess.

The other two pilots in the same flight group looked at each other wordlessly.

One of them asked in the channel, “Maybe… we should try it too?”

The other refused, “You try if you want, I’m afraid of diving at such high speed and licking the ground, a single mistake and I’ll be planting myself straight into it.”

“Fair point…” the other pilot could only regretfully give up, “Let’s just stick to dropping bombs honestly.”

The two Wind Falcons gave up on performing high-difficulty maneuvers and flew stably high above the heads of the enemy, simply dropping the bombs they were carrying.

During this process, they watched with envy as Kuchi, who had circled back around, engaged in another round of ground shooting, claiming the lives of four bio-artillery soldiers.

By now, the whole bio-artillery position had descended into chaos.

But his time to show off had come to an end.

The other five formations of Wind Falcons had also arrived by this point.

Thirty heavy missiles, with the help of servo-skull assisted fire control, hit the enemy's high-value targets with relative precision.

All the bio-artillery soldiers were history.

Kuchi pouted, feeling a bit unsatisfied.

Shooting at fixed targets on the training ground, what could be more thrilling than unleashing firepower on the enemies of humanity in an actual battlefield?

Given more time and a few more rounds, he was confident he could take out the remaining bio-artillery soldiers all by himself with just his Wind Falcon.

Unfortunately, his teammates had come to steal the kills.

The newly arrived five formations, fifteen Wind Falcons, started making strafing runs over the enemy's dense positions and dropping bombs.

Having exhausted his bombs in the earlier engagement, Kuchi could only sullenly aim his machine gun at the enemy for ground strafing.

Each ground assault dive was accompanied by a shrieking howl, followed by the bloody baptism of lasers and kinetic cannon shells over hundreds of meters in a straight line.

Round after round, Kuchi didn't count how many he'd fired, until the squadron leader called him, urging him to keep up with the formation and evacuate, only then did he stop, still longing for more.

On the return flight, passing over Crook Manor, he even flashed a 'yeah' gesture to the soldiers below—he didn't care whether they could see it or not.

…

Jason Morgan, looking up, of course, couldn't see the gesture made by the impressive pilot, it was too far and the pilot was inside the cockpit.

But that did not prevent him from saluting him.

He was the great savior!

He had heard that the Twin Cities were assembling the Allied Air Force.

In the past, he had seen airplanes too.

To his mind, whether it was the Old Alliance's propeller airplanes or helicopters, they were at best… just for show.

As for their practical use, he had not seen it.

At least, there was nothing particularly noteworthy about their combat records.

He had thought that the new Alliance's air force would be more of the same, perhaps a bit more impressive, but how much better could they really be?

However, today, he had truly realized the power of the air force.

Under the governor's rule, these types of aircraft he had never seen before were simply too fierce!

A single Wind Falcon combined the functions of a missile launch platform, fighter, attack aircraft, and bomber, and crucially, it did all these roles quite well.

He had counted, and there had only been eighteen that had come, yet their arrival had dealt a devastating blow to that wave of a hundred thousand Aberrant Beasts.

Death rained from above!

Firstly, they had almost completely eradicated the enemy's artillery forces.

The bio-chemical artillery units, with a range exceeding ten kilometers, posed the greatest threat to the militia troops.

The militia's mortars and small mountain guns were not only scarce in number but also lacked the range to hit those bio-chemical artillery units, making it very difficult to engage the enemy.

In the face of limited numbers, even if they managed to cover the distance with their firepower, they often couldn't produce significant battle results, and they would also draw a strong counterattack from the enemy.

The pressure from the bio-chemical artillery was too much, frankly speaking, since the beginning of the conflict, most of the casualties within the militia troops were caused by those highly corrosive and wide-impact biochemical shells.

After eliminating those dozens or hundreds of bio-chemical artillery monsters, the enemy firepower bearing down on Crook Manor would be significantly reduced.

Artillery is the god of war, and this holds true even for the advanced version of the Aberrant Beasts armies.

Of course, it would be good just to deal with the enemy's artillery, but that might still not be enough.

The remaining massive number of enemies were still a terrifying threat.

Then, the horizontal bombing by the eighteen Wind Falcons, although not very precise, the total of more than two thousand bombs were capable of carpet bombing the battlefield in front of Crook Manor.

More importantly, the legions of Aberrant Beasts evidently lacked experience and preparation for dealing with an air force. The dumb creatures didn't even know how to lie down when being bombed.

Previously, the vast enemy force that had brought them immense pressure had already been scattered.

Countless corpses lay on the path leading to the assault on Crook Manor.

Up to now, Jason Morgan was completely confident that he could defend the entire manor.

At the very least, holding out until dark tomorrow, until the main forces of the Alliance Army arrived, would be no problem.

Moreover, if needed, the Allied Air Force could come for another round during this process.

Having emptied their munitions, they would return for resupply and could come back. Back and forth, a trip of twelve or thirteen hundred kilometers was just a matter of a couple of hours.

Just the time for reloading munitions was a bit exaggerated; the ground crew might complain, "I've been loading missiles and shells all damn day, and you shoot them all out in just a few minutes?"

But all things considered, the problem was no longer severe.

…

In fact, even holding their ground was no longer necessary.

After the Allied Air Force squadron made their move, those Aberrant Beasts seemed to realize they couldn't win.

The remaining Aberrant Beasts retreated like the tide, back into the dense jungle.

And here, three people in green academic robes gathered together.

“The air power of the Alliance is much stronger than we imagined,” one of them said.

“However, if we hide in the jungle, the power of the Alliance Air Force should be greatly reduced…”

“Indeed, but that’s not realistic. The chairman demands we take the offensive. The plan’s start requires time, it needs more people. People won’t venture into the jungle of their own accord. But if we’re constantly under threat from aerial strikes, we simply can’t leave the jungle to take the offensive.”

“I’ve reported it to the chairman. We must quickly research anti-air, or even air force-type mutants within the society, otherwise, we can’t fight back.”

“But, it’s probably difficult to get quick results. To avoid orbital strikes, Chanter Town has been abandoned. The rear is looking for a new hidden location and also dispersing the research facilities to avoid a total wipeout. The defection of the chairman’s teacher has had a big impact.”

“That’s how it’s going to be then, we can only lay low for now.”

“But what will the Alliance do? They’ve made such a show of moving south…”

“They’re definitely heading to reclaim the entire Green Valley Region, but all they can reclaim are those plantations, those gathering places. Eighty percent of the Green Valley Region is virgin jungle, our kingdom. Does the Alliance Army dare to enter the jungle on their own?”

“It would be good if that were the case.”

…

“What? Take the offensive into the jungle?”

Jason Morgan’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“Yes,” Perbov said confidently, “I thought those brainless monsters would continue to besiege Crook Manor for a while, allowing me to eliminate part of their main force before entering the jungle. It’s a pity they fled… But never mind, once we’re in the jungle, we can wipe out these creatures just the same.”

“But why… how?” Jason Morgan asked, puzzled beyond measure.

Chapter 295 Wipe Out the Jungle

After the wave of Aberrant Beasts receded, the dire situation at Crook Manor was completely resolved.

Despite the heavy losses of the militia; despite the manor being severely damaged by biochemical cannon fire, with vast areas of corrosion left unresolved, at least the crisis of extinction was lifted.

Then, the next evening, Major Perbov—oh, now he’s a Colonel—led his Wind-Extinguishing Brigade to Crook Manor.

Jason Morgan and Perbov were old acquaintances; before the liberation of Rubbish Town in the eastward advance, during the bandit suppression operation within the two hundred kilometer expanse between Revival City and Rubbish Town, he collaborated with Perbov, who was then a Major and company commander.

At that time, the gap in their statuses was quite large.

Of course, it’s not small now either, but it has decreased since then. Although Perbov’s promotion to the most important Wind-Extinguishing Brigade commander and his rank increased by a level, Jason Morgan’s promotion speed was even faster. Although his rank isn’t high, currently a D4, he has already become the main person in charge of the Mutual Aid Society on behalf of the Alliance.

The Wind-Extinguishing Brigade's rapid march and assault required material support, which still depended on him.

And after a brief exchange of pleasantries, Perbov revealed his next plan to attack the jungle.

This shocked Jason Morgan, who felt that Colonel Perbov must be out of his mind, indulging in an impossible fantasy.

The main continent of Rage Owl Star can generally be divided into six major regions: the Central Region, the Eastern Provinces, The Northlands, Green Valley, the Western Desert, and the Western Continent.

Among these six places, the Green Valley Region is known for having the most population, with over ten million people.

However, for this fertile and vast land, the number of humans is still too few. Far from being the owners, the vast jungle is the true master here.

Humans merely opened up one plantation after another on the clearings between the jungles and connected them with roads.

The war between humans and the jungle in the Green Valley Region has been going on for a very long time.

The jungle breeds Aberrant Beasts. When their numbers become too great within the jungle, they will surge out, attacking humans, trying to expand their territory and the jungle area; this is the so-called wave of Aberrant Beasts of the Green Valley Region.

But when humans recover, they will counterattack and reclaim the land that has not yet become jungle.

Overall, the jungle is extremely dangerous; it lacks the things humans need to survive and is filled with terrifying monsters instead.

In the jungle, humans have no advantage. The numerous thick trees, muddy ground, swamps… these natural environments all form obstacles to human conquest of the jungle.

Not to mention the sheer number of monsters bred within it.

In the Green Valley Region, to venture into the jungle is akin to seeking death.

This is a fact that everyone in Green Valley has been taught from childhood.

And now, Jason Morgan hears that Colonel Perbov wants to lead his troops into the jungle to their death.

Feeling Jason Morgan's astonishment, Perbov only laughed after the other man expressed words of dissuasion.

"Of course, of course, I understand that the jungle of Green Valley is hell. But before I set out, I had already studied it for a long time; no one understands the jungle better than I do."

After boasting, Perbov continued, "We have a secret weapon in our hands now."

Jason Morgan didn't take the bait, "What secret weapon can enable us to easily conquer the jungle?"

"This is the Governor's arrangement."

Jason Morgan immediately fell silent.

Nonetheless, Perbov could tell that Jason Morgan wasn't completely reassured.

He didn't explain further but simply patted the civil officer's shoulder and said, "You'll be able to see it with your own eyes soon enough, don't worry."

…

While “soon” was mentioned, in reality, Jason Morgan waited several days before he saw what that secret weapon actually was.

In fact, the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade began their operation the very next morning after arriving at Crook Manor. The soldiers, driving armored vehicles and tanks, had come to the edge of the jungle and started their clearing operation.

Yes, the cleansing of the entire jungle.

Jason Morgan was full of curiosity, wondering how this was going to be accomplished.

However, he still managed to suppress his own curiosity.

He had many tasks of his own to attend to.

Continuing the meetings of the Mutual Aid Society, providing supplies for the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade and for other units of the Central Group Army that would later join them, these were his most vital tasks.

At the same time, he had also received a directive from the Alliance’s Civil Affairs Department to undertake the restructuring of the population in the Green Valley Region.

The historical mission of the Mutual Aid Society was nearing its end. The Alliance’s system would be fully implemented in the Green Valley Region.

Following the guide materials directly provided by the Civil Affairs Department, Jason Morgan understood what he had to do.

He was to transform the Mutual Aid Society into the Alliance's managing agency for the Green Valley Region, which would become the fourth direct-administered province of the Alliance: the Beiqing Valley Province.

The manor lords would become local administrative officers, just as with the restructuring of the central three provinces. They would, subsequently, enter the Wind-Extinguishing Loyal Heir Academy in batches for training; meanwhile, their own manors, in a sense, were also thus confiscated. They no longer held ownership over their former properties; instead, they only maintained managerial rights.

This was of course not a thorough reform, bearing deep compromises. Manor lords turned Alliance officials were unlikely to change much about the management of their original manors, and the life of the public was not expected to change sufficiently.

Chapter 296 Wipe Out the Jungle_2

Even so, it's foreseeable that when the Alliance turns those manor farmers into agricultural workers and then provides them with varying ranks of E5-E7, will they really be able to receive the corresponding benefits? Won't the benefits they're entitled to be embezzled by the manor owners, who now wield administrative power?

But those are solvable problems.

Fighting corruption, persistent propaganda to the lower classes, giving them opportunities for advancement. They will know what they ought to receive at E5 or whatever other rank, and if the manor owners don't provide it, they can report it.

That said, it's easier said than done. Many people have never left the manor in their entire lives; where would they go to report? Could the reporting channels also be controlled by those with vested interests?

There are many issues.

But essentially, all this is making way for another practical factor—the Alliance simply doesn't have the capacity to appoint enough officials to handle this matter.

Cleaning up the system sounds easy, but where will the Alliance find so many suitable officials to take on this part of the work?

Administration isn't something you can just get right by pulling in any person off the street.

Letting these natives take on the work may lead to various problems, but at the very least, the operations in Beiqing Valley Province can be maintained in the early stages.

In fact, the strategy of the Alliance in the Central Province, Central-North Province, and Gaota Province is consistent,

Just start working on it.

The Discipline Committee of the Alliance will play their role.

And later, as more students from Loyal Heir Academy and Grammar Academy graduate, these issues will be alleviated.

It won't take too long.

The Alliance's Education Department currently has high investment, teachers can easily be promoted, and school buildings are a priority…

As for the education system, minors attend school properly; meanwhile, there are crash courses for adults.

However, this so-called crash course is different from the worker education conducted in Weixing City. Even rapid courses cannot produce administrative officials as quickly and easily as factory workers.

But overall, the Alliance's educational endeavors have been underway for some time, and soon enough, suitable students will graduate.

At that time, if those manor owners and the old officials in the three central provinces are not doing well enough, they will be replaced; the Discipline Committee will also conduct a thorough screening then, both to purify the atmosphere and to make room for the relatively more ideologically correct new officials.

However, dealing with the existing operational plantations is relatively easy.

But the large number of homeless refugees present a bit more of a problem.

The Twin Cities cannot absorb two million people all at once; that's unrealistic. Even if the Twin Cities metropolitan area is going to expand further in the future, that's not now. Urban expansion always requires time. A massive influx of population can't keep up with the expansion of production lines; they'd be out of work even if they moved there.

Of course, relocating residents is still a normalized task, a constant work in progress. For the surplus population, they can first go to adult schools, night schools, to learn some industrial technology, literacy—that also requires time.

Once they are trained and initially qualified as an industry workforce, and the corresponding production lines have expanded, they can then better integrate seamlessly.

As for the remaining population, they also have their uses.

They are generally assigned to the E3-E4 level.

The lowest few levels really need to be discussed.

In the Alliance, reaching E1 means you have citizenship rights. But at that level, there are no benefits; the Alliance only acknowledges you as a citizen.

E2 will receive half of the minimum living standard, which is generally given to children and those completely incapable of work due to disability, as a government subsidy.

E3 entails benefits of a minimum standard of living, from food allocation to necessary medical assistance.

E4 begins to provide a stipend, but not much; it is regarded as a trainee level.

It is not until E5 that most adult members of the Alliance with jobs are classified. This ensures that beyond securing food and warmth, they may even save some money for improving their lives and can afford some entertainment. A couple at E5 can support three to five children and both sets of parents, although that would make life quite tight.

“`

Although the refugees were mostly classified as E3 or E4, this still filled them with joy and excitement.

And by taking these people in, considering them as members of the Alliance, it had taken on a great burden. As a civil officer of the Alliance, and the actual person in charge of governmental affairs in the Beiqing Valley Province, he had to get these people moving.

They needed to work to find their own value; the Alliance also needed them to work hard to make back the high investments, to quickly turn the burden into positive profits.

Fortunately, what the Green Valley Region did not lack was land.

The high-yield seeds acquired from interstellar trade had also been sent by the Alliance Headquarters. It was now autumn, an opportune time to build one plantation after another, to settle these refugees. By the time construction was completed, it would be about time to sow the seeds.

Additionally, a considerable number of people were dispatched to the military to accompany the troops in their operations.

The Central Group Army needed a large number of accompanying workers, with the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade under Perbov being the most urgent.

His troops had already entered the jungle areas and had requested 30,000 young workers from him, the logistics steward.

Morgan had supplied them accordingly.

They were sent into the jungles to participate in clearing the vegetation.

Then, Jason Morgan began to busy himself with his own affairs.

Even though he was putting all his effort into maintaining the Mutual Aid Society system, the introduction of Alliance systems locally still left Jason Morgan overwhelmed.

There were endless tasks for the workers to do. In the beginning, he could hardly spare a moment away, but after some time, he managed to find time to head to the edge of the jungle.

He really wanted to see what Perbov referred to as a secret weapon.

And then, he personally witnessed a large tract of the jungle disappearing.

The armored vehicles were equipped with a device similar to a flamethrower, but the purple-red flames that shot out didn't bring about high temperature or combustion.

The trees and vegetation burned by the purple flames withered and dehydrated rapidly.

This was much faster than actually setting fire to them.

After the armored vehicles finished spraying, after a short wait, the walking soldiers and conscripted laborers began to advance.

The work they had to do was also simple.

The low shrubs that quickly dried up could be reduced to debris with a few pokes of a stick, providing the soil with nutrients; the tall trees became brittle. A strong man could kick them down with a few kicks.

Once the tall trees fell thunderously, they were dragged in batches to the vehicles behind.

These materials should not go to waste.

The dehydrated timber could be used as construction material. While it wasn't particularly excellent, not being as good as wood cut down and processed with the appropriate industrial technology, it was a material that could be obtained quickly when necessary.

Conveniently, a large number of new plantations in the rear needed to be built. Houses, fences… all required these construction materials.

Of course, not all of it could be used up. At the very least, a synthetic starch factory could be built nearby, and these timbers could still be used as raw material for synthetic starch production.

This would generate a significant economic value, something Jason Morgan, as an administrative officer, could see.

But what he could see even more, was the pathway to completely solving the Green Valley problem.

Ever since he arrived in the Green Valley Region, he had been considering this issue, but he had never imagined that the realization would be the complete eradication of the "jungle" itself!

If someone had told him this in the past, he would have thought it was a pipe dream.

But now, all of this became a reality before his eyes.

Chapter 297 Special Forces

"What is it called?"

After watching a demonstration of the Purple Flame Ejector's capabilities, Gu Hang posed this question to its developer, Mr. Hu Ke.

Mr. Hu Ke was rather modest, "It doesn't have a name, just a little gadget I tinkered with in the past. By compressing high energy, releasing high-energy particles, and special chemicals, it's some of the targeted gadgets I developed during six months in the south. If it can be useful and assist Mr. Gu, that would be more than I could ask for."

Gu Hang shook his head in admiration, "This is not a mere trifle; this is nothing short of terraforming!"

Mr. Hu Ke waved his hands in dismissal, "Mr. Gu, please don't say that. Terraforming is way beyond my reach. Such equipment, such technology, are far from what a small gadget can achieve. In fact, its ability to be mass-produced is all thanks to the production capacity of the Concentrated Energy Cubes you created.

Without this exceptional energy support, it couldn't function, let alone be mass-produced. Even so, it's still only capable of dealing with the jungle… "

"True, compared to those legendary terraforming technologies, it's not worth mentioning," Gu Hang said, "but it is indeed the best solution we have for addressing the Green Valley issue now."

At this point, Mr. Hu Ke sighed, "Are you truly determined to do this? Eradicate every inch of jungle in the Green Valley Region?"

"Why not?"

"It will require a massive amount of manpower and resources, and it will destroy the environment of the Green Valley Region…"

"Yes," Gu Hang didn't deny these points, "But we have sufficient capabilities and enough time to achieve this. Moreover, this is not merely an investment. Look at the reports coming from up ahead, this project is already generating positive returns.

It has solved the unemployment problem for a large number of refugees in the Green Valley Region, and the wood produced, although of inferior quality, does have value; the production department has already transferred the latest batch of synthetic starch production lines to the Green Valley Region, where factories will be built locally.

Once the scale is sufficient, these refugees might not need us to pay extra to support them; their own output will be enough to sustain them, and even generate a surplus…"

Pausing for a moment, Gu Hang mentioned a second point, "As for the natural environment, its weight was too small in my decision-making process. Compared to the threats posed by those monsters and the Cult established by your students, the problems caused by environmental degradation are minuscule. And if there really are issues, we will have the opportunity to rectify and solve them in the future."

Mr. Hu Ke nodded repeatedly.

He was a researcher, a Prophet of the Engine, who, although having a not insignificant status within the Sect of Mechanics, never involved himself in actual management and focused solely on his own tasks. In matters of industry and certain political considerations, he was not thorough.

Speaking of the environment, that was because he had witnessed many planets ravaged by excessive human exploitation, where the quality of life was far from good.

However, what Mr. Gu said seemed reasonable to him.

He realized that the per capita resource consumption enjoyed by the inhabitants of Rage Owl Star was by no means considered to be overexploitation. For the planet's development, frankly, they were not in a position to care about such things.

Not to mention the added threats of the Cult and mutated monsters.

Develop first, govern later.

Yet, Mr. Hu Ke still had his doubts, “Even so, the time required is too long. I understand you have ample time to develop that land, even by using years, or even decades as units of time. And indeed, this is a permanent solution. Eradicating the jungle will deprive the mutated monsters of their environment, and the Nature Salvation Society will have no place to hide.

Whatever their plans, they would be meaningless. But isn’t that too slow? Do you really want to take ten years to eliminate the Nature Salvation Society?”

“I can see you’re very concerned.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Hu Ke, who had been in the Twin Cities for a little while now. In these days, he had seen the state of the city.

Some things could be faked, but the living conditions and psychological states of the largest group of lower-level citizens could not be.

He had visited many different worlds. The living conditions of these people on Rage Owl Star certainly weren’t good, even belonging to the poor category.

But that wasn’t the fault of the rulers—at least not the current rulers. The conditions on Rage Owl Star themselves were too poor; not to mention the commoners, even Gu Hang, the Governor-General, and the various high-ranking officials of the League he had met, led austere lives.

However, compared to the less than abundant living environment, the mental state of the ordinary citizens in the Twin Cities was quite good. Something called ‘hope’ was brewing in their hearts and overflowing on their faces.

They had aspirations for the future and genuinely believed that under the League’s rule, they could improve their lives through their own hands and efforts.

This might sound mundane, but across the universe, only a few places possessed such vitality.

Mr. Hu Ke wasn't infected by this; rather, he could confirm through experience that a League capable of maintaining such a psychological state among its subjects couldn't be a rubbish government.

Chapter 298 Special Forces_2

Flying into the stars to find another home wasn't a reliable option. In contrast, staying in the Union and living a stable life was a good choice.

Having made this conclusion, he still wanted to contribute his strength to the entire Union.

In his view, the Nature Salvation Society was one of the significant threats to this world.

He pondered before saying, "I've recently given it some careful thought, what Ge Wajia ultimately wants to do. When I was in the south, after being thawed and released by him, he didn't trust me enough initially, and I couldn't access too many secrets in the organization established by my student.

However, since he went to the trouble of saving me, he naturally wouldn't give up on the knowledge I possessed. Some peripheral research projects were placed in my hands. Those projects, I'm working hard to piece together his goals."

"What's your speculation?"

"I should preface this by saying I can't be completely certain, it's just a guess, with insufficient evidence. That's also why I didn't tell you at the beginning…"

"That's okay, I will make the judgment."

"Well… I believe that Ge Wajia and his group are trying to summon demons again…"

"Oh, that's a bad guess."

"You don't seem surprised? Did you guess this a long time ago?"

“In a sense, yes,” Gu Hang spread his hands and said, “I have no evidence and not like you, who conducted experiments with them and pieced together fragments of the truth. I am merely guessing. After all, those so-called Cult members, individuals tainted by the Abyss demons, have this constant thought in their heads—an easy guess reveals their goal.”

Hu Ke gave a bitter smile and said, “What you said… is indeed correct.”

“But simply knowing their goal isn’t enough, I hope to know what means they have to achieve it, and how we can stop them.”

“That’s exactly what I wanted to talk about,” Hu Ke sighed, “We can’t eliminate the Nature Salvation Society just by destroying the jungle. I’m not against your strategy, but that’s meant for exterminating Aberrant Beasts, and to eradicate Ge Wajia using this method, by destroying the jungle, it would be too slow. Perhaps, before we succeed, that group might accomplish their goal first.”

Pausing for a moment, Hu Ke continued, “My guess is that they might have gained control of an intact Psychic Energy Field that hasn’t been destroyed.

If you’re aware of the history of Rage Owl Star, you’d understand that in the past, it was precisely because of the presence of enriched Psychic Energy Fields that an ample energy source was formed, used as a means to open the veil between reality and the Abyss hell.”

“The primary Psychic Energy Fields of the old Rage Owl Star were on the other two continents, which should have been completely destroyed by now; there are fields on the main continent too, but few, and most probably in a state of destruction as well. The one that Ge Wajia found should be of a smaller scale. But we can’t afford to be complacent about this.

Once he truly tears open the veil of the real world, even if it’s just a tiny crack, we will be in huge trouble.”

Gu Hang mused, “So do you have any guesses about the location of the possible Psychic Energy Field?”

“None at all,” Hu Ke said with a wry smile, “in fact, I can’t be certain if it truly exists, all of this is just my speculation…”

“But your speculation is somewhat more reliable than mine,” Gu Hang stated reassuringly, “I’m still very grateful for your information. I was planning to deploy a special forces squad to the Southern Green Valley to assess the situation there, things like guiding bombings. Now, they might have an additional task.”

…

Aéro Rakrosha felt like he had been deceived.

He said he didn’t want to be an officer, just wanted to be a warrior. His wish had been affirmed by the Governor, and he wasn’t an officer now, but he still ended up with over thirty warriors under his command.

Isn’t this just making me a squad leader?

Earlier, he was transferred from the Beast Slaughter Brigade to the Tenth Special Brigade as a squad leader. He and his thirty new subordinates were equipped with a full set of individual soldier gear, which they had never seen before.

Each had an individual exoskeleton, fitted with primary plasteel and a ceramic-steel plating that protected the torso and limbs. It was nowhere near as majestic as the Interstellar Warrior Powered Armor but had a slender aesthetic.

The full-coverage helmet came equipped with night vision, anti-glare, color temperature, and other visual modes, as well as a shooting assistance system.

This so-called shooting assistance system was provided by a servo skull that accompanied them in combat. That specific servo skull of his could also help control the two drones in his backpack, carrying out tasks such as reconnaissance, supporting fire attacks, and kamikaze strikes.

The weapons in their hands had all been switched to LR5 Laser Rifles. Each person carried ten high-energy batteries which could support 15 shots before needing a replacement. This firepower sustainability was somewhat lacking, but the power far surpassed that of the conventional G9 rifle.

To make up for the firepower, they also carried a short-barreled, stockless tactical rifle—a specialized variant of the G9.

Lacroix himself had slightly more refined equipment than his team members. The most significant difference lay in the fact that instead of high-energy batteries, he used crystal-like energy blocks. These things were said to be much more expensive than the laser rifles in their hands. A Wind Falcon flying high above could operate solely on one of these blocks.

As a result, this device powered only his rifle and exoskeleton…

The potent energy source allowed his ‘Ranger 1st Generation’ exoskeleton to maintain a constant overload mode until it broke down; his laser rifle could also fire continuously in overload mode.

Other people’s LR5s would waste a high-energy battery with just one overload shot, and according to their training discipline, it was strictly forbidden to do so unless necessary.

But his energy blocks allowed him to fire in overload mode almost limitlessly without needing a replacement. All he had to worry about was whether his rifle could withstand the strain without breaking.

All of this made him feel as if he were in a dream.

People called him ‘Soldier King’, and he always felt it was surreal and disliked being addressed that way to his face. But now… it seemed he really was receiving the treatment of a Soldier King.

And in the so-called special forces brigade, he was to execute special missions.

After completing their bombing mission at Crook Manor, a formation of three Wind Falcons prepared for their return journey, carrying Lacroix and his squad straight to the world’s far southern end.

Their target was to reconnoiter a place known as ‘Chanter Town’, reported to be the headquarters of the Nature Salvation Society.

There was no specific location, just vague descriptions.

After they descended in the Wind Falcons, they continued to search the ground while maintaining constant communication with the three fast-attack crafts temporarily assigned to work in coordination with them.

In this joint air-ground reconnaissance operation, they uncovered numerous potential targets, but all were eventually ruled out. These were merely ruins of villages long deserted, with the jungle slowly extending its reach, reclaiming those places.

On the third day of the operation, however, they made a significant discovery.

Based on the intelligence description and an accompanying hand-drawn map, they could almost confirm that this was indeed Chanter Town.

But this place appeared to be abandoned as well.

After an internal discussion, the squad still decided to venture in for exploration.

Out of caution, they called Lieutenant Kuchi, and the three Wind Falcons were ready to provide air support.

Lacroix was quite nervous about this.

It was still warfare, going into battle, but the approach was completely different from his past experiences.

He wasn’t sure if he could do well enough and decided it was best to proceed with utmost caution.

And his caution saved many lives.

Chapter 299, Life is Really Tough

Actually, Gu Hang's original plan was somewhat risky.

Directly pulling Galaraldo's soul into the Storm God Kingdom, if everything went smoothly and was completed in a second, there wouldn't be any problem; but if this guy had any special preparations, any interruption during the pulling would leave traces.

Though Gu Hang would definitely disguise any traces left behind, and it would take a long time for the Empire's official investigation team to arrive, any remnants of subspace energy would eventually dissipate completely.

As for Korolya III's local capabilities, let's not even mention the Psychic Cultivator's Association, hopelessly amateur; there is no direct dispatch organization from the Tribunal in the Tianma Star Sector, so no worries there; it's just that the nuns of the Holy Lillies are a bit troublesome, particularly since many of them have spent time in the Rage Owl Star, even directly joining the crackdown on the Storm Cult. These nuns have a probability of seeing through Gu Hang's disguises and realizing that it originates from the Subspace Evil God on Rage Owl Star that should have been destroyed.

In this case, Gu Hang, being the only one present from Rage Owl Star, would see his level of suspicion skyrocket.

However, with the help of the Plague Demons, there would be no such concerns.

For Gu Hang, the best outcome would be for the Plague Demons to emerge and directly slaughter Galaraldo.

An Apostle of War dying at the hands of demons emerging from an abyssal rift that had opened in a world corroded by demons would be considered an accident, perhaps with a hint of conspiracy, but no matter how much they investigated, they should not, and would not be able to trace it back to Gu Hang.

Yes, he is an A-level Psychic, but even the most powerful S-level, let alone the legendary Alpha-level Psychics who can tear apart a planet, are not known to be able to manually and out of nothing open an abyssal rift—that's just not within the Psychic's range of abilities.

Gu Hang was able to do it because he borrowed the essence of a Subspace Inferior God. This point, too, Gu Hang could freely allow others to investigate, for without revealing anything, they would find nothing.

Moreover, in this demonic attack, he came forward and saved so many people; before Galaraldo's disappearance, it was he who had made a valiant attempt at rescue, all events that took place in full view of the public.

The reason Gu Hang did this was, on one hand, not wanting to drag too many people into it—having the upper echelons of the Tianma Star Sector caught in one swoop would cause chaos throughout the whole sector; on the other hand, he was also trying to wash away any suspicion from himself.

As for revealing his Psychic Level, that was bound to be exposed anyway. Once the Empire investigated everyone present at the time, Gu Hang's powerful psychic abilities could not possibly remain concealed.

As long as they couldn't find out about the Subspace Inferior God, that was enough.

But unfortunately, Gu Hang had already overestimated Galaraldo's capabilities, yet he didn't expect that this guy was pretty tough; even with so many Demons appearing he couldn't be killed.

In the end, Gu Hang still took action, deliberately opening a subspace rift beneath the other's feet, not bothering with the soul pulling anymore, directly sending the entire person into it.

And, to avoid any loopholes, Gu Hang didn't even pull the guy into the Storm God Kingdom, but maintained the connection between the Divine Realm and the Father's Domain, directly delivering the man into the Father's Domain.

With that, things were truly foolproof.

Even if you ask Galaraldo himself, he wouldn't know it was Gu Hang who had acted, only knowing he was attacked by Plague Demons and pulled into a subspace filled with deadly poison, pestilence, and despair, matching exactly the feel of the Demons that attacked him.

And Gu Hang? Wasn't he the one who gave me a big hand and tried to save me in the end, alas in vain?

Of course, Gu Hang didn't believe that the Apostle of War had any chance to tell all this himself, which was somewhat regrettable.

Thinking this, Gu Hang, who had ascended in consciousness to the Divine Realm, closed his eyes and began to use his psychic sensing abilities to search for the target.

When he took Galaraldo away, Gu Hang had deliberately left a mark on him. It had no other use, except to let him sense and track the specific condition of the target.

It was a way to confirm for sure that the guy was indeed dead.

However, what surprised him a bit was that Galaraldo was still not dead.

That guy really had an extraordinary life force.

How long had it been since he was thrown into the 'Father's Domain'—almost two days now?

Not to die in all this time was somewhat shocking.

Gu Hang asked himself, if it had been him in the same situation, setting aside the special circumstance of controlling the origin of the Subspace Inferior God, and merely relying on Psychic powers, perhaps two days would be approaching the limit as well.

Though he had never experienced it firsthand, one in the Father's Domain as a human would indeed be in agonizing torment. Not to mention the constant attacks from Plague Demons, the mere environment was enough to corrode a person into an eternally undying mass of rotten flesh, yet full of indescribable pain.

This is the 'Father'; it seems to 'love' all creatures—including the parasites, viruses, bacteria, and cancer cells in the human body…

In Gu Hang's perception, a dazzling golden light was protecting Galaraldo.

It was a blessing from The Emperor.

In the real world, the power of The Emperor's blessing was roughly equivalent to that of an A-level Psychic. But in subspace, although one was in the Father's Domain, the essence was closer to the Divine Emperor's Spirit Network. With the strengthening bond, the blessing granted by the Divine Emperor also became more potent.

Chapter 299, Life is Really Tough _2

This was the core reason Galaraldo could persist for such a long time.

But there was a limit, he had merely received the Divine Emperor's blessing, he was not the Divine Emperor himself who had to keep him alive. Gu Hang didn't believe he could survive for long while staying in the abyssal hell filled with malice!

Withdrawing his attention from him, Gu Hang checked on the status of his Storm God Kingdom.

Previously, to tear open the abyssal rift, Gu Hang had used the Storm God Kingdom as a passage connecting the real world and the abyssal hell. This indeed allowed a large number of Plague Demons to directly descend upon Galaraldo's head, but the Storm God Kingdom was also invaded by the Plague Demons.

Those Plague Demons were not Gu Hang's subordinates, nor would they listen to his orders.

To exterminate these demons, the Heroic Spirit Warriors of the Storm God Kingdom had paid a significant price.

The casualties and consumption were substantial, there was no doubt about it, but it was not without gains.

Firstly, this was a tally at the end of the battle.

[Storm God Kingdom Battle Tally:]

[Bloody victory, earned 884 blessing points]

[Loss of 3121, extermination of 4152]

Among the invading Plague Demons, although there were many relatively low-level monsters such as Plague Corpses, Plague Wraiths, and Plague Giant Flies, there were also powerful beings like Plague Carriers. Not to mention, the Rot Dragon that was expelled also lingered in the Storm God Kingdom.

That dragon was strong, even though it had taken many hits from the anti-aircraft guns above Mingyan City, had lost many Plague Flies that protected it, and had suffered numerous wounds due to the golden beam from Galaraldo and the Battle Nuns who subsequently rode flying motorcycles to the sky and attacked it with bomb guns and sharp blades.

But it was still formidable.

Merely to exterminate it, Gu Hang's Heroic Spirit Warriors had lost at least six hundred lives.

However, although the average individual strength of the enemy was solid, since the overall scale of the battle wasn't too large, and considering the considerable losses on Gu Hang's side, the rating was only a 'bloody victory,' resulting in a not-so-high reward coefficient.

In this way, the total yielded blessing points was about eight hundred or so.

For Gu Hang at that time, the system's level of expenditure was very high, and his monthly fixed income of blessing points had already exceeded three thousand; hence, he didn't value the additional eight hundred blessing points very much.

However, the benefits of exterminating so many demons within the Storm God Kingdom were not limited to blessing points alone.

After these demons were killed, their Subspace Origin would remain here.

And these things were the nourishment of the Storm God Kingdom.

Even though the corpses left here turned into a pile of pus, quite disgusting to behold, in reality, with some time and purification of the contamination, the remnants could be digested, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of the entire Divine Realm.

To kill and devour other abyssal demons was akin to seizing the power of other Evil Gods.

Of course, for that great Father, it was as insignificant as a drop of water in the ocean, completely undetectable.

For a while, Gu Hang even thought of trying this approach again, casually opening a passage between the Storm God Kingdom and the domains of other subspace Evil Gods, especially when Gu Hang himself was on Korolya III, particularly close to the Father's Domain.

Lure the demons in to kill them, after their deaths, earn blessing points and digest their Subspace Origin energy to strengthen his own Divine Realm.

But he quickly discarded this suicidal thought.

Indeed, killing a few thousand or tens of thousands of ordinary demons was absolutely inconsequential for the 'Father,' no cause for concern. But accidents happen when they are least expected.

If by chance the Father's gaze happened to fall here, that would be the end of it.

Being in Subspace, without the 'veil of reality' that the more powerful the demon, the harder it is to break through, there would be nowhere to run.

Not to mention attracting the ‘Father’s’ gaze, even if just a Great Demon or a Great Unclean One were to come, that would be enough to cause Gu Hang serious trouble.

Even though Gu Hang’s personal strength was respectable, even with the Divine Realm’s enhancement and being able to desperately fight a Great Demon in a home-field environment, that was when the real trouble would begin. Immediately thereafter, a second, third, even seven or eight Great Unclean Ones might turn up, and that would indeed be normal.

Such suicidal actions were better left undone.

…

After resting for a day, Gu Hang returned to the scene of the incident.

Here, it almost remained as it was at the time, without any clean-up or organization.

The security guarded the place tightly.

At the scene, the Battle Nun, the Psychic Cultivator Assembly Representative, a bishop from the state religion, and a technical priest from the Mechanical Cult Guild were already waiting.

The leader, of course, was the head of the nuns at this place: Sister Chang Ge Ruite, as well as Bishop Zhao Qinghong from the state religion.

However, after Gu Hang’s arrival, the most enthusiastic was the Psychic Cultivator Assembly Representative.

His name was Wang Yuyang, the person in charge of the Tianma Star Sector Psychic Association, usually based on Flying Wing Star, with the headquarters of the Tianma Star Sector Psychic Association located there as well. He had also been invited by Galaraldo to Korolya III to attend the banquet on behalf of the Psychic Association.

Generally, on Flying Wing Star he was always referred to with great esteem as ‘Grand Mage’—and indeed, his status was very high.

Wang Yuyang was extremely warm and solicitous, skirting around the real issue concerning the investigation, instead continually introducing the status of the Tianma Star Sector Psychic Association.

Chapter 299, Truly Tough Fate_3

Gu Hang wasn’t at all embarrassed, “If you want to talk, I’ll keep you company.”

In the process of their conversation, he began to understand the reason behind Wang Yuyang’s attitude.

The Psychic Cultivator’s Association was a major organization within the Empire that managed spiritual energy practitioners and held a non-fixed seat in the Imperial Supreme Council, highlighting its significance.

However, unlike the state religion and the Mechanical Cult Guild, two powerful religious organizations, the Psychic Cultivator’s Association resembled more a scholarly organization. Its structure was relatively loose, the control of the upper echelons over the lower ranks was weak, and it neither had fixed territories like the Sanctuary World of the state religion and the Foundry World of the Mechanical Cult Guild, nor did it have its own military forces like the Battle Nun Association and the Mechanical Protective Forces.

It had three main institutions under its jurisdiction: the Star Language Hall, Star Guidance Hall, and Star Law Hall.

The Star Language Hall was responsible for training those who could build and maintain the Star Language Towers.

The Star Guidance Hall was responsible for training navigators who guide starships through the Star Realm Tunnel.

The Star Law Hall trained combat spiritual energy practitioners for the Imperial Navy and army.

In the Tianma Star Sector, however… there was no such detailed division, just a dispatched institution of the Psychic Cultivator's Association and that was it.

Mainly because it's too weak.

But did Wang Yuyang think that way?

He didn't.

But with limited capabilities, what could he, a C-level spiritual energy practitioner, do?

Over the years, he took on many students, but not many could break through to D-level. Most were at E-level, and it was already not bad if their combat skills allowed them to defeat armed infantry by a ratio of seven to three unarmed.

They definitely didn't hold much sway in discussions.

However, Gu Hang's arrival gave him a tremendous hope!

In the Psychic Cultivator's Association, the words of ten thousand low-level practitioners weren't as effective as a single high-level one.

He still remembered Gu Hang. Although not his student, as the scion of the Gu Family, he had initially registered with the Psychic Cultivator's Association on Flying Wing Star.

All this ought to be considered a feat of the Tianma Psychic Cultivators Association! Reporting upwards that they had produced an A-level spiritual energy practitioner would instantly elevate his status greatly, and direct rewards could make him prosperous.

However, the only thing was… Gu Hang needed to cooperate a little.

After all, he hadn't truly cultivated Gu Hang, and if Gu Hang hadn't revealed his strength in a crisis, he would have been none the wiser!

Gu Hang was quite moved by this as well.

The Psychic Cultivator's Association… seemed like something he could make use of.

Especially since the Tianma Star Sector's association was still weak, he even came up with an idea – was it possible to relocate the headquarters of the Tianma Cultivators Association to Rage Owl Star?

Even opening a branch would be fine.

This could be tax-deductible, strive for funding from the Psychic Cultivator's Association, and gain access to more orthodox ways of training spiritual energy practitioners…

Most importantly, Rage Owl Star already had unique conditions. Furthermore, Gu Hang already had plans to cultivate more spiritual energy practitioners. Introducing the Empire's official power would provide a good explanation for the large number of new spiritual energy practitioners.

And while the two of them were enjoying their conversation, a soft cough came from the side.

Sister Chang Ge Ruite, who was familiar with Gu Hang, walked up: "Excuse me for interrupting your conversation. However, we can talk about other matters later, for today, we need to deal with the current issue… Mr. Gu, we still need your help very much this time. I'm sorry for the trouble."

Georgette's attitude towards Gu Hang was very respectful. For her, it was not the first time witnessing Mr. Gu's strength; they had worked well together during the eradication of cult members on Rage Owl Star.

Gu Hang was nothing if not accommodating: "Okay, Master Wang, we can talk later. Let's take care of official business first."

While Mr. Gu was on Korolya III, coordinating with a joint investigation team formed by personnel from various forces to investigate the disappearance case of the War Apostles, inside the human command center on the Western Front at Rage Owl Star, the atmosphere was incredibly tense.

Yan Fangxu tightly gripped the combat plan he and his comrades at the staff office had labored over for several days and nights, his face a picture of displeasure as he looked at the person sitting at the top.

This person looked quite majestic and robust, a big, beard-dense bald man.

His name was Cai Minjin, a Major General of the Imperial Star Realm Army, commander of the Dragonhawk 3rd Legion 4th Corps, and the overall commander of the troops from the Fatches Star System, totaling one million soldiers, who came to Rage Owl Star to reinforce the battle.

The initial three hundred thousand and the subsequent seven hundred thousand troops on their way all belonged to this fourth corps; they were all his direct subordinates.

A total of 25 large brigades had been dispatched. He had arrived at Rage Owl Star with the vanguard of three hundred thousand soldiers.

His decisiveness was undeniable. After the landing of seven large brigades, amounting to three hundred thousand troops, he led his men to the Western Front and met with Yan Fangxu right away.

He knew that Yan Fangxu was the highest commander of the so-called ‘Rage Bear Legion’ in this area and also the commander of the planet’s Planetary Defense Force.

Therefore, to quickly push forward the battle and resolve the problems on this planet, it was obvious that he had to approach this man.

To put it bluntly, Cai Minjin didn’t at all feel that this battle was worth wasting his time on.

He was originally reluctant to come.

The Iron Man rebellion sounded terrifying, but he heard that after the local Planetary Defense Force on Rage Owl Star fought a battle with the so-called Iron Man rebel army, they achieved a significant victory with minimal casualties.

Therefore, Cai Minjin believed that the enemy they were about to face was probably just so-so.

Since the higher-ups arranged for him to come and fight, then he would fight.

However, he didn't plan on wasting too much time here.

As such, the moment General Cai Minjin arrived at the frontline and summoned Yan Fangxu, he set aside the so-called 'campaign plan' without a glance and immediately proposed his own idea:

"I want to achieve significant results within three weeks. We have three weeks' time, during which our corps' remaining forces should also be in place. Then, after gathering them, I expect to completely eliminate the rebels on your planet within six weeks. I want my soldiers to be able to return to Fatches II to celebrate the New Year."

Of course, Yan Fangxu would not mind the Star Realm Army wanting to end the battle quickly. Although he found General Cai to be somewhat arrogant, if it was just a matter of attitude, he could bear it.

They came with a million-strong army to help fight the war; no matter how arrogant their demeanor, it was acceptable!

However, what Cai Minjin proposed next was something Yan Fangxu could not accept.

It was bad enough that Cai Minjin completely disregarded Yan Fangxu's battle plan, but the new plan he put forward was utterly objectionable.

He acted as if he were the supreme commander of the allied forces.

The Central Group Army of the alliance, combined with half of the Rage Bear Legion, totaling 270,000 troops, had mostly recovered their positions from before the 'Flash Tail Operation.'

Meanwhile, Cai Minjin's Star Realm Army was essentially massed on the Central Boulevard.

According to Cai Minjin's new operational concept, the alliance's forces would launch a full-scale offensive in a few days; his fourth corps would advance along the mainland, moving behind the Central Collection 1 Brigade. They would support the battlefields everywhere, ensuring that within two weeks, they would crush the enemies in front, break through the Western Desert, and penetrate westward into the mainland.

In Yan Fangxu's view, this was too reckless, too hasty. Do you know how many forces Blackbird Heavy Industries has regrouped in the month after the Flash Tail Operation, and what is the distribution of these forces?

Launching an all-out fierce attack without knowing anything?

But that perspective was secondary. If Cai Minjin let his forces carry out such high-risk actions, Yan Fangxu would at most earnestly persuade him to reconsider.

However, Cai Minjin clearly had a different intention.

His seven large brigades were not planning to engage on the front lines initially but to gather behind and provide support whenever needed.

Wasn't this tantamount to sending the alliance's troops into the largest, deepest traps?

If they can get through, then they get through; if they can't, I will decide if I want to send reinforcement based on the situation.

Using the forces of Rage Owl Star as cannon fodder?

Where is the sense in that?

But… in most cases, that's exactly how it is.

To many, the Star Realm Army is considered 'cannon fodder,' which is a comparison to the Starfighter Battle Group, the Sisterhood, some elite forces, and the precious Imperial Navy Fleet. But in reality, the so-called 'Hammer of the Empire,' the Star Realm Army, is the Empire's primary ground force.

They are numerous, ferocious in firepower, fearless in sacrifice, and rely mainly on artillery and armor as their strength, crushing the enemies of the Empire like a steadfast warhammer.

Indeed, they don't possess the glamour and flamboyance of some elite units, and in many cases, they serve as a background for the elites, becoming expendable material that can be consumed to create opportunities. But this does not negate their own achievements and value.

Yet compared to others, the Star Realm Army is still not at the very bottom of the Empire's military system; the Planetary Defense Force is.

Although it could not be said that the entire Planetary Defense Army was incompetent, there were indeed formidable units, but those were exceptions. Generally speaking, their combat effectiveness was far inferior to that of the Star Realm Army.

Moreover, on battlefields where the Star Realm Army was needed for support, it meant that the planet was already in serious trouble and the local Planetary Defense Forces had been unable to resolve the issue. In such cases, with their higher status, stronger strength, and the identity of saviors, the Star Realm Army could easily become the more dominant party.

Strictly speaking, there was no hierarchical relationship between the two forces. However, according to some military regulations of the Empire, the Star Realm Army indeed had the right to take command of the local planetary forces "when necessary."

Although Yan Fangxu also held a position as a commander in the Star Realm Army, it was clear that the scale of the Rage Bear Legion, as well as Yan Fangxu's rank of colonel, were far behind Cai Minjin, a bona fide Imperial Major General.

When the other party was determined to seize command, Yan Fangxu really had no good solution.

If it wasn't for the need for the help of the Star Realm Army, then it would be easier to handle; just ignore them. But if you really wanted to take control, then you would have to see if you could manage it.

But the key issue was that they were actually asking for the Star Realm Army's assistance, right?

Yan Fangxu had already tried to persuade the other side twice and even revised his battle plan multiple times. If you want to accelerate, then let's accelerate, but using the Alliance Army as cannon fodder and to clear mines, that's not acceptable.

Previously, Gu Hang, Yan Fangxu, had been quite optimistic, hoping that after the arrival of the Star Realm Army, they could leave the main difficult battles to them. But it now seemed that they had been too hopeful; the others just wanted to pick the ripe fruits.

So, abandoning illusions, since everyone's life mattered, I didn't plan to sacrifice you to defuse bombs. Why couldn't we just fight this battle fairly and normally, and get it finished quickly?

The General Cai Minjin's message was, no.

"Stop wasting my time with those useless papers." Cai Minjin said, "Starting from tomorrow, I demand that all reconnaissance troops must set out; four days later, a full-scale offensive must begin."

At this point, Yan Fangxu had given up on conventional methods. He said, "Sorry, General Cai, your order conflicts with another one I have received, and I cannot execute it."

Cai Minjin's fierce eyes narrowed: "What do you mean? On this planet, militarily, is there anyone whose orders carry more weight than mine? Is it your governor? A brigadier general who isn't even here, what qualifications does he have to command the troops?"

While speaking, he saw that Yan Fangxu still had something to say and simply waved him off, interrupting: “Under the Imperial Wartime Act, I now formally request that you transfer all command of the troops to my headquarters. Do you understand me?”

As he spoke, he even pulled out a handgun.

He didn’t voice his threat, but his actions were quite clear.

When necessary, he had the authority to execute officers two ranks below his.

Yan Fangxu, a colonel, fell precisely within that category.

Yan Fangxu spread his hands and, indeed, said no more.

And it was at that moment that a sudden disturbance could be heard from outside.

Following that, the curtain to the makeshift headquarters was flung open.

Cai Minjin furrowed his brow.

This place had already been taken over by his guard squad, and no one could approach without orders.

His gaze returned to Yan Fangxu.

Was this colonel causing trouble?

Did he really think I wouldn’t dare to kill?

Under his fierce gaze, Yan Fangxu remained silent.

You're not letting me talk, right?

Moments later, the curtain was suddenly swept aside.

A towering figure, clad in crimson Terminator Power Armor with its head bowed, stepped inside.

Cai Minjin stood up in surprise, even forgetting to put away his gun.

What did he see?

A starfighter!

In his thirty-year military career, he had only fought alongside a starfighter once—and even calling it 'fighting alongside' was a stretch; during that time, he could only be considered a distant observer of their gallant figure on the battlefield.

That there were starfighters on Rage Owl Star was not exactly a secret; Gu Hang hadn't deliberately concealed anything.

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However, after all, Rage Owl Star currently has very little communication with the outside world; the Starport has just been built and is still a very small port; there aren't many interstellar travelers; the Star Language Tower, which is used for interstellar communication, only exists in Revival City within Gu Hang's governor office…

Given the isolated environment, some well-informed individuals might know a thing or two, but for those who do not pay attention to Rage Owl Star at all, like Cai Minjin, he was truly unaware that there were starfighters active on the planet!

“General Cai?”

Cai Minjin subconsciously crossed his arms and performed the Sky Eagle Salute, responding, “Yes… Yes, I am Cai Minjin, Major General of the Dragonhawk 3rd Legion 4th Corps. May I ask who you are…”

“Phoenix Battle Group, Battle Group Commander, Martins Salas.”

Martins also identified himself, then stated, “I have taken over the command of this battle.”

He succinctly notified Cai Minjin.

And General Cai had nothing to say.

As he had previously mentioned in the Imperial wartime code of conduct, high-ranking officers of the Star Realm Army have the power, at crucial times, to command officers of lower rank from different systems and unify the command of the Planetary Defense Forces of an entire planet, ensuring that all Imperial Army forces can have unified command in the face of powerful enemies, to avoid confusion.

And in this hierarchy clearly defined, a commander of a Starfighter Battle Group sits very high in the order of things.

Within the hierarchy of the Star Realm Army, at least an admiral is needed to make suggestions; to contend on equal footing, one would need to produce the rank of a full general; and to command a battle group during wartime, one would need to be a Marshal of the Star Realm Army.

Of course, rules are dead, people are alive.

In a real battle situation, where multiple types of forces and systems work together, who takes charge is usually a matter of discussion. One’s high status alone does not translate into real command authority without actual troops to command.

But the current situation was obviously not like this.

Earlier, Cai Minjin could ignore Yan Fangxu because he had enough strength at his command. Three hundred thousand troops, plus the estimated seven hundred thousand arriving tomorrow at Rage Owl Star's Starport, amounting to a million in total, were his confidence.

He could act unbridled, having this confidence and the support of both legal and high position.

But now, that was not possible.

The local forces of Rage Owl Star combined with the Rage Bear Legion also numbered hundreds of thousands, and then there was the appearance of this person wearing Terminator Armor, along with a huge physique, which was certainly not a fake starfighter…

Now, Cai Minjin couldn't be sure of his victory, neither in terms of position nor in terms of strength.

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The appearance of Martins was, of course, Yan Fangxu's doing.

Or rather Gu Hang's doing.

Before leaving Rage Owl Star, he had contemplated the issue of military command, fearing that the incoming Star Realm forces would overshadow the local command.

Therefore, before his departure, he had a long discussion with Martins and Yan Fangxu.

And now, it really came into play.

With Martins leading thirty starfighters, firmly in control of the situation, there were no more ripples in the matter.

The joint command center was successfully established, and Cai Minjin honestly merged his own staff with the staff of the Alliance Army, beginning preparations for the battle.

He ceased causing trouble.

Although he had never heard of the “Phoenix” before, when thirty starfighters stood before him like thirty grand and solemn statues, he didn’t dare make a sound.

But Yan Fangxu and Martins did not engage in any acts of personal vendetta either.

In fact, they fully considered Cai Minjin’s desire to finish the war quickly—which also aligned with the needs of the Rage Owl Star Alliance—and based on Yan Fangxu’s previous plans, they devised new strategies.

A few days later, the fires of war reignited in the West Desert Region.

Six hundred thousand troops of the human alliance marched westward, mightily.

At the same time, the remaining 700,000 of Cai Minjin’s 4th Corps arrived, and they orderly disembarked from the Starport, expected to move to the front line of the Western Front battlefield within two to three weeks.

By then, the number of the human alliance forces would directly surpass 1.3 million.

The war indeed had to be fought swiftly, for sustaining such a massive army’s supply lines posed a severe challenge to the logistics system of the Alliance.