Chapter 31 - Chapter 31: Chapter 31, is it this governor?

Chapter 31: Chapter 31, is it this governor?

Hodgson indeed did not know that one of their Alliance Council members, Wohan, was a cult member.

He had no prior knowledge of this information.

Now that Gu Hang had exposed this, he was completely dumbfounded.

When he had slightly regained his composure, his first reaction was to suspect: Was the accusation against Wohan of being a cultist fabricated by Mr. Gu himself as an excuse to cause trouble for Revival City?

“This matter is of great significance. Do you, Governor, truly have concrete evidence to prove this?”

“The evidence is irrefutable. The people who attacked the transport team were directed by Wohan. I have wiped out the bandits on his manor and captured him. I personally saw this scoundrel use Storm Sorcery...”

“Right now, you seem to know nothing about it, President of the Council Hodgson. I’m very disappointed. With an Alliance Council member corrupted, and you, as president, having no knowledge of it, is this negligence, or has the Alliance Council been condoning the spread of the cult in Revival City all along?”

Hodgson immediately denied it: “Absolutely not! We have been intensifying our efforts to crack down on the cult. How could we possibly condone its spread? I will investigate this matter...”

Before Hodgson could finish, he was interrupted by Gu Hang: “Investigate? How much longer will we have to wait for you to slowly go about your investigation? Revival City will become what? With even Council members being corrupted, how can I believe you’ll uncover anything?”

Hodgson was under immense pressure from Gu Hang.

This totally unexpected news caught him off guard. He had no contingency plans in place, and at this moment he could only insist: “We will definitely take effective measures to deal with the problem. We will carry out background checks on all Council members and also strengthen the investigation into the cult in the entire city.”

Gu Hang said: “I’m giving you this chance. But I also want to remind you that our city is facing a severe threat. I need you to resolve this problem quickly and thoroughly! If I don’t see a more proactive attitude from you, then I will personally take action, and you will be held accountable.”

Hodgson could only strive to assure: “We will do everything necessary to ensure the safety of the city. I assure you, we will give you an explanation.”

“You had better keep your word.”

…

After hanging up the phone, Hodgson’s brows were tightly furrowed.

He did not wish to always be at a disadvantage in communications with Mr. Gu.

Yet, what could he do?

The first time, he demanded supplies by wielding his authority, with a not inconsiderable amount, yet just within the limit that Revival City was capable of paying, forcing them to reluctantly agree. Nobody wanted to entirely offend the Governor over such a matter, risking a fall-out with him.

The second time concerned Wohan’s unauthorized attack on the transport team, an action he undertook alone. Hodgson sold him out without any psychological pressure.

In both instances, the Governor hinted at using his authority, even suggesting orbital bombardment from the heavens to exert maximum pressure and make threats, his goal being to obtain something. Once the conversation reached this point, not wanting a confrontation, Hodgson had little choice but to concede.

This third time, though the Governor had neither made too many threats nor demanded anything, he used the sternest tone thus far, directly accusing the Alliance Council of either negligence or treason.

The accusation could not be more pointed.

Yet Hodgson could not refute it.

The Governor now held the high ground.

The Primal Owlbeast Sect, the common enemy of the many forces on the wasteland, who do not worship the Divine Emperor but instead follow that “Primordial Owl Beast”; skillful in Storm Sorcery, they have indeed caused many devastating disasters that annihilated settlements.

How could an Alliance Councilman be a member of this cult? How can this be explained?

It can’t be explained at all!

Mr. Gu was justifiably angry.

He thought he was just dealing with a greedy grain merchant, and if that guy wanted to go against Mr. Gu, then let him stick his neck out and be the target, he deserved to die. But it turned out this person was actually a member of the cult, which completely took Hodgson by surprise.

He also realized the seriousness of the situation.

After hesitating, Hodgson turned to his grandson Lambert and asked, “Mr. Gu said that Wohan is a member of the cult, do you think it’s possible?”

“Maybe it’s true, maybe it’s not,” Lambert Hodgson, having listened to the entire conversation between his grandfather and Mr. Gu, cautiously offered his considered answer, “But that’s not the key issue now. Since Mr. Gu is acting on this trump card, it means he must possess some evidence. Even if that evidence isn’t real, Mr. Gu would have forged it well enough. We’re truly on the defensive now.”

In response to Lambert’s speculation, Hodgson sighed and continued to ask, “What do you think Mr. Gu will do next?”

Lambert pondered, “He might use this as an excuse to further intervene in the politics of Revival City, to strip us of our power under the guise of striking at the cult, and eventually take control of the entire Revival City.”

“From what you say, it sounds like you’re quite unhappy with this?”

Lambert was taken aback.

“Grandfather?” He didn’t understand why his grandfather would ask this.

“Mr. Gu, the planetary ruler appointed by the empire, is also the head of the Alliance Government. If Mr. Gu takes complete control over Revival City, isn’t that justifiable and proper?”

Lambert frowned deeply and spoke with difficulty, “You’re saying... but... ”

Hodgson brought up another matter, “I remember, you once said your dream is to save the world?”

“...Yes, the nonsensical babble of my reckless youth...”

“So I ask you now, is that dream still buried in your heart?”

Lambert didn’t want to answer, “Grandfather, why are you bringing this up?”

“I’ve told you, only the Governor can save this world. I don’t know if Mr. Gu is the one, so I’ve always hesitated, just like the previous governors have all failed. But I recently realized something: How many more governors can we wait for?”

“I don’t understand... do you mean, you want to?...”

“No, it’s not that stage yet, I just feel that this governor is a bit different from the previous ones,” said Hodgson, “As for now, I think you’ve got the emphasis wrong.”

“Please enlighten me.”

“The focus now isn’t what the governor will do next but what we must do. What we need to do is simple, ascertain how widespread the Primal Owlbeast Sect has become in Revival City, and what their aim truly is. That’s the most important thing, a matter of life and death. What’s the point of all these power struggles? It would be ridiculously tragic to defeat Mr. Gu only to have the cultists destroy the city afterward.”

“I understand!”

Chapter 32 - Chapter 32: Chapter 32, Courtesy Light but Affection Deep

Chapter 32: Chapter 32, Courtesy Light but Affection Deep

The news of cult proliferation sent everyone in Revival City into a frenzy.

However, the instigator of the crisis, His Excellency the Governor, seemed to have no sense of urgency at the moment.

Early the next morning, he began to address the food supply issue of his territory and once again made contact with the “Quintet” above.

Colonel Yelisia still showed him no kindness in her expression.

Gu Hang was indifferent to this, even understanding.

Had he been in her shoes, having his wool sheared by others haphazardly day after day, his reaction would have been more intense than Yelisia's.

Considering how empathetic I'm being, why don't you just hand over the synthetic starch technology to me?

Of course, Gu Hang knew he couldn't just ask for it for nothing; he had to offer something in return.

"Colonel Yelisia, I've brought you another piece of good news!"

Upon hearing this, Yelisia remembered the loss of her three thousand slaves, three hundred mech servants, a pile of weapons and equipment, and the four Strider Vs.

Her heart ached.

As for the previous gift of a Marine Corps captain?

Was there such a thing? She didn't recall.

Yelisia said with a stern face, "Your Excellency's good news always comes at a high price."

"How could that be? I am sharing our achievements with the best of partners."

"If you have something serious to say, then get on with it."

"About the issue of heretic cultists brewing on Rage Owl Star, I've already made some progress. I've captured a cult member, who happens to be a high-ranking official in the planet's government!"

On hearing this, Yelisia became grave, "Has it deteriorated to such an extent? Tell me where the enemies are, and I will eliminate them."

"No, no, no, it's not time for that yet. I'll soon track down the exact whereabouts of these cultists, and by then, I may need you to send your elite Marine Corps, even the power of the Shipborne Church, to assist me in cleansing these heretics."

"It's possible, but it would be best if you could create an opportunity for me to conduct orbital bombardment directly."

"I'll try my best."

Yelisia had no reason not to agree to this. Orbital bombardment was the most convenient; if ground troops were needed, that was fine too. She didn't mind, as long as it meant earning merits.

Moreover, deploying the Marine Corps was different from the previous situation where people were said to be 'lent' but were essentially given away. The people 'lent' to Gu Hang were working for him on a long-term basis. With regards to missions, to fight or not, and how to fight, the entire command system was still under the starship's control, with Gu Hang at best providing a target and some advisory suggestions.

It was not a conceptually similar situation.

Yelisia's expression became somewhat calmer, and her heart relaxed a bit.

Her investment in the Governor seemed to be finally showing some sign of return.

Eradicating the heretic cult entrenched in the capital city of the planetary government somewhat counted as a noteworthy achievement.

Although it wasn't a major victory, the prospect of a return on investment invited anticipation, and there were still two years left.

Yelisia, in a better mood, asked a question she would later somewhat regret: "Very well, is there anything else?"

"Yes, I need synthetic starch technology," Gu Hang said.

Yelisia's face stiffened.

I originally thought you were just here to deliver a message, but it turns out you're here to ask for things, huh?

"I am only responsible for striking down the enemies of the Empire," Yelisia said. "Supporting construction is not my job."

"But this is for the purpose of striking down the enemies of the Empire!" Gu Hang argued. "What is at the core of the growth of cults? It's when people see no hope. When they can't even have enough to eat, they are easily tempted by cults. Synthetic starch technology could help us solve this problem."

Yelisia felt that Gu Hang made sense, but... could saving people with this method be considered a naval victory?

As she pondered, Gu Hang's voice came again: "Colonel Yelisia, please understand, it is necessary to wipe out our enemies with thunderous might. But if the situation

deteriorates to an uncontrollable state, where salvation can only be achieved through utter destruction, that may not necessarily be a good thing."

"A city corrupted by a cult then destroyed; or, the heretic cultists spread to a terrible extent, but are completely annihilated under the command of the madam colonel, with hundreds of thousands of citizens of the Empire saved. Please compare, which of the two scenarios is better?"

The destroyer, or the savior...

The former seems a bit cooler, but within the Empire—at least in the Tianma Star Sector—the latter holds more value.

Moreover, the identity of a savior aligns more with Yelisia's current mission. She came to orbit Rage Owl Star for two years not to fight and destroy enemies but to assist the governor in reviving the planets.

At this point, Yelisia had to admit that Gu Hang's argument had moved her once again.

She began to calculate what it would take to provide Gu Hang with the synthetic starch technology. Was the price too high?

The conclusion was, not particularly.

Starships of course have synthetic starch technology; during the long interstellar journeys, when resupply is scarce, the ability to recycle nearly any organic material into edible starch blocks is an essential auxiliary technology.

However, as important as it is, the synthetic starch machines aren't used frequently. In peacetime, starships can get supplies fairly smoothly, and no one really wants to eat starch blocks.

Currently, the food reserves on the "Quintet" are quite abundant, enough to last for several years.

And besides, there's more than one synthetic starch machine on the starship. Handing over one shouldn't be a big problem.

Of course, what Gu Hang wants is the technology, not just the machine. But that's not too troublesome either. Send down a logistician from the starship with one machine, some spare parts, and that should meet Gu Hang's demands.

In theory, this should be enough for Gu Hang to produce his own synthetic starch manufacturing machines, provided he has a certain industrial base.

If he does not, there's not much Yelisia could do: I'm not your mother, can I possibly feed you milk directly?

"I agree," she said.

Having given her consent, a transport with technicians and equipment arrived on the ground and, when it returned, Gu Hang loaded it with a fair amount of goods.

According to him, these were gifts for Colonel Yelisia from Rage Owl Star, the specialty of the place. But in fact, they were just a small portion of the food and textile supplies brought from Revival City, allocated to be sent skyward.

It wasn't meaningless, though; it would improve the crew's diet on the starship and provide some supplies.

It was, in any case, a way to show that the governor did not take without giving in return!

As for the difference in the value of the two... it's the thought that counts!

After watching the transport fly off into the distance, Gu Hang plunged back into his grand plans for expanding production.

Chapter 33 - Chapter 33: Chapter 33, The Fast Track to Development

Chapter 33: Chapter 33, The Fast Track to Development

In Gu Hang's plan, he intended for the Abandoned Cave Society to serve as the heavy industrial production center of his territories. It was well located, being closer to future raw material and energy sources in Rubbish Town and already possessed some mineral resource output.

The production line for alloy steel was there, and once the merchant named Dennison Henry brought back the heat-generating limestone power unit, Gu Hang planned to set up a power plant in the Abandoned Cave Society.

However, with the heavy industry and energy industry of the Abandoned Cave Society developing, a workforce of merely eight hundred would certainly not suffice. Gu Hang had been continuously sending workers from the Governor's Camp, who were originally expanding the camp and building an 'airport', to the Abandoned Cave Society to meet the labor needs of the alloy factory there.

But this labor pool had its limits, and the Governor's Camp needed people as well.

Production required people, expansion of the army required people, and right now, Gu Hang's demand for labor was very high. It was inevitable to absorb population from outside, which was precisely why he had made a special request to Dennison Henry to find ways to promote and bring in people.

Of course, those refugees recruited from outside Revival City might not necessarily be qualified industrial workers.

Let alone the refugees, even the people from the Abandoned Cave Society and the former slaves brought down from the starship were not really qualified.

Illiteracy was a significant issue; illiterates could perhaps toil, but it would be hard for them to grow into skilled technicians.

However, this was a solvable problem. Gu Hang had already requested the creation of night school classes in the Abandoned Cave Society, including his own direct camp, starting with literacy work before moving on to some basic skills training, experience summary, and sharing.

Inside the Abandoned Cave Society, there were indeed many who were willing to learn and eager to advance.

These people did not need much worrying over; as long as they were given the opportunity, they would be keen to strive upwards.

But not everyone had such a drive to improve themselves.

Now that they could live above ground, security concerns were no longer an issue, they could eat their fill, have clothes to keep warm, and they heard that soon there would be electricity and heating... Such treatment was enough to make them quite content.

Freed from the motivation to improve.

Gu Hang was certainly not pleased with this.

If no one strives to work hard, how am I to expand production and rebuild the world?

To address this, Gu Hang introduced a strategy: a work point distribution system.

Work resolved into work points, which determined material and welfare allocation. If you wanted to eat well, live well, and dress well, even allowing your closest kin to also lead a good life, then you needed to work diligently.

Moreover, several technical job categories were introduced at the worker level. Becoming a skilled technician through assessments meant earning more work points than an ordinary worker.

The requirement to become a skilled technician was to study diligently.

Also, although attending school did not grant work points, it did provide a free evening meal, which spared one from spending their allocation and saving money in the process.

With tangible upward motivation and a real increase in food allocation, night schools launched in the Abandoned Cave Society and Governor's Camp were widely welcomed.

On the other hand, finding teachers was not easy. For now, they could only use a few literate individuals among the servants brought down from the "Quintet" Starship to act as teachers; as for so-called professional technical training, it mostly comprised some experience and tips formed by a handful of sharp-minded workers during their labor, which were summarized and disseminated.

With an inadequate teaching force, expecting to educate exceptional students was unrealistic.

Gu Hang understood this point; given the circumstances, all he could do was to make the best of the situation.

As for the work points mentioned earlier, Gu Hang did initially consider whether to introduce a currency.

In the wasteland, the circulation of goods was extremely chaotic. Currency existed; the Alliance had issued the Revival Currency, and several major forces had also issued their own. However, these currency systems were not only disorganized, but the exchange between them was also cumbersome, and some remote settlements might not even recognize certain currencies.

The most popular method of trade on the wasteland still involved the very primitive barter trade.

The scale of Gu Hang's power was still too small to issue his own currency without exerting great effort to promote it, and using others' currencies could easily overwhelm the internal system with their volume.

Thus, he simply decided not to implement a currency and instead created an 'work points' system for internal use only, to serve as a motivational tool.

Earn work points by participating in production; consume work points to obtain housing and rations; this became a simple prototype of a currency under a planned economy.

Gu Hang did not plan to stick with a planned economy forever, but it would certainly constitute a major component. Concentrating efforts to accomplish big projects was, in Gu Hang's view, a very successful experience during development stages.

If the goal of the Abandoned Cave Society was to develop towards an industrial hub, the role Gu Hang envisioned for the Governor's Camp was as a transport hub and a center for light industry.

Transportation requires no further explanation, with its core task being the connection with the great treasure trove in the sky, the "Quintet." When Gu Hang chose the location for the camp, he picked a flat terrain with no natural defenses, primarily for this purpose.

The textile machinery and related technologies that Gu Hang requested Dennison Henry to purchase were part of the light industry that Gu Hang had planned.

Apart from textiles, there was also the food industry.

The synthetic starch manufacturing machines brought down from the "Quintet" had already begun operating under the guidance of technicians who came down with the ship. Additionally, a new synthetic starch production line was being constructed, mainly relying on various parts that had also been brought down from the starship.

The alloy factory at the Abandoned Cave Society had also received orders to manufacture qualified components as per the technicians' requirements; for parts with high demands on processes and materials, Gu Hang would produce them using Black Boxes of finished alloy plastic steel.

Of course, there were still some core components that the current industrial capabilities under his power couldn't produce. The technician who had come down from the starship was, at the Governor's request, trying to figure out a way to master this technology.

There was a good chance of success. The industrial base at the Governor's Camp started from scratch but had developed quickly, mainly thanks to some incredibly powerful materials and technology. Even if the alloy plastic steel produced by the Abandoned Cave Society was not satisfactory, the premium alloy plastic steel produced directly from the finished Black Boxes was of outstanding quality.

However, the scale of the synthetic starch production line could not be further expanded until the technology had been mastered.

Even so, the current production capacity was more than enough.

As long as there were sufficient raw materials and the production line was running at full capacity, there would be more than enough food to ensure that everyone under Gu Hang's command was well fed. In fact, there was significant excess capacity to stockpile food, or even sell it for export.

All these various plans of Gu Hang were waiting for Dennison Henry to bring back the first batch of goods and people before they could truly get underway.

The merchant from Rubbish Town did not keep him waiting too long and soon returned.

The inflow of people and resources was ‘devoured’ by the power under Gu Hang’s command.

With the two major industrial centers, along with the Mantan River Valley Manor already gradually restoring agricultural production, the overall productive power of the Governor’s power began to embark on a rapidly developing fast track.

Chapter 34 - Chapter 34: Chapter 34, A Ray of Light

Chapter 34: Chapter 34, A Ray of Light

Osenia surveyed her surroundings, her vision filled with a vast construction site.

The land of the esteemed Planetary Governor, proclaimed by that kind-hearted person as the ‘land of salvation’, seemed quite different from what she had imagined.

After the end of last winter, a massive surge of mutated monsters erupted in Osenia’s homeland, an area called the ‘southern provinces’ by the people of Revival City.

It was a huge disaster that completely destroyed many settlements.

Barely surviving the wave of mutant creatures did not mean the end of the disaster.

Unable to sow seeds in spring, having endured another winter, and due to fighting against the alien creatures... various factors caused a significant loss of food reserves. Hunger and shortages of supplies plagued the southern provinces.

What do people do when they can’t survive?

They become monsters.

Osenia and her younger brother originally lived a comfortable life. The soil in the southern provinces was more fertile and suffered less from the Low Energy Storms, so many of the local settlements could live off agriculture. In fact, the southern provinces were an important food-producing area, with hundreds of thousands from both the inner and outer parts of Revival City relying mainly on grain imports from the south.

Osenia's father was the owner of a plantation. Before everything collapsed, their plantation had a population of tens of thousands; during productive times, they not only fed everyone but also had ample surplus to sell in exchange for industrial goods.

Understandably, Osenia's standard of living was akin to that of a little princess, far exceeding that of the vast majority on this wasteland.

But all of that fell apart at the turn of spring and summer.

Outside, a great number of raiders besieged the plantation; then, a riot broke out within its bounds.

With their guards' protection, her family tried to break out and flee from the plantation at the last moment. Many who didn't take part in the riot attempted to escape alongside them.

But amid the chaos of war, she was separated from her father.

Concealing their identities, smudging ash on their faces, cutting off their hair...

She took her brother and followed the stream of refugees, finding herself aimlessly in Revival City.

Along the way, she suffered through many hardships.

For a morsel of food, she was willing to do anything, no matter how small the job, as long as it procured some sustenance. Even more desperate measures included begging, fighting tooth and nail, stealing, and deceiving...

Before the collapse, she was educated to be a proper lady; she had never imagined herself in such a state.

But she persevered.

Throughout these past months, she was so hungry she felt dizzy; her just over ten-year-old brother was malnourished.

Yet at least, they were both still alive.

However, she often found herself lost in confusion.

If one has never experienced goodness, perhaps they can fall endlessly in darkness. But just months ago, she was a little princess, the apple of her father's eye, worried daily about authenticating and restoring expensive pre-war art, helping manage the estate, and overseeing accounts.

Now, she hesitated over what to eat the next day.

More critically, there was no end in sight to such a life, no hope, no glimmer of light.

She felt she could hardly hold on any longer.

More than once she had thought that living in such a terrible world, perhaps death would be more of a relief?

But every time she looked into her brother's eyes, she shoved that thought away, clenched her teeth, and continued the grueling struggle.

Oddly enough, she hadn't been very close to her brother, seven years her junior, in the past. She even often found the mischievous little devil quite annoying.

However, over these past few months, she would rather die than abandon her brother. Once, when her brother was kidnapped, she bit the kidnapper like a madwoman, taking a beating that left her bleeding without loosening her grip.

She didn't know why, but she knew that if anyone dared to harm her only remaining family, she would fight them with everything she had.

But she deeply understood they were on the brink of not being able to survive any longer.

The great chaos in the southern provinces had a huge impact. The shortage of food imports caused food prices in Revival City to keep rising. Her part-time jobs were becoming increasingly insufficient to feed herself and her younger brother.

Recently, an even worse piece of news had spread: the largest grain merchant in Revival City had disappeared. Shortly thereafter, the city's food prices became even more volatile.

It was at this time that a traveling merchant opened a free porridge shop outside Revival City, in the slums.

Anyone could receive a warm serving of porridge in the shop, provided they listened to the entire declaration made by Mr. Gu Hang, the Planetary Governor, on his first day on the wasteland.

She had fought someone to secure a spot for her and her brother there.

The so-called Governor's declaration was a long one, and she was thinking about skipping some parts to get to the meal quicker. She couldn't remember much about what the Governor's declaration actually said.

Only one phrase remained clear in her mind: the Governor would ensure that everyone who submitted to him would have a good life.

The next day, the porridge shop was still open, and she came back. But this time, she was told that those who had eaten once were not allowed a second serving, unless they were willing to follow the caravan to the Governor's Camp and become subjects of the Governor.

She didn't hesitate and pressed her handprint on the paper.

After waiting for a few days, she headed to the camp with her brother when the caravan set off.

Although driven by desperation to follow the caravan to the Governor's Camp, wasn't there also a desire to change their circumstances and seek some light and hope?

She thought she would see a city that was quite well-developed, but instead, she saw vast areas of dust. There were many rudimentary cement buildings already erected, but even more were under construction.

However, looking at the large-scale construction across the camp, there should at least not be a lack of work opportunities.

But could her small frame handle construction work?

Osenia, who was full of confusion and uncertainty about the future, held her brother's hand and went to the registration area as arranged by the caravan.

When it was her turn, the registrar asked for some basic information.

Name, age, skills, desired occupation...

She answered truthfully according to her actual situation.

"Huh?" The person registering her suddenly exclaimed, "You're literate?"

"Uh... yes."

"That's great!" The registrar was overjoyed, "Head over to that table and fill out another form, congratulations, you will receive a good treatment."

Osenia went over bewildered.

There were hardly any people at that table.

After she filled out a form, she was assigned two tasks: during the day, she would work as a clerk in the soon-to-be-established textile factory, arranging and implementing production plans, keeping track of the output, and managing the production process...

The second task was to teach literacy classes at the evening school.

The work content reassured her quite a bit. This was something she was truly adept at; back at the estate, she would assist her father with some management tasks. While then it was agricultural production management, now she would be a clerk at a textile factory, that was still closer to her skill set than manual labor.

Especially when she heard about the treatment, she became even more excited.

According to the work point system, she could earn more than enough supplies every day to support herself and her brother, with some to spare.

Although everything was incomparable to her days as a little princess in the past, this was the only ray of light she had seen during her months of hardship

Chapter 35 - Chapter 35: Chapter 35, Henry ah Henry

Chapter 35: Chapter 35, Henry ah Henry

Dennison Henry discovered that every time he visited the Governor’s camp, he would see something new and surprising.

This time, having completed a business deal and coming to meet the Governor again, he was accompanying Gu Hang, inspecting the newly established synthetic starch production line.

He saw workers mixing the decomposed corpses of exotic monsters, scrap wood materials discarded after construction, and leaves and branches collected from the nearby woods, and feeding them into a machine. The other end of the machine output rectangular blocks of starch after crushing, decomposing, and restructuring the materials.

Each block weighed a standard fifty grams, and a few pieces could keep an adult from starving to death.

Even though the raw materials used in production seemed somewhat... strange, Henry still realized the enormous value of this technology.

Toxic monster carcasses, wooden waste, weeds with very low nutritional value, old clothes, torn fabrics... these things of little worth could be transformed into precious food in the wasteland after processing by this machine.

So what if the ingredients were disgusting? When people were starving to death, who cared about that?

This was bona fide food, carbohydrates, high in calories.

Wasn't this much better than foraging for wild vegetables, grass, bugs, and mixing them with a bit of grain to cook up a bowl of watery porridge?

Henry pinched his nose and personally tried eating a block.

The taste... it could be said was virtually tasteless, like eating plaster, at most with a hint of sweetness from partially saliva-digested starch, and a bit of saltiness.

But again, these issues were not problems in the wasteland.

Not to mention the life-threatening environment of the wasteland, even in the Imperial Star Realm Army and the Imperial Navy, when supplies were not so smooth, a significant proportion of food rations were met through 'corpse starch'. So who was nobler than whom?

It was a terrifying technology.

Henry was so amazed that his eyes bulged as he said, "Incredible, I..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Gu Hang raised his hand to interrupt him, "No talking, I just brought you to have a look."

"Uh..."

Henry's face turned slightly red with embarrassment.

But he quickly understood that this part of the business, especially the production line and technology, was something he could not obtain from the Governor.

In a sense, this technology had the potential to change the whole world, and it was immensely significant.

He could only feel regret and even more determined to cling closely to the Governor's coattails.

After visiting the newly established synthetic starch production line, Gu Hang took Henry to his office.

Henry, who had just completed a business deal, had quite a few things to report to Gu Hang.

Sitting in front of the Governor, Henry was somewhat reserved, “This time I’ve successfully accomplished my mission, and the alloy plastic steel has caused a sensation among the material merchants in Revival City. This material, which used to be available only in small quantities from Blackbird Heavy Industries and was tightly controlled by them, now has an additional channel, and those merchants are very happy, and our goods sold very well.”

“The items you wanted, I have mostly exchanged for you. The generators powered by thermoelectric stones should be enough for establishing a small-scale power plant. Moreover, I have mobilized connections in Rubbish Town to allocate a batch of thermoelectric stones. The looms are also adequate to open a production line. The gruel shops cum propaganda stations we set up recruited over two thousand vagrants...”

“However, Revival City has been somewhat turbulent lately, affecting our prices. The Alliance Council has gone mad with a city-wide hunt for Heretic Cultists. Many people got caught up in it, leaving everyone on edge. Rumor has it that a councilor responsible for food was discovered to be in collusion with the Cult. It’s said... it’s said that you, Governor, even lost your temper?”

Henry paused, stealing a glance at Gu Hang. Seeing no response to that question, he understood—the silence was as good as an affirmation, right? Maybe the person was even taken care of by the Governor himself.

He continued, “This matter has caused a great commotion, the whole Revival City is in chaos. And now that the councilor is finished, the food trade market he controlled has also become disordered, and the entire market is unstable. If not for this, we could have sold our alloy steel at an even higher price.”

“But still, things aren’t too bad now, are they? Revival City is the largest market nearby, not only capable of consuming various raw materials but, more importantly, it acts as a trade nexus connecting multiple forces and regions. I have also reached long-term agreements with many agents. They can take on a considerable production volume, so there is no worry about sales.”

“Additionally, those bulletproof vests we sold are an even bigger hit in Rubbish Town. They can even withstand a shot from Green Skin Orcs! Now our goods are completely popular in Rubbish Town! The activity of those Green Skin beasts has been expanding recently. Scavengers and adventurers are clashing with them more frequently, and arms and bulletproof equipment are now the hottest-selling items.”

“This is an opportunity, Governor. I don’t ask for exclusive rights to everything, but if you would grant me the exclusive sales rights for the armored vests, it would greatly help me secure the position of agent in Rubbish Town. Then, I could serve you even better!”

After reporting a multitude of information—mainly to take credit—Dennison Henry couldn’t help but bring up the matter of the exclusive rights he coveted.

In his eyes, Governor, you want me to prove my loyalty, but I've done enough this time, didn't I?

The materials and equipment you wanted, I wracked my brains to get them for you; the population you wanted to attract, I paid from my own pocket to bring them over.

Isn't that enough to prove my loyalty?

You're not willing to give me exclusive rights to the entire alloy steel production line, so granting exclusive rights just for the bulletproof vests isn't too much to ask, is it?

"Henry, oh Henry..." Gu Hang murmured his name, "Should I say you are smart, or foolish?"

"I...I don't understand?"

"You are so clever; you show me that you have accomplished things, made contributions. You also express loyalty and say you will do more, do better in the future, hoping to obtain exclusive rights from me. You worry that if you create a market for materials and bulletproof armor, more merchants will come to me to do the same business, preventing you from making exclusive profits."

Having said this and though it was meant to be a compliment, Dennison Henry just felt awkward.

What Gu Hang said was indeed exactly what he was thinking. It wasn't hard to guess.

But...

Who just lays it out so directly? Where do you expect me to put my face?

He didn't speak, while Gu Hang continued, "But you are so foolish, failing to see the essence of the matter. The production capacity of alloy steel isn't abundant, and expanding scale also takes time. For now and the foreseeable future, you can absorb all the goods—what is there to worry about?"

"Are you worried that if you don't work wholeheartedly for me later, I will find a better collaborator?"

"Are you worried that I will restrict your ability to manipulate the goods' prices, limiting how much money you can make in the future?"

"Are you afraid that you won't keep me reliant on you, the one behind the Governor in power?"

"Henry, oh Henry, tell me, are these your concerns?"

Chapter 36 - Chapter 36: Chapter 36, Knocking

Chapter 36: Chapter 36, Knocking

Dennison Henry dropped to his knees with a thud before Gu Hang.

Cold sweat had permeated his forehead.

The Governor’s three questions peeled away his psychological defenses layer by layer until they were completely stripped away.

He had not thought this way.

At least, he didn’t dare to consciously think this way.

But upon introspection, even by the instinct of a businessman, hadn’t he subconsciously done just that?

He was a merchant, and he was in the business to make money. The Governor, however, was not a merchant and always wanted him to do this and that. The additional conditions attached to the business inevitably impacted his profits.

He truly didn’t want other merchants competing with him for this business, even if in the future he couldn’t handle the full production capacity himself.

As for going one step further, he indeed hadn’t thought about it, but...

If he were the only one with exclusive authorization—and if in the future he managed to secure the agent qualification of Rubbish Town—powerful and influential under his command, and continued to grow stronger through exclusive rights, the Governor, looking to expand trade routes and further development, would gradually become more reliant on him. He would become a key official for the Governor; his every word and deed would have a significant impact on the Governor’s strategies, his voice becoming increasingly influential...

These unthinkable yet inevitably contemplated scenarios were crushed to smithereens by the Governor’s interrogation at this moment!

He kowtowed deeply: “Governor, I absolutely did not dare!”

Maintaining his kowtowing posture, he couldn't see Gu Hang's expression, only hearing the Governor's indifferent tone after a moment:

"Really? You're so clever, thinking about such deep matters, yet you can't even imagine this?"

"I didn't dare to think." Henry no longer dared to play any tricks—today, he had truly been dealt a clear lesson, "You're right, Governor, I am indeed a fool, unable to see the true nature of things. I should have realized that as long as I work diligently for you, I don't need to worry about those elusive matters. Thanks to your guidance, I've completely understood. Please give me another chance."

After speaking, he lifted his head, looked at the Governor sincerely, and then once again kowtowed deeply and heavily.

Seeing Dennison Henry's submissive demeanor, Gu Hang finally let a slight smile cross his lips, and his tone softened, "Since you can be a bit smarter and think deeper, that's good. Get up now, no need to kneel anymore, I'll take you to see a new batch of goods. Didn't you say that weapons and equipment are the best commodities in Rubbish Town? I think the standard weaponry widely equipped by the Imperial Star Realm Army would be very attractive to those adventurers."

Dennison Henry suddenly lifted his head, his eyes brimming with surprise.

After being slapped across the face, this date stuffed into his mouth was unexpectedly sweet!

The standard equipment of the Imperial Star Realm Army!

If he could get a batch to Rubbish Town, wouldn't they sell like crazy?

From the start, Gu Hang hadn't intended to chastise Dennison Henry.

Objectively speaking, the job the guy had done this time was not bad. Everything Gu Hang wanted was there; the thousands of workers had greatly supplemented his labor needs for the upcoming expansion of production capacity.

But the guy was persistent about exclusive authorization, which had annoyed the Governor.

So, Gu Hang did not hold back.

At the same time, he clarified something further: what exactly was Dennison Henry's position?

Maybe the guy saw himself as a collaborator. As a merchant, it was only natural to want profit from a partnership, to make money for oneself.

But of course, Gu Hang didn't share that attitude.

What he actually wanted to say was:

"I'm not scamming you or bluffing you. I'm offering you a chance to rise to the heavens in one step. Do you want to keep being a merchant, or become my subordinate, a high-ranking official in the future Planetary Government?"

A regular merchant, even if one has made some money by relying on His Excellency the Governor, how could that compare with the status of a real senior official?

Of course, this was an extremely risky matter. Whether the Governor could truly consolidate power in the future and develop his domain were decisions Henry had to make, risking his own capital investment.

But Gu Hang was full of confidence in himself and generously offered the opportunity to Henry.

At least for now, Henry seemed willing to seize the opportunity.

That was good.

What he said aloud wasn't the important part. After this statement, Gu Hang would carefully observe how Henry would perform in the future.

As for providing Imperial Star Realm Army standard equipment to Dennison Henry for sale, that was something Gu Hang had planned to do anyway, giving him a date to eat just came in handy.

The G9 Gun Family production line wasn't available yet, but it would be soon enough. In fact, they were already using the Black Box Manufacturer for small-scale production.

Afterwards, a complete production line replicated from the mother machine would increase the heavy industry capabilities of the Abandoned Cave Society with another line of armaments.

With the production capacity for alloy plastic steel material being sufficient, the production capacity of the G9 Gun Family would quickly catch up. Before long, they would be able to fully reequip the two infantry battalions currently under Gu Hang's command.

The phased-out G7 Gun Family would need a destination.

Selling them to Rubbish Town was a good idea, as Gu Hang's territory was rapidly developing and his demand for raw materials was significant.

Of course, he wasn't planning to sell them all.

He would set aside a small portion, mix them with the local mixed-brand weapons confiscated from mercenaries in the battle at the Mantan River Valley Manor, and make a bundled sale, which should fetch a reasonably good price.

The rest, Gu Hang planned to temporarily use them for the expansion of his forces.

He still intended to add to his military.

Currently, a portion of the newly recruited refugees, after simple registration and organization, would be assigned to the Abandoned Cave Society. Some would join the alloy plastic steel industry line, while others would participate in the construction of the Hot Ash Stone Power Plant.

Although Gu Hang still had enough energy crystal blocks, using these valuable high-energy batteries for industrial production was too extravagant. If there were cheap power plant construction capabilities, then saving the energy crystal blocks would be better.

Apart from dispatching people to the Abandoned Cave Society to fill the manpower gaps in heavy industry, the rest would set up a textile factory here at the Governor's Camp.

Human resources were still scarce, and yet, under such circumstances, Gu Hang was still intent on expanding his military.

In this Wasteland World, he did not feel secure.

Frankly, everything he was doing was still like dancing on a tightrope.

The Quintet above was mighty indeed, but it didn't belong to him.

He was the Governor, the ruler, but his directly-affiliated loyal forces were still too weak.

If powers nearby, like Rubbish Town or Revival City, were driven to desperation by him one day and launched an all-out strike, aside from having the Quintet strike back in revenge and obliterate a force from the planet surface, Gu Hang would have no choice but to await death.

And that's not even considering those low-probability events that were not yet in sight, just the present situation alone posed a threat to his sense of security.

The threat of the mutant aliens.

Chapter 37 - Chapter 37: Chapter 37, Hatching Nest

Chapter 37: Chapter 37, Hatching Nest

Gu Hang couldn't help but accelerate the expansion of military forces due to an imminent matter, not to mention his personal anxiety over the weakness of his own direct lineage and his paranoia about being persecuted.

Previously, there had been an attack by 'pustule monsters' within the Governor's Camp. Subsequently, Yan Fangxu led an investigation into the source of the monster attacks and discovered they were coming from a forest to the west.

Afterward, while Yan Fangxu took his soldiers for training, they used it as both a training exercise and an opportunity to exterminate these monsters.

They had no idea until they went there and were shocked by what they found. They encountered many monsters in that forest, not just pustule monsters. And they even discovered numerous monster breeding nests.

Gu Hang himself went to check it out.

The infested forest where the corrupted nests were densely packed had trees with bark already riddled with holes corroded by the secretions of alien creatures, emitting a strong stench of decay.

The breeding nest he saw was hidden in a damp and dark area of the forest, its entrance concealed by dense vines and thorns.

Upon burning away those vines and thorns, one could enter the nest. Parasitized trees surrounded the nest, creating a breeding ground that was dark and damp inside, filled with a strong alien odor lingering in the air.

In the corners of the nest, numerous alien creature eggs clung to the moist ground, with embryos of mutant monsters wriggling inside their semi-transparent shells. The eggs were covered in a thick layer of mucus, from which droplets occasionally fell, turning into pools of foul-smelling green pus. Cracks in the eggshells emitted eerie glimmers of light, casting sinister shadows on the walls of the nest.

At that time, Gu Hang ordered the destruction of the nest, burning it with fire and blowing it up from the inside.

However, that was just one small nesting site, and there was no telling how many more might be in the forest.

According to their subsequent assessment, if left unaddressed, a wave of mutant monsters would sweep towards Gu Hang's camp, including the Abandoned Cave Society, in a few months.

By then, the cost to quell this wave would be unpredictable.

Fortunately, the situation was discovered relatively early, and there was still time.

Gu Hang needed to expand his army to ensure the safety of the camp. According to his plan, once the troops were reorganized, apart from the necessary guard forces, the other units would take turns clearing the monster nests in that forest.

The main goal, of course, was to nip the problem in the bud as much as possible.

Besides that, there was also the immediate benefit to be gained, which Gu Hang valued highly.

That benefit was the Earned Rewards points.

When Yan Fangxu led his troops to destroy the first alien breeding nest, Gu Hang's interface showed the battle settlement.

No losses, two Earned Rewards points gained.

Afterward, he learned that there was a significant number of breeding nests within that forest.

His eyes lit up at the news.

You can call it a threat, and you would be correct. But in Gu Hang's eyes, it was also like a huge gold mine!

He had gone to great lengths to develop his territory, bring in population, deal with light industry, heavy industry, construction industry, got his hands on everything, and had barely managed to double his monthly fixed income from the previous 12 to 25.

He was planning to persevere further and increase that number a bit more when he would receive his rewards at the end of the month, but he had stumbled upon such a gold mine.

Destroying one breeding nest for two Earned Rewards points meant that burning down ten would equal a month's gains!

Why should I bother with farming... oh, farming is still necessary, these two matters don't conflict.

However, precisely because there was something to gain, he paid it a bit more attention.

The First Automachinary Battalion had barely moved, with forces split to guard Valley Manor, the Governor's Camp, and the Abandoned Cave Society.

The 2nd Infantry Battalion, on the other hand, was mostly thrown into the Strange Monster Forest—this name was newly coined by Gu Hang.

The battalion was left under the command of Captain Yan Fangxu, who was responsible for sweeping through the forest.

Over the past few days, seven nests had already been burned.

Captain Yan commanded the operations with caution; he would rather progress slowly and carefully to avoid losses as much as possible.

Conversely, Perbov, the former commander of the 2nd Infantry Battalion, was not too satisfied with this. In his opinion, during this time frame, let alone burning seven nests, he wished he could burn seventy!

How could he live up to the Governor's trust without achieving the battle results as quickly and as much as possible?

Gu Hang was very satisfied with Perbov's high combat enthusiasm.

Then, he chose to support Yan Fangxu's command strategy.

The situation wasn't so dire that it required filling gaps with human lives; Gu Hang had no need to order his soldiers to die unnecessarily.

The eradication of monsters within the Strange Monster Forest could still proceed methodically: eliminate the monsters, destroy the breeding nests, and take it slowly.

There were still several months ahead; even with Yan Fangxu's cautious strategy, the problem should be resolvable.

Of course, as a leader, Gu Hang needed to be even more cautious.

Destroying those seven monster nests brought Gu Hang a total of 11 divine grace points.

He planned to recruit another infantry battalion from among the refugees and slave laborers.

With the Black Box Manufacturer, he could quickly produce enough weapons and ammunition to equip them; by spending divine grace points, he could also quickly train these newly recruited soldiers into qualified warriors.

In Gu Hang's care, the rate of soldier production was exceedingly fast.

The Governor's will was quickly implemented.

A recruitment office appeared in both the Abandoned Cave Society and the Governor's Camp.

Residents of both places eagerly enlisted.

Of course, their reasons for enthusiasm were not the same.

The most eager were the residents of the Abandoned Cave Society; they had enjoyed a period of good days and fully cherished this time. They were willing to take up arms to defend the hard-earned results.

Next in willingness were the refugees who had just been allocated. They didn't have any particular thoughts, purely attracted by the Governor's generous treatment for recruiting soldiers.

Guaranteed food, two sets of military uniforms, weapons and equipment... These were enough to attract those refugees who had nothing.

Moreover, Gu Hang would also issue work points to them, which could be used at the distribution station to 'purchase' whatever they wanted. After two days of explanations, they clearly understood that work points were valuable.

Following Gu Hang's instructions, of the 300 soldiers in the 3rd Infantry Battalion, 150 were selected from the refugees, 100 from the starship slave laborers, and 50 from the Abandoned Cave Society.

The composition of the personnel was complex, but Gu Hang himself hoped that the military, this great melting pot, could amalgamate soldiers of different backgrounds as much as possible.

The more effective melting pot, however, was the [Soldier Tag] System.

With a short duration of training, Gu Hang would have a qualified infantry battalion.

With three to four days of training and about six days of equipment production, this infantry battalion would be formed.

While busy preparing the troops and planning a strike in the alien woodland, Gu Hang also didn't forget another matter:

How is the investigation of the cult situation in Revival City progressing?

Chapter 38 - Chapter 38: Chapter 38, Attack Warning

Chapter 38: Chapter 38, Attack Warning

The cult crisis sparked by Senator Wohan reverberated throughout Revival City.

Through the accounts of those refugees and the words of Dennison Henry, Gu Hang had learned that the authorities of Revival City were already in complete disarray.

He was quite satisfied with this situation.

The turmoil created an opportunity to set the stage for his future intervention in the political landscape of Revival City.

So, even though he knew that the Alliance Council was in a state of panic, Gu Hang had no intention of backing down.

On the contrary, he was planning to fan the flames even higher.

He connected with Hodgson.

"Hodgson, why haven't you taken the initiative to contact me during this period? Where is the explanation I demanded?"

Hodgson's voice was filled with fatigue, "Your Excellency, we have taken a series of actions and initially achieved some results. I had planned to report to you after gathering more information. However, since you need an answer now, I can report our current findings..."

"I'm listening."

Hodgson began his report.

Clearly, he was prepared for the possibility that Gu Hang might seek him out earlier than expected. His speech flowed smoothly, detailing the actions taken by the Alliance Government in Revival City during this time.

Gu Hang listened patiently until Hodgson finished.

Hodgson was a bit surprised; he had been ready to be interrupted at any moment during his account, but the Governor had not done so.

However, he did not feel relieved.

This might signify that the Governor harbored even greater fury in his heart.

As Hodgons's anxiety began to mount, Gu Hang's voice rose slowly, "Oh, is that all? What remarkable achievements indeed."

"Several cult-affiliated suspects have been arrested, some cult materials have been uncovered... But what then? There is no clarity on the extent of the cult's infiltration in Revival City, nor any understanding of the detestable heretics' plans. Those cult materials, even someone like me who has been on Rage Owl Star for less than two months is already vaguely aware of; the few small fries caught haven't disclosed any useful information, I can't even be sure if these individuals are scapegoats put forward by someone else."

"Don't you think that the Alliance Government should put forth more effort for the safety and security of Revival City?"

As expected, the inevitable had still come.

Faced with the Governor's questioning, Hodgson slowly began, "You are right, the Alliance Government does indeed need to exert more effort. Our following sweeps will intensify. However, as for results, we do have one piece of intelligence that hasn't been confirmed."

"Oh?"

"We have reason to believe you may be the target of a cult attack. It seems they're aware that Wohan was dealt with by you, and they may even know that the current crackdown in Revival City, which targets them, was personally ordered by you. They might be planning a retaliatory strike against you."

Gu Hang's expression had turned utterly cold, "Unconfirmed intelligence mentions they want to attack me... How exactly is this intelligence unconfirmed?"

"In an intercepted communication, your camp's location was mentioned, as well as an approximate number of armed forces you might have. Although the intelligence doesn't specify what will be done, our analysts believe your current situation is somewhat dangerous. I strongly advise you to return to Revival City as soon as possible, where the Alliance's military can pledge their undying allegiance in ensuring your safety."

After Hodgson finished speaking, Gu Hang fell silent.

This was truly a formidable warning.

In an instant, Gu Hang considered many things.

He finally spoke slowly, “Speaker Hodgson, you’ve truly given me a major surprise.”

Hodgson sighed.

The tone of Gu Hang’s voice let him know that his earlier concerns were justified.

This matter, not easy to discuss, could easily be misunderstood, and he had no way to clarify.

He said, “I maintain my suggestion, Your Excellency, please return to Revival City as soon as possible, where your safety can be assured.”

“I will take care of security, as for the cult... I hope that the next time I communicate with you, you’ll have more to show for it.”

As for Hodgson’s proposal to have him return to Revival City, he couldn’t even be bothered to reply with half a word.

...

After hanging up the communication, Gu Hang did not look pleased.

A warning of an attack targeted at him...

This matter had too many and too deep implications behind it.

Was it true, or was it false?

Regardless of the answer, it was no longer good for Gu Hang to pressure the old speaker.

In terms of results, they had one, wasn’t the safety of the governor a big deal?

Yet, upon learning this piece of information, Gu Hang found himself in a dilemma.

How should he respond to this security threat?

Focus on his own safety, and thereafter be cautious in everything? That would obviously take up his attention, and he might not have as much energy to trouble Revival City afterward, to the extent that even the fast track of his power’s development that he had just embarked on could be affected as a result.

But he couldn’t just ignore it, what if it turned out to be true?

Yet, if he were to take action, what could he do?

The method of attack was completely unknown. Was it an assassin hidden among the refugees he had taken in? A bomb? A raid by a squad? An army?

Even if nothing happened, Gu Hang couldn't go after Hodgson.

After all, according to that old fellow's words, the intelligence was unverified, and he did not say that it was forced out by Gu Hang insisting on results. Even if nothing happened in the end, it would not have much to do with the Alliance Government.

Telling the lord governor to be cautious about his safety was never going to be wrong, right?

Hodgson's warning cast a shadow over Gu Hang's heart.

He could even consider the issue from an even darker perspective: was this a warning from Hodgson or the Alliance Council not to manipulate the governor's authority too much, hinting that just as he had the power to sever ties and perish together, they had it as well?

Even if the information was fake, the authorities in Revival City had the means to turn it into reality.

Considering this possibility, Gu Hang's expression grew even grimmer.

However, the bad news today kept on coming one after another.

Only a short while after ending the call with Hodgson, his aide Zhang Chao rushed in, looking somewhat panicked.

"Lord Governor, we've received a distress signal from Captain Yan Fangxu! They're trapped in the monster forest, under siege by a large number of beasts!"

Gu Hang did not respond immediately.

After a while, Zhang Chao swallowed hard, finding it difficult to speak again, "Governor?"

It wasn't until then that Gu Hang let out a long sigh.

"I'm aware. Gather our troops, prepare to rescue Yan Fangxu."

"Yes!"

Watching Zhang Chao rushing off again, Gu Hang sighed once more.

“This warning, it’s been realized quite timely.”

————

Thanks to the great Fox Tail for the chapter recommendation~

Also, a friend made a few fan arts of the characters, but it seems I still can’t post a bonus chapter... you can go back to the latest chapter and click into the character page to see them~

Chapter 39 - Chapter 39: Chapter 39, The Fire Holder

Chapter 39: Chapter 39, The Fire Holder

In fact, up to now, Gu Hang still couldn’t be sure whether Yan Fangxu’s entrapment was part of Hodgson’s warning.

If it was, then the capabilities of the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect were rather significant. Not only did they wield the Storm Sorcery bestowed by the Evil God they worshipped, but they could even control those mutant monsters to some extent?

But to say it wasn’t would be too much of a coincidence.

He had also wondered, could this possibly be a case of luring the tiger away from the mountain?

Surrounding Yan Fangxu, drawing away the main forces from the camp to rescue him, and then attacking the camp?

But soon, Gu Hang discarded the idea.

Not very likely.

If his enemies were simply those mutant monsters, it seemed those creatures didn’t have the intellect for it.

If his enemies were the cult, or even worse, certain individuals within the Alliance Government, then destroying Gu Hang’s camp wouldn’t be of much value to them. After all, whether Gu Hang was causing trouble for the cult members or the Alliance Government, his main reliance was always his power as the Governor.

As long as he was alive, what did it matter if his camp was destroyed? Those people's troubles would not lessen one bit.

Of course, it wasn't entirely impossible. If the rescue troops sent by Gu Hang weren't led by him personally, then the enemies might take the opportunity to kill him by attacking the camp.

And if he personally led the rescue team, he would have to be prepared to face an ambush.

No matter how one looked at it, the situation was complicated.

But Gu Hang was not one to dwell on issues.

Since the challenge had arrived, he would meet it head-on.

...

Within Revival City, Hodgson sat in his wheelchair, gazing at the entire city through the large glass window of his office.

Truthfully, Revival City wasn't particularly large, nor did it have many tall buildings. The planning of the buildings and roads within the city was orderly, a sound foundation laid by the first Governor when establishing the Alliance.

However, after so many years, although the inner city still looked decent, the outer city clinging to the perimeter of the city walls, and considerably larger, was chaotic. Hundreds of thousands, nearly a million people, depending on the city for their existence, yet unable to live within the city walls, formed vast slums.

There, lacking planning and order, everything was a mess. Sewage ran openly, supplies were scarce, and living conditions were harsh. These issues hung over the area, an undesirable sight not fitting for a capital city of an Alliance planet.

Many Alliance Councilmen and inner city residents disliked those displaced persons. They believed these people brought chaos, and considered the slums a breeding ground for filth.

But the smarter ones clearly understood that Revival City in fact could not do without those people.

The displaced living in the outer city consumed the worst and least food, with hardly any clothes to cover their bodies and their dwellings haphazardly constructed. The inner city did not pay them for any public services or welfare benefits, yet they labored in the most grueling jobs, receiving only a dismal amount of compensation, just enough to keep them alive.

Without them, how could the inner city residents live comfortably? How could those councilmen earn wealth far exceeding their contributions?

Therefore, these smart individuals occasionally displayed their compassion generously. They offered more work, distributing charity to the displaced, as if they were truly saving them.

But they had no intention whatsoever of seeking welfare for those who barely counted as residents.

Letting nearly a million displaced live a better life? That was simply unthinkable. Inner city residents were still dissatisfied with their own lives not being good enough, so how could they spare the energy to care for the outer city's displaced? Their only kindness was allowing fewer to die.

The even smarter ones might see the crisis lurking in the lowly, broken houses beyond the city walls.

Under those submissive and numb expressions, was there not also rage?

Indeed, the fire had burnt numerous times before. But the sparks were too feeble. The sporadic resistance was either crushed under the immense inertia of the deformed system or scattered in the face of armed police.

In summary, these sparks had not yet become the inferno that could consume everything.

But that day would inevitably come. What was needed was a fuse, what was missing was a firebearer.

Hodgson was acutely aware that he belonged to 'the smarter ones'. He could see all of this, but his wisdom ended there. He could not find a solution, nor did he have the ability to unite and consolidate everyone. He couldn't even control the Alliance Council.

There were those in the Council who secretly supported the Cult, unbeknownst to him;

There were those who dared to attack the goods bound for the Governor, which he could not stop;

The endless obstacles when mobilizing military police to investigate the Cult, combined with endless debates and queries in the Council, left him exhausted.

More than once, he felt that he had truly grown old.

But he dared not step back.

The investigation into the Cult was originally an order from the Governor, meant to stir Revival City's political scene. However, as he delved deeper, he began to sense that something was amiss: The fuse he had feared, the firebearer, seemed to have already emerged.

"Grandfather."

Lambert Hodgson pushed open the doors to the office.

Hodgson did not turn around, merely asking, "Is there a result?"

"We have still not located the whereabouts of the supplies. Councilwoman Marlene has denied the supplies passed through her hands. Two agents responsible for this line have vanished; in the outer city, we've found many Rage Owl statues, supposedly originating from a relief station. A group of police attempted a search there but sparked a minor riot among the vagrants, returning empty-handed. When we deployed more forces, the place had already been torched..."

Hodgson sighed deeply, "This time, we are in serious trouble."

Lambert agreed with his grandfather's assessment, and for that reason, felt somewhat helpless.

He asked, "We thought it was just the Governor giving us problems, but as we kept investigating, it really sent chills down one's spine. Those Cult followers are planning a big event in Revival City, but we still don't have any clear intelligence... What do we do next? The Governor could very well be attacked; shouldn't we offer support?"

"Who should we send? I can't even be sure that the ones we dispatch won't turn out to be the same ones attacking his Excellency the Governor. The Governor himself might think the same and wouldn't trust us easily."

"Then we must make our stance clear," Lambert insisted, "I'll go, leading a squad of absolutely trustworthy men."

"Do you understand what this means?"

"I do, it means we'll face the Governor's suspicion and be considered by those Council members as completely siding with the Governor, getting squeezed from both sides."

Despite speaking of grave consequences, Lambert's tone grew firmer as he went on:

"But I've come to understand what you meant when you said 'only the Governor can save this world' last time. We can't be sure if this Governor is the right one, but at least right now, he seems a bit different from his predecessors. He's chosen a path the previous Governors dared not take; he has the support of a Starship that previous Governors

lacked. I want to try. If he isn't the Governor we're hoping for, I'll do everything in my power to help him become one."

"We don't have much time to wait for more Governors; the whole planet is yearning for revival, the sooner the better. I would rather contribute now instead of continuing to wait in silence. Being a catalyst for the times is far more meaningful than waiting for the times to change before frantically jumping on board."

The young man spoke of his grand ideals in front of his elder, who just quietly watched him.

After a long while, Hodgson let out a long breath, "I'm quite old now, living to this age in this wasteland, I have lived enough and can't make bolder decisions. You've always been better than your father, if that's what you want to do, then go ahead and do it."

Chapter 40 - Chapter 40: Chapter 40, The Storm is Coming

Chapter 40: Chapter 40, The Storm is Coming

As the young man bid farewell to his elders, within the confines of Revival City, Perbov, the Primal High Priest of the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, was performing his daily mandatory ritual.

In a brightly lit hall, stood the divine statue of a god that resembled a bear with the wings of an eagle. Carved from white marble like stone, the furious visage of the Rage Owl God threatened to engulf any onlooker in its wrath. Those who stood before it felt as if a storm was hurtling toward them, and the faint of heart could be shattered by its winds.

Primal High Priest Perbov sat steadily before the statue of the Primordial Rage Owl God.

He was receiving the baptism of the storm, while also hearkening to the fury of the divine spirit.

At that moment, a cleric wearing a gray hood silently appeared behind the High Priest.

Keeping his distance, he did not feel the wind, but he knew well the consequences of standing before the stormy effigy.

And the High Priest had been standing there for a long time.

The cleric's eyes were filled with fear and devoutness as he reported in a low voice, "High Priest, our actions within Revival City have encountered some resistance. The governor who is not in the city has put too much pressure on the Alliance Government. They have increased their scrutiny of us substantially. Many supplies can no longer be transported openly using official channels, and our proselytizing among the outer city's vagrant population has been forced underground."

The High Priest turned around, his gaze deep, as if peering into the soul of the cleric. Though his lips did not move, his voice, like a gentle breeze, arose at the cleric's ear, "The power of the storm is boundless, and we shall overcome all obstacles to fulfill our divine mission. Any hindrance will ultimately be destroyed by the storm, even if it is that governor."

The cleric was wholeheartedly convinced, "You are right. The Howling Wind Divine Envoy sent a message earlier; the enemy has taken the bait. We should soon receive good news. Once the governor is dead, all of Revival City will be thrown into chaos! They cannot endure the fallout of the governor's unnatural death. They will be too afraid of the starships above, and no one will have the capacity to care about what we are doing."

The High Priest sighed, "Time flies, and humanity still wallows in ignorance, only the storm can lead them out of the darkness. Our mission is to spread God's glory to every corner of the world."

The cleric respectfully responded, "As you say, High Priest. We will spare no effort and not disappoint the expectations of the storm."

The High Priest prayed in silence once more, then lamented, "May the storm guide our path, that we might be a beacon to those wandering in the dark. Go now, my child, and be blessed by the Lord."

The cleric bowed reverently, then slipped away quietly, leaving the High Priest alone before the statue of the Rage Owl God.

...

Yan Fangxu was becoming acutely aware that something was amiss.

He led the newly formed 3rd Infantry Battalion, freshly equipped, on a cleansing mission through the alien woodland.

Four hours earlier, his troops had purified a monster nest.

They had slain dozens of the creatures lurking around the den, and the tasks that followed were no different from before. Although the size of this hatchery was larger than any they had encountered before, it still hadn't exceeded their imagination.

After destroying the nest, they prepared to depart for the next location.

Then, the surrounding woodlands erupted with the sound of dense gunfire.

Yan Fangxu's command style had always prioritized stability. Even though he had already destroyed many hatching nests before, upon encountering this one, he still didn't relax his vigilance in the slightest. He didn't miss a single perimeter alert that should have been set, and when it came to destroying the hatching nest, he also didn't neglect to establish a temporary defensive position. In short, his approach highlighted methodical combat, leaving no flaws whatsoever.

He knew that old fellow Perbov had been grumbling behind his back about his slow efficiency, wishing to get the 2nd Battalion to do the job, allowing the newly formed 3rd Battalion to stay at home. But obviously, the Governor-General trusted him—a bona fide Imperial Captain—far more than the crash-trained Perbov.

And he didn't let the Governor-General's trust down. Since the operation began, the team he led had suffered very few casualties.

Especially today, his caution paid off.

The soldiers on perimeter alert discovered a very large group of monsters approaching. They opened fire first, delaying the monsters' advance, and also bought time for Yan Fangxu here.

The alert soldiers fought as they retreated, and by the time they returned, Yan Fangxu had already directed his troops to construct a triangular defensive position. Each of the three infantry companies took a position, with parts extending outward to create angles, ensuring that their fire could provide mutual cover and support for one another.

To be able to achieve all this in the more than ten minutes bought by the perimeter alert soldiers was due in part to Yan Fangxu's skilled command and prior preparation, with his troops strictly adhering to discipline, without any letup; on the other hand, it was also because the overall military proficiencies of the entire 3rd Battalion were fully up to the mark.

Even though they hadn't been in a tough fight yet, the soldiers were visibly tense. But their morale remained high, and they carried out their orders meticulously, meeting the standard norms of the Imperial Star Realm Army.

Every time he saw this, Yan Fangxu couldn't help but sigh in amazement.

Such troops weren't too common even on the Quintet Starship. Most of the slave servant army or mechanized soldier servants didn't reach this level. Only a few land battle regiments were capable; and as for the Land Assault Team he brought down, they were

indeed more elite, but there were only about a thousand soldiers of this caliber on the entire starship.

The soldiers smoothly constructed the defensive position, which considerably eased Yan Fangxu's tense mood from the sudden attack.

When those enemies appeared in front of them, the soldiers began to fire fiercely.

Under the crossfire, the monsters fell in swathes.

They quickly repelled the monster horde's assault.

The disgusting, differently shaped pus monsters lay dead everywhere. The dark green pus that oozed from their bodies was exceptionally foul-smelling.

Disgusting as it was, the threat was indeed not much of one. Enemies that can only rely on biting, short-range pus spray corrosion, and can die from being shot, stood no chance under the barrage of firepower.

But before they could relax a little longer, the enemy's second wave of attacks arrived.

It was still a large number of Pus Spewers, human-shaped, beast-shaped, and indescribable things covered in swellings, rushing out from the woods, screaming towards the position. And among this second wave of attack, there were some that possessed long-range attack capabilities.

Pus Spewers.

These monsters looked similar to the ordinary pus monsters, except they had a nozzle, either in the chest or on the top of the head. They would stop at a distance of around fifty meters, accumulate for a brief moment, and then spray out a large volume of yellow-green pus from the nozzle.

These monsters capable of spraying highly corrosive pus posed a significant threat to the position.