Governor 311

Chapter 311, I am a federation person!

In the Green Valley Region, a group of investigators had just returned from hunting…oh, investigating clues.

They too had heard the Governor's speech on the broadcast.

A young Judge, hesitating, opened his mouth and said, "This 'team leader' of ours… did he really come back to investigate clues? Why did he dump us here and disregard us, running off to give some global speech? It seems to me he doesn't take the investigation team's work seriously, he just wanted to come back to be the Governor!"

His question prompted a burst of light laughter from the others in the investigation team.

He was confused and didn't know what was so funny about what he had said.

The others, too lazy to explain, were also strangers to one another. There were those from the national religion, the Sect of Mechanics, the Psychic Cultivator's Association, the Legal Department… Formed into a temporary team, they didn't want to engage with this clueless youth in any conversation out of turn.

Only an old Judge from the Tribunal, like him, helplessly stopped the young man who was about to speak again, pulling him aside and started muttering in a low voice.

"Why blurt out such blunt truths? If you can see it, don't spout nonsense; otherwise, everyone will just laugh at you."

"Why? Can't even talk now?"

"So, Mr. Gu, the team leader, is coming back to be the Governor, and what are we doing here on Rage Owl Star?"

“Investigating clues!”

“What have you investigated these past few days?”

“Er…” he recalled that each day was spent finding different delicious things to eat. The agricultural produce here, grains, meat, and the like, were all natural.

Such natural foods were a rarity in the empire, especially in larger, heavily populated planets like Nest Capital.

Naturally bred livestock and fresh vegetables and fruits, where could they be compared with mass-produced synthetic meats, artificial fibers, and vitamins in terms of cost-efficiency?

While the high-ranking elites and wealthy tycoons certainly didn’t need to worry, these investigators were not the top figures of their respective forces; they were comfortably middle-class, hardly rich.

So, naturally, they hardly got to eat such natural foods.

As for the so-called investigation activities… he previously thought they were indeed investigative, but looking back now, it was merely hunting trips to relieve boredom.

“Come here, be treated to good food and drink, and you might as well enjoy yourself as if you were on a holiday. Still talking about investigating? The outbreak of the demonic disaster here was controlled as soon as it started, and it’s been a year and a half; what else is there to find?”

“This…” The young man found it hard to accept.

“If you can’t stand it, go investigate yourself; you can also report it when you get back. But let me tell you, don’t make trouble for yourself. If you report it, nothing will change. This is tacitly approved by the higher-ups, even the result of some exchange of interests.”

With that, the veteran Judge fell silent.

Upon returning, a familiar face, laughing, said, “Why bother with so much? A young man will learn after running into a few walls.”

“Isn’t it about not spoiling everyone’s fun?”

…

On Rage Owl Star, not only the investigation group had listened to the entirety of Governor Gu’s speech.

There were also over 250,000 interstellar immigrants.

Of those, 210,000 had come with Governor Gu during his return aboard the Korolya III; the remaining 40,000 had been brought over from Heijian Star while the Gu Commercial Firm’s ships were transporting supplies for the stationed Alliance Army.

Throughout Governor Gu’s speech, he talked about the Alliance, the development of Rage Owl Star, and barely mentioned these immigrants.

However, the immigrants were still incredibly excited after hearing the Governor’s words, filled with hopeful anticipation.

They felt the power and determination of the Alliance as the governing body of this planet through the past achievements outlined by Governor Gu.

And in the future painted by the Governor, they saw a better life beckoning to them.

The Alliance indeed did not specifically mention what would happen to these people, but it was actually completely unnecessary.

Each of them, upon arriving at Rage Owl Star, was assigned a corresponding rank. Generally, they were all at the E4 level, which failed to reach the E5 level of formal citizenship in the Alliance, meaning their rights as citizens were not complete, and their welfare benefits were also substandard.

But… whether it's the people from Korolya III or those from Heijian Star, there generally wasn't any dissatisfaction.

E4 was enough, after all, the welfare and allowances received per capita amounted to 0.3 Tax Currency a year.

Wasn't that enough?

When Korolya III treated people like livestock, having per capita expenses amounting to 0.1 was already considered generous by the overlords.

The consumption of food and industrial products had tripled at once, what did they have to be unsatisfied about?

Moreover, a bright path lay before them. Being granted the E4 rank was a start. The Alliance had allocated them corresponding work or educational opportunities, under fairly relaxed conditions, that merely required working hard for one year. Advancing to the E5 rank and gaining full citizenship rights as well as improving their own treatment was a simple matter.

Mr. Gu, the governor, spoke sentence after sentence about the Alliance, but every sentence was also about them.

The vast majority of them had already shed the fear of being far from their homeland that they had had while migrating on the starship.

Let the miserable slum areas of Nest Capital be damned! We are now part of the Alliance!

Mandoya Lucas was one of those who had quickly transformed their sense of identity.

And unlike most of her compatriots, although she came from the lower strata, she had made a name for herself through various strokes of fate. At the age of forty, she ended up in the upper district, and relying on her own studies, became a Nest Capital urban planner.

It sounded good, but in reality, she was just another worker.

Due to her poor background, her professional ceiling was limited, and many of her ideas and designs were not valued.

She had so many plans that, if realized, could greatly improve the living conditions and quality of life for the residents of the bottom city area, but those designs were always confined to the bottom of a box.

If she completely abandoned her past, perhaps she could live decently.

But she just couldn't forget the lower city area of Fino City.

The environment there was perilous, it was rife with bad people, gangs ran rampant, cults proliferated, honest people lived in miserable conditions, yet would become oppressors given the chance…

The place was almost wholly rotten.

But she never thought the people there were to blame.

It was the environment of despair that was the root of all evils.

When the plague broke out, she was 'back home' conducting surveys, working on a new round of designs.

Caught in the disaster, she, like many refugees, was rescued by the military from Rage Owl Star, saved her life, and then was hazily sent aboard the starship bound for Rage Owl Star.

After listening to Mr. Gu's broadcast speech, she was deeply moved.

This was a kind of statement she had never heard on Korolya III—the nobles there didn't even bother to pretend to care for their subjects.

A glimmer of hope arose in her.

Perhaps her abilities could be put to use on another planet.

With a nervous heart, she found the team leader of the textile factory job she had been assigned to, revealed her capabilities, and hoped to meet 'the people higher up'.

She thought she would face a lot of difficulties, as it was very common on Korolya III. She had even prepared many arguments to enhance her credibility.

But there were none.

She made her way up and met Mr. Parter, the mayor of Weixing City.

Chapter 312, Starport Construction Investment

This broadcast speech to the entire Alliance was certainly not a whim of Gu Hang's.

He had at least three layers of purpose in this matter.

First and foremost, as the union had just completed the unification of the whole planet, he needed to address all citizens in his capacity as a ruler and proclaim the legitimacy of the Alliance.

This would help boost the confidence of the people.

Secondly, he also had to use this means to convey his political ideology to the officials of the Alliance Government.

Thirdly, he had been away from his center of power for half a year and needed to make his voice heard in public in order to strengthen his own prestige.

Regarding the second and third points, they couldn't be solved with just one speech.

Or rather, whether it was the implementation of ideals or the maintenance of personal authority, neither could be resolved once and for all in a short period or by a single action. This required his long-term and continuous embodiment.

In the following period, Gu Hang's schedule became incredibly busy.

He hardly stayed in Revival City for a long time and was flying all over the Alliance. Today he would meet with a regional governor, tomorrow an important mayor, and the next day he would visit a military garrison to offer comfort to soldiers.

After a round of such visits, upon returning to Revival City, Gu Hang would then meet with important members from various departments of the Central Government…

Indeed, during his visit with the mayor of Weixing City, Patel, he heard about a middle-aged female worker who had been assigned to an ordinary factory in Weixing City but was in fact a city planner from Korolya III.

Although she was not the main architect of the whole city, her experience in urban planning for such a 10 billion people metropolis like Fino City, and even her rare personal insights, made her a sought-after talent.

In just over a month, by observing around Weixing City, she identified several unreasonable aspects in the urban construction planning. By redesigning the road network and urban development, simple and localized changes significantly improved logistics efficiency and the smoothness of city resource traffic at certain nodes.

The roads for transporting raw materials and outputting products finally stopped conflicting with each other, resolving the chronic problem of frequent congestion in that area.

Latter, she even came up with a complete set of three-dimensional construction plans, as well as a vision for the integration of Revival City and Weixing City, based on some planning documents of the Alliance Government.

All these things astonished Patel, making him feel as if he had stumbled upon a treasure, leading him to bypass normal channels for talented individuals, hoping to greatly elevate the position of the lady named Mandoya Lucas. He even made a special mention of this during his visit to the governor.

Gu Hang was also very pleased.

If she could handle urban planning in a metropolis of ten billion people, let alone in Weixing City, which currently has only millions of inhabitants.

Although Weixing City was planned as one of the most important industrial centers of the Alliance from the very beginning, it had its limitations in terms of scale and the capabilities and vision of the planners, which meant some things were not perfect.

With the addition of such a talented individual, he was indeed eager to have a good chat with Ms. Lucas.

Unfortunately, he truly did not have the time.

At least not for now, as he was about to lead some members of the investigative team back to Korolya III to report.

After this return trip, he had other matters to attend to.

He would have to wait for the next opportunity with regret.

…

Nothing significant happened during Gu Hang's trip to Korolya III.

He no longer had ships from the Gu Commercial Firm at his disposal, but the Alliance had produced a starship capable of interstellar travel, equipped with weapons and shield systems.

The weapons system was barely adequate. Against some destitute interstellar pirates, it could still fight, but if the enemy was slightly larger in scale, there would be big trouble.

However, the route from Rage Owl Star to Korolya III was not considered dangerous. Aside from the Green-skin Plundering Fleet that suddenly appeared last time (which may well have been drawn by the system), there hadn't been much news of interstellar pirates.

Interstellar pirates, risking their lives to acquire ships capable of cosmic travel, would of course want to make big money. The few shipping lanes around Rage Owl Star were not bustling with activity and were even as poor as ghosts, so pirates were too lazy to come there.

In short, even traveling on a starship, the chance of an incident was very low.

However, the starship was small, with a crew of only about five hundred people. It could not transport a large amount of materials and was not convenient for bringing back items from Korolya III.

On this trip to Korolya III, Gu Hang took some of the investigative team members with him and exchanged a few. During the period, a little kid even ran to tattle on him, but the final result of that, of course, sank like a stone in the sea.

He didn't pay it any mind.

Some representatives of the investors had also returned. Gu Hang didn't know what they would specifically tell their bosses, but at least from the feedback obtained from the Alliance Foreign Affairs Department and the Department of Commerce, they were basically satisfied with the situation on Rage Owl Star.

This also brought back some positive results.

Gu Hang stayed on Korolya III for two days. On the first day, he mingled with the investigation team, wrote reports, drank tea, and had chats with Grand Mage Zhang Guang'en and the like.

On the second day, he met with a few investors and signed several investment agreements regarding the Rage Owl Star Port.

The investments were generally not large; those able to make a decision so swiftly were honestly not the big spenders. Their gestures were more like backing Gu Hang the individual. The common investment amounts were only around a hundred thousand Tax Currency, at most two hundred thousand.

Altogether, the investors contributed roughly seven hundred thousand Tax Currency.

This, of course, was far from enough for building a large-scale Starport, and Rage Owl Star needed much more than this seven hundred thousand Tax Currency.

Despite this, Gu Hang accepted all offers without exception.

Why refuse money?

He included it all as shares in the Starport, to be distributed as dividends accordingly.

Moreover, Gu Hang didn't use this batch of money for himself; instead, he immediately signed another agreement with the Gu Commercial Firm. Along with some previous savings from the alliance and one million Tax Currency contributed by his mother, this money became the investment from the Gu Commercial Firm into the Rage Owl Star Port.

In total, this amounted to two million Tax Currency.

The Gu Commercial Firm then began to leverage its connections, reserving the schedule for a construction starship from a Sect of Mechanics' Foundry World two Star Sectors away. They would arrive at Rage Owl Star in one year and begin construction.

In another year, the Rage Owl Star Port would be built up to a scale capable of docking large vessels and supporting a substantial population and throughputs of material goods.

All in all, including the costs of hiring labor, materials, and inflight industrial components, the total cost of Rage Owl Star Port was projected to be around five hundred million Tax Currency.

Even though much of the materials and groundwork would be extracted, smelted, and produced by the alliance themselves, and although the alliance's own space construction machinery would undertake a significant portion of the work, the actual cash or equivalent material costs incurred would still be around two hundred million Tax Currency.

This was a massive investment, exceeding the current financial capacity of Rage Owl Star.

Miss Wang Qi had expressed her concerns to Gu Hang, but he didn't listen.

It was indeed a bit extreme, but he believed it was a necessary investment.

Otherwise, relying solely on the slow construction by the alliance itself, it would take five to ten years to develop the Starport to the same scale.

The losses incurred in that period would not just be time spent on Starport construction but also the prime opportunity for the development of Rage Owl Star.

He would rather spend two hundred million to seize this opportunity.

As for how to raise this money, Gu Hang wasn't too worried.

A down payment of two million had been spent, and the construction schedule for the starship was set, which itself reflected Gu Hang's determination. This resolve could directly resonate with other investors.

Gu Hang was no swindler; firstly, he had a planet vouching for him, secondly, the Gu Commercial Firm stood behind him, and thirdly, he had recently become a notable figure in the Tianma Star Sector's political sphere. He believed he could attract a considerable number of investors.

For many wealthy individuals, investing in the construction of a Starport on a planet with promising development potential was quite valuable.

Gu Hang aimed to raise fifty million Tax Currency when the Sect of Mechanics' construction ship arrived in one year and then exceed one hundred and fifty million within two years.

This would suffice to cover the costs for these two phases of the project.

What if he couldn't raise enough funds?

Then the Gu Commercial Firm would cover the shortfall.

The Gu Commercial Firm was affluent.

Although the money didn't all belong to Gu Hang, or even entirely to the Gu Family, it didn't matter; Gu Hang was the Family Head, and his mother was the actual controller. They could fully use the Gu Commercial Firm's name to invest in the Rage Owl Star Port. Whatever the shortfall, they would cover it with shares, converting it into fixed assets for the Gu Commercial Firm.

Of course, this would definitely cause discontent within the firm and attract opposition. After all, the firm had always emphasized, aside from investing in starships, not partaking in other heavy assets investments unless necessary, and investing in a Starport clearly broke this tradition.

But on one hand, Gu Hang believed his mother could resolve these issues; on the other hand, even if it caused some disruption, in comparison to the construction of Rage Owl Star, it was an acceptable trade-off.

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If it really had a significant impact on the family business, his mother would assess it and wouldn't agree thoughtlessly.

…

After signing that pile of agreements on the investment and construction of the starport, Gu Hang hurriedly boarded a shuttle and returned to Rage Owl Star.

Upon his return, he continued his busy life traveling around the planet for a while, finally making a complete tour of all the important regions of the world and meeting all the key figures in the alliance.

Once he finally had some free time, Gu Hang began to plan how to spend the over fifty thousand favor points he had on hand.

Unquestionably, the spending of favor points was the greatest tool in enhancing the strength of the alliance.

Drawing for technology, of course, was a major part of it.

However, before he started drawing, Gu Hang set aside a portion of favor points for other purposes.

He resolved the other matters first, and whatever favor points remained, he would use for the drawing.

And what were these so-called other matters?

Broadly, they were in three areas: construction, talent, and military.

Let's start with construction.

He exchanged for 13 civilian factories and 27 military factories, costing a total of four thousand favor points, all of which he allocated to the various factories in Weixing City.

The forty factory exchange items essentially covered the entire area of Weixing City.

The number of factories in Weixing City, of course, wasn't just limited to these. However, the exchange items for [military factories] and [civilian factories] had a covering effect. Smaller-scale factories could cluster together and share an exchange item, all benefiting from the boost.

Conversely, if the factory was too large, it might require multiple exchange items to cover it in order to truly enhance the factory's production efficiency.

These four thousand favor points and forty factory exchange items, according to the description text in the [construction] interface, basically ensured that the entire Weixing City area's production capabilities were upgraded by a [moderate extent].

In the past, Gu Hang had also exchanged factory options and allocated them to some military factories. After a detailed inquiry and comparative study, he could roughly estimate that this so-called 'moderate extent' of enhancement was about 15%.

This was quite impressive.

It meant that without changes in worker skill, quantity, technology, or management structures, production capacity increased by 15%, which was certainly a very good effect.

Specifically, in Weixing City, the annual output had already reached ten million tax currency. A 15% increase in production capacity represented an additional output of three million tax currency worth of industrial products each year, most of which were military or heavy industrial products.

Why three million?

Because the factories that Gu Hang boosted, of course, weren't 'generously' chosen. Some low-value ones, such as bullet production lines and textile factories, weren't really necessary. Instead, lines like the Lion Tank, armored vehicles, Wind Falcon, and steelmaking… these larger scale, higher value-added. A 15% increase in their production capacity brought about a far greater increase in output value than a uniform enhancement.

And remember, this was every year, not a one-off deal.

Extend the timeline, and those growth rates could be enjoyed long-term.

Besides that, Gu Hang also strengthened the alliance's education system.

He could see in the [construction] interface that the three academies he had previously established, the Loyal Heir Academy, Comprehensive Academy, and Technical Academy, all had advanced upgrade options available.

The price for each was five hundred favor points.

Gu Hang never begrudged investments in education; increasing the quality of the populace was of significant importance to the construction of the alliance. Besides, he now had an abundance of resources, and a total investment of one thousand five hundred favor points was entirely affordable.

After completing these enhancements and upgrades, Gu Hang also saw a new building listed in the construction menu:

[Mage Academy].

Chapter 313, The Cradle Project

[Mage Academy: Once you have built an academy dedicated to teaching control of Spiritual Energy and specific Psychic Spells, and have set it into operation, you may redeem this option to assign to the designated academy. It slightly increases student learning efficiency and faintly increases the chance of loyal talents becoming available for activation. New troop type available for training: Psychic. Exchange value: 5000 favors. Training cost: 100 favors/person]

The effects of this Mage Academy are similar to the other three, except that the bonuses for training general talents, technical talents, and loyalists are applied to the training of Psychics instead.

It's just that the price has soared straight up compared to when those other academies were first established.

But Gu Hang still had no doubts and clicked to exchange.

The main reason was that the training of the Psychics was too enticing.

It was particularly fitting for his current situation.

The training of Psychics, even with the system, still requires the trainees to have a talent for Spiritual Energy.

This is quite normal, just as when Gu Hang was cultivating new blood for the Phoenix Battle Group, he had to train them from the age of teens, step by step from T5 to T1. During this process, many people could only advance to T3 or T4 level and could not train further, which meant that this level represented the person's highest potential.

And the proportion of people with the talent for Psychics in the population might even be lower than those with the potential to reach T1 level.

However, compared to training T1 level warriors and cultivating new star warriors, training Psychics is much "simpler".

First of all, there's no upfront investment.

To train a T1 warrior, one must practice all the way up. Before then, no one knows whether a still-growing youngster has this potential, one only knows after beginning the training. Therefore, training a T1 warrior requires 100 favors, exchanging a seed costs 100 favors, but in actuality, Gu Hang has to spend a thousand or two points of favor for a round of selection to eventually find two or three suitable candidates.

Of course, the extra expenses were not without value; they were thrown into the 10th Brigade to become special forces. Equipped with Exoskeleton Armor and more elite weapons, they also formed a not insignificant force.

When training Psychics, there is no such worry. One glance at the training interface to see if someone is trainable, and if not, just drop it; there's no cost upfront.

Moreover, training for Psychics is very suited for Gu Hang.

Where does human talent for Spiritual Energy come from?

Basically, it is the sensitivity of the human spirit to the source of Spiritual Energy—the Subspace.

Those with higher sensitivity naturally possess talent.

In the past, this was a disaster. Those with a talent for Spiritual Energy, even those so high they naturally possessed certain supernatural powers without training, could constantly hear whispers from Subspace, endure massive mental pressure, and go mad. Moreover, they themselves would be targeted by malevolent entities within Subspace as conduits to the real world.

A person wielding uncontrollable power, prone to madness, and likely to attract Demons… obviously, this was a source of disaster. In many places, there was a tradition of witch-hunting to proactively eliminate these dangers, resulting in customs and religious edicts.

In fact, under the earlier environmental conditions of the entire Empire, Psychics were likewise subject to stringent control, with many individuals with talents for Spiritual Energy being executed directly.

Not until the Divine Emperor ascended and carved out a space in Subspace to establish the Spirit Network.

Wild Psychics without control are still dangerous. They possess talents but are unaware, untaught, unsupervised, and thus very likely to fall into madness under the whispers of Subspace, lose their minds, go out of control, or even become beacons for Demon invasions of the real world.

But trained Psychics can direct their sensitivity to Spiritual Energy to the Spirit Network built by the Divine Emperor, allowing them to use Spiritual Energy safely. They will not be targeted by malevolent entities within Subspace, and the likelihood of plunging into madness and losing control of their power is greatly reduced.

This has made Psychics a truly exploitable part of humanity.

At the same time, it has established the importance of the Psychic Cultivator's Association. They are not only responsible for cultivating Psychics, Star Speakers, navigators, but they also collect wild Psychics.

Those who can still be saved are trained into legitimate, legal Psychics; those already mad or corrupted by Demons beyond saving are dealt with.

In such an environment, Gu Hang "coincidentally" has two things that tie in nicely with it.

Firstly, he obtained authorization from Zhang Guang'en, a big shot at the Psychic Cultivator's Association, to establish a branch of the Psychic Cultivator's Association on Rage Owl Star. This was something he needed to do, and it would allow him to get a foothold into the upper echelons of the Empire's power structure through the Psychic Cultivator's Association.

Secondly, Gu Hang "just happened" to control a piece of the Subspace Divine Kingdom. The essence of a Psychic fundamentally lies in their sensitivity to Subspace, which, logically, cannot be taught as it's innate. But with Gu Hang, it's not the case. Unless they are so-called 'Untouchables', completely Subspace Insulators, Gu Hang can turn anyone with even a slight talent for Spiritual Energy (which actually most humans have) into Psychics.

Chapter 313, Cradle Plan_2

Even those with the most stubborn physiques, when placed inside the Divine Realm for ten days to half a month and thoroughly bathed in Subspace's blessing from head to toe, would suddenly become sensitive to Spiritual Energy. Upon returning and coordinating with the system to undergo a training for a specific type of soldier, they were certain to become Spiritual Energy users.

Of course, there was no need to go to such extremes. Gu Hang wasn't aiming to create a society of all Spiritual Energy users. The Rage Owl Star, due to the presence of the Storm God Kingdom, naturally had a thinner veil to Subspace compared to other planets, which was why resources such as the Spiritualized Gas Field existed. Even more so, Gu Hang suspected that this Cult, that Cult, along with the Iron Men Rebellion, had much to do with the planet's thinner veil of reality.

In such an environment, the likelihood of Rage Owl Star People manifesting as Spiritual Energy users was inherently higher. Not to mention, now that Gu Hang had seized control of the Storm God Kingdom, it had an extensive yet benign influence over the entire planet, subtly resulting in a considerable number of individuals with innate Spiritual Energy talent.

In fact, the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect was a case in point: while it was rare in other places to find high-grade Spiritual Energy users, there were a plethora of evil sorcerers among them.

Of course, there were differences between the two. After all, Spiritual Energy users belonged to the category of "scholars," "mages," and were people with innate talent who became such through training. Whereas the so-called evil sorcerers received their powers directly from the Evil God, somewhat akin to Gu Hang's previous idea of "stuffing a person into the Divine Realm for a baptism," which greatly reduced the requirement for talent.

Setting that matter aside for the moment, the benefits Gu Hang could reap from almost whimsically cultivating Spiritual Energy users were obvious.

Firstly, the number and quality of Spiritual Energy users collectively determined the status of the Rage Owl Sect's Psychic Cultivator's Association within the entire system of such associations—it was the grade of the "high-level power field entry ticket" Gu Hang had previously contemplated.

Moreover, the Psychic Cultivator's Association could request funding from the Empire, with the allocated amount directly depending on the size of the association.

Furthermore, having a multitude of trained Spiritual Energy users was inherently of great value.

The combat effectiveness of Spiritual Energy users was formidable. At lower grades, they might not be as reliable as a laser gun, but who said that Spiritual Energy users couldn't also carry guns? Moreover,

they had a higher potential for development. When they reached C grade—the level of ability Gu Hang himself held at two or three—, they could influence the outcome of a company-level battle.

They also had strong functional capabilities in scouting, interrogation, infiltration, special operations… all of which were excellent supplements to regular elite forces.

Furthermore, one shouldn't fixate on mere combat. Once Star Speakers were trained, they could construct the Star Language Tower, which was a potent export product; Star Navigators were indispensable for interstellar travel.

After training these individuals, it was beneficial whether Rage Owl Star employed them itself or sent them out to work for others and earn wages.

Especially in terms of sending them out to earn wages—this wasn't Gu Hang being ruthless, but rather, it was standard procedure under the Psychic Cultivator's Association system.

The Navy, different planets, the Empire Commerce Guild, the Sect of Mechanics, the national religion… even the Starfighter Battle Group; as long as there were interstellar travel and communication needs, they had to go to the Psychic Cultivator's Association for personnel. When these people were sent out, they had to be paid, and a portion of that money would go to the association that trained them.

Whether it was a regular cut or a lump-sum buyout fee for their training, fostering one was hugely profitable.

And the best part was, even though Spiritual Energy users were working for others, they were still under the jurisdiction of their respective associations, which could recall them if necessary, compensating some money; if the contract ended, they could choose not to renew it.

Being a top-tier organization with the potential to enter the Imperial Supreme Council, the Psychic Cultivator's Association didn't have the massive scale of the Sect of Mechanics or the national religion but still had its own confidence.

Gu Hang had quite the motivation to cultivate Spiritual Energy users.

Construction of the Mage Academy had already begun site selection. The Minister of Education had even inquired about the name of the academy. “Hogwarts” almost slipped off Gu Hang’s tongue, but in the end, he restrained himself.

He decided to stick to being more straightforward.

“Let’s call it the Storm Mage Academy, and the future Mage Corps will bear the same name.”

…

In terms of construction, Gu Hang spent a total of 11,500 points of grace.

He still had over forty thousand.

The second major expenditure was on talent.

In the Alliance, Gu Hang had activated people like Osenia, Yan Fangxu, Perbov, Tadeusz, Wu Jiarong, and others using the “Hero” system.

He had already appreciated the benefits of activating heroes. No matter what their initial aptitude was, after becoming heroes, not only did their abilities greatly improve on the spot, but they also gained a high potential for growth.

Not only could levels be raised through experience in handling affairs, enhancing abilities, but also that so-called rarity could grow—though it was much harder and seemed to require certain key opportunities.

No matter how you looked at it, these early-activated ‘heroes’ had now grown to become pivotal figures in various fields within the Alliance.

Therefore, he had to continue without letup.

In the past, when the Alliance had only a few thousand or at most several million people, there were already several candidates who could be activated. Now, with a total population of 45 million in the Alliance, even the number of non-military government staff had reached nearly 130,000. Naturally, the number of activatable “heroes” had increased significantly.

So far, Gu Hang could now see more than five hundred people who could be activated as “heroes” in his talent interface.

This was a significant number.

Gu Hang himself was internally mocking, “What kind of ‘heroes’ are these? Is it wholesale or what?”

However, from another concept, it could be understood as people with the potential to become “heroes.”

Most of them were of the most common N grade. Those who reached the higher R grade were fewer than twenty; there was only one SR grade.

Gu Hang planned to activate all of them, which would cost just over six thousand in blessings.

Among them, some already held important positions; others were still unknown.

For the former, there was nothing to say, and Gu Hang wouldn’t give them any special treatment. They would stand out in their lives and work within the Alliance system after their “hero” attributes were activated and their abilities significantly enhanced.

As for the latter, Gu Hang planned to elevate them to higher positions.

There were corresponding positions within the Alliance system to arrange for talents in government and business. They wouldn’t be too high, but at least they would be a position where they could utilize their abilities to a certain extent, like a deputy director of an office, an assistant to a project, a deputy manager of a factory…

In the military, those with command talent would be given positions around deputy company level or company leader level; single-combat types would be transferred to the 10th Brigade.

In these positions, Gu Hang believed that the vast majority of them would excel.

Of course, before that, they would have to undergo special training.

Gu Hang made a list of these five hundred and some people and handed it over to the Alliance Government. Officials from the Ministry of Education would then review their records according to the list, mainly checking for any learning experience at Loyal Heir Academy.

As for the twenty at R grade and the one at SR grade, Gu Hang also specially noted them.

They would not be rushed; their treatment would be the same as everyone else's. However, in the higher echelons of the Alliance, the names of these few individuals were specially marked, and they would receive more attention.

Regarding the cultivation of such a large group of people, Gu Hang coined a name, called the 'Cradle Project.'

He hoped that from this cradle would emerge a batch of true heroes.

Chapter 314, Military Construction

The Storm Mage Corps and the Cradle Plan, these were the two central cores of Gu Hang's subsequent efforts in talent training.

The former focused on cultivating extraordinary functional talents with Spiritual Energy practitioners at its core, constructing the path of the Psychic Cultivator's Association; while the latter was an indispensable part of talent building throughout the full-spectrum development of the Alliance itself.

In these two areas, Gu Hang was very willing to invest a substantial amount of grace points.

So far, his total investment of grace points in architecture and talent has reached more than seventeen thousand.

He still had over thirty thousand at his disposal.

Next, it was time for military construction.

Regarding military equipment, this did not require grace points but relied on the Alliance's own productivity; however, personnel needed the training function provided by the [Soldier Card] panel for supplementation.

First, it was about replenishing the existing troops.

The Blackbird Campaign, with both stages combined, resulted in a personnel loss of over seventy-five thousand for the Alliance Army; the Rage Bear Legion's battles on Korolya III had also accumulated losses of ten thousand to date.

Under the banner of glorious victory, the Alliance Army also paid the price with heaps of corpses.

This number of losses was actually not small at all.

Before the victory of the Blackbird Campaign, the Alliance's total manpower pool without initiating a conscription order was just under five hundred thousand, almost fully utilized. The active military personnel of the Alliance had exceeded five hundred thousand. During the mid-to-late Blackbird Campaign, the Alliance initiated a second-level conscription order, shifted production capacity to military industries, and expanded the scope of conscription to withstand the pressure.

Now, the conscription order was canceled after the war ended. However, after the victory, the Alliance gained control over the entire western part of the continent; with the West Desert Province and three other provinces, adding a population of eighteen million to the Alliance, the strain on available manpower significantly eased.

Gu Hang had no intention of massively expanding the army for the time being; he simply established six armored composite divisions numbered 60 to 65, organized and structured to match the current Wind-Extinguishing Brigades.

At the same time, all the other existing Composite Camps were also restructured to this standard.

Regarding the 1st Extinguishing Wind Brigade, which was always used as the model of innovation for the Alliance Army, it was further strengthened and reorganized.

Firstly, all the Composite Camps increased their personnel and removed all motorized infantry companies, switching entirely to 4 armored infantry companies plus 2 tank companies, and likewise included engineer, logistics, communications, reconnaissance, anti-air, and other functional troops within.

Such a company's strength grew from the original eight hundred and some to twelve hundred, increasing by half and becoming nearly the size of an average battalion, with the density of technical equipment many, many times that of a conventional battalion.

For the entire brigade, the main Composite Camps increased from 5 to 8; the original tank battalion also increased from 1 to 2. Artillery support companies for each battalion, along with the brigade's own artillery battalion, shifted from towed artillery to much more mobile self-propelled artillery. The brigade headquarters also included various functional troops.

The brigade's total strength increased from nine thousand one hundred to twelve thousand; the number of tanks grew from eighty to two hundred four, a 2.5-fold increase, while the number of armored vehicles soared from two hundred to nine hundred. In addition to the numerically dominant infantry fighting vehicles, there were also more of the 'Walker' series including anti-aircraft and command vehicles. Directly under the brigade headquarters, there were three aviation formations, totaling thirty Wind Falcons.

All soldiers were collectively trained from T5 level to T4 level by Gu Hang; the equipment of the front-line combat infantry would be completely switched from the G series of projectile rifles to the LR series of laser rifles or HS series of electromagnetic rifles.

As a luxurious enhanced Composite Brigade, serving as a demonstration army, its construction period would be long, probably not a task that could be completed quickly.

From the price alone, one could see. The Wind-Extinguishing Brigade's cost would skyrocket from the original 90 grace points plus less than six hundred thousand in tax currency to 1320 grace points plus one million eight hundred thousand in tax currency.

The improvement in soldier quality and the significant increase in technical equipment density undoubtedly meant that the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade's combat strength would surge greatly. Although the number of people only increased by about three thousand, the combat strength likely increased many times over.

However, Gu Hang was also not sure if the improved combat strength compared to the increased costs would mean that the cost-effectiveness had actually improved.

The construction cost had tripled, which was easy to explain, as the significant increase in equipment quantity directly bolstered combat capability. It was the extra thousand-plus grace points spent on improving troop quality that he wondered if they could truly enhance the combat power tenfold.

Gu Hang was somewhat skeptical of this.

But on the other hand, how could he know without trying?

After all, it was only one brigade. The 1st Extinguishing Wind Brigade, as a demonstration unit, was meant to undergo such experimental restructuring.

The remaining issue would likely be for the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade to head to a certain battlefield and put their enhanced combat strength to the test, to see if it matched the exaggerated cost increase.

But now on Rage Owl Star, there were no battles requiring their intervention. For regular domestic suppression tasks, there was little difference between the cheapest garrison division and the most expensive Elite Armored Combined Brigade.

Chapter 314, Military Construction_2

But the Alliance now also has two battlefields that need manpower.

They are Korolya III and Heijian Star.

Gu Hang thought for a moment, then decided he could throw the entire Wind-Extinguishing Brigade onto Heijian Star.

Lately, there had been fighting there.

He would discuss the specifics later, as Gu Hang's attention was still on building up his forces.

To establish six new brigades, upgrade another nine composite brigades, and significantly strengthen the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade, a total increase of over sixty thousand soldiers was needed; the additional military budget for equipment would require an increase of almost six million Tax Currency.

The shortage of equipment was a separate issue. Given the Alliance's current production capacity, the pressure was considerable. However, as the Alliance developed, this pressure should be rapidly relieved. At the same time, the substantial military orders would stimulate the development of the Alliance's industry.

As for manpower shortages, with new units being formed and the replenishment needed for previous units' losses, Gu Hang would need to recruit nearly one hundred and forty thousand people into the military in total.

The former Alliance definitely couldn't have handled such recruitment, nearing the limits of a second-level mobilization order in terms of available manpower.

But now, the pressure wasn't too great.

The Western Desert, the three western provinces, the population migrating to the Alliance… The Alliance's total population had soared from twenty-five million to forty-five million. The newly added manpower could now be put to good use.

After the mobilization order had been lifted, the expected available manpower was also more than eight hundred thousand.

The current Alliance Army, including the Rage Bear Legion, had so far only used six hundred thousand people.

For those who had recently joined the Alliance, enlisting was not a bad choice. As soon as they joined, a private's treatment was equivalent to an E6 level. If they stayed for a while, performed well in training, or gained some military tenure, it wasn't unlikely for them to be promoted to officer or non-commissioned officer rank. At the very least, reaching the level of veteran soldier was not a bottleneck.

Veteran soldier treatment was equivalent to an E9 rank, and the transition to this level was direct upon retirement.

As for injuries, sacrifices… these were inevitable fates for a military career. However, the Alliance's compensation policies had always been relatively generous, mitigating many people's worries about their future.

These one hundred and forty thousand people would enter the training camps established all over the world by the Alliance Military and Political Department for initial training.

After that, Gu Hang would work his 'magic' among them.

The training costs for one hundred and forty thousand people, even if all were only trained to the T5 level, with a favor granting training to one hundred people, would still consume fourteen hundred points.

Adding the approximately thirteen hundred points needed for the Wind-Extinguishing Brigade, the total cost would be two thousand seven hundred points.

As the military scaled up and higher standards were required for troop quality, training costs, once thought negligible, began to feel significant.

Still, all things considered, this was not the main expense.

The real expense lay in the cultivation of the Starfighters.

So far, the number of Phoenix warriors remained around thirty people.

Commander Matins was already quite satisfied with this.

When he was wandering in the past, he had never dared to hope that in less than three years, their numbers could swell from seven to thirty-six.

As for Gu Hang, not continuing to increase the number of Starfighters wasn't because he didn't want to; it was mainly because it was too expensive.

Gu Hang had calculated that the average cost of training a new Phoenix recruit, taking into account the initial selection and training, as well as the exchange for seeds, was about six to seven hundred favor points per person.

This was quite an expensive feat, and using Starfighters in war was unquestionably a luxurious act.

Beyond the expense of favor points, the Powered Armor and other exclusive equipment for Starfighters also represented a considerable outlay.

The reason for not having previously increased the number of Starfighters further was also due to a shortage of Powered Armor.

Currently, the Powered Armor used by the Phoenix, aside from their original seven units, were all ordered by Gu Hang from the Gu Commercial Firm.

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Fifty thousand tax currency per unit, not including any other equipment.

And if we include other equipment, not to mention cheaper bomb guns and chainsaw swords, then there are thrusters, plasma guns or thermoguns, powered swords, missile racks, and even Terminator Armor, Dreadnought Mechs… all of these cost a fortune.

Buying them just isn't feasible.

Not to mention those other pieces of equipment, just to get another twenty powered armors would drive the price up to a million tax currency. At that time, it was Gu Hang who, in order to tie these Starfighters to his own battlefield, and given the commitments made to Phoenix amidst the onslaught of the Green Skin pirates, gritted his teeth while his cousin directly paid the sum as a gift to cope with the situation.

Subsequent purchases would be too costly.

And the channels for buying are very difficult.

Not only are Interstellar Warrior Powered Armors expensive, but their production capacity is also low. Usually, only some Sect of Mechanics' Foundry Worlds possess the technology to produce them. But the key point is that the demand isn't high.

A standard Starfighter Battle Group, when fully staffed, consists of only about a thousand people. Even factoring in a surplus for reserves, the total demand wouldn't exceed fifteen hundred to two thousand suits at most.

And these powered armors can only be worn by Starfighters.

The Regular Powered Armor that regular people can use is not the same thing.

Given such limited demand, many Foundry Worlds capable of production don't manufacture in high quantities. If you only buy a small quantity, they can't be bothered to produce it for you; you can only hope there's surplus stock. If you buy in bulk, they're willing to start up production, but then the price is unaffordable.

Ultimately, when it comes to powered armor, the notion that “it’s better to buy than to build” is entirely inapplicable.

The production of powered armor, as well as other Starfighter-specific equipment, must rely on in-house manufacturing.

It’s simply a matter of spending more Grace Points.

In fact, Gu Hang had already made up his mind to extract some Starfighter-related technologies. After completing the “Phoenix in Peril” storyline, he could specifically choose to extract Starfighter technologies during the tech draw, which greatly reduced the element of chance.

Putting the tech lottery aside for now, Gu Hang also planned out a sum of Grace Points, about fifteen thousand or so, estimating it would be enough to train twenty new members of the Phoenix Newblood.

They themselves would also require at least six months to two years of growth, and during this time, the Alliance’s self-produced powered armors should be available.

Even if they can’t be made, or it’s not cost-effective to do so, drawing out technologies and pulling out Black Boxes to distribute them would also be feasible.

And the fifteen thousand Grace Points spent would bring additional benefits besides the twenty new members of the Phoenix Newblood.

That would be a large number of elite soldiers at T2, T3, and T4 levels.

T4-level soldiers would be distributed among various units. These are the first batch to be eliminated during the Starfighter training process—those with the weakest potential. In regular units, they are also top-notch soldiers and their arrival would be warmly welcomed by those units.

As for T3 and T2 level soldiers, they all went to the Tenth Brigade.

This special combat brigade now had a size of over four thousand, all of whom were filtered out during the process of Starfighter training. With the Alliance's self-produced Exoskeleton Armor, they could also operate bomb guns and chainsaw swords individually. Their combat power might be far less than that of the genuine Starfighters—in a real confrontation, they might be easily slaughtered.

But against other regular infantry units, they could inflict just as much chaos.

The difference in numbers was significant.

After all, there are only a few dozen Starfighters; they aren't available for every mission.

The special combat brigade of several thousand, on the other hand, was different.

In fact, during the previous Blackbird Campaign, the Tenth Brigade had already demonstrated outstanding performance. They frequently led the assaults on key targets, often fulfilling their missions without tarnishing their reputation and reducing heavy casualties for regular units; they also conducted special airborne operations, infiltrations behind enemy lines, decapitation tactics against enemy data transmission and command nodes, and sabotaging enemy logistics centers…

At that time, the special combat brigade with only two thousand men had proved more useful than several divisions.

Chapter 315, Power Armor Technology

After completing the army construction, including the Phoenix Battle Group, Gu Hang only had 18,000 grace points left.

In fact, regarding the military, Gu Hang had another minor expense.

That was the Black Arrow Corps.

The army led by Perbov consisted of five bona fide divisions of the Alliance, stationed on Heijian Star, helping Nes Luman stabilize the domestic situation.

After all, the army of the Luman Kingdom had been basically smashed in the war a year ago. That place was not peaceful, and it needed troops to be stationed there.

At the same time, Gu Hang also needed an army there to ensure the stability of the victory fruits obtained by the Alliance in the last war.

However, with a sizeable Luman Kingdom population of forty million, which was almost as many as the native population of Rage Owl Star, it was unrealistic to expect a force of less than fifty thousand from five divisions to completely hold the ground.

The Black Arrow Corps of the Alliance essentially held a fixed position in the capital of the Luman Kingdom, Pincer City.

And the defense work of the entire kingdom still depended on the Luman People themselves. Only when there were issues that they truly couldn't resolve would the Black Arrow Corps of the Alliance deploy.

Also, the number of the Black Arrow Corps could not be too small.

Gu Hang had already given Perbov the authorization to recruit soldiers locally in the Luman Kingdom. Corresponding weapons and equipment would be transported to the Black Arrow Corps in supply ships between the two planets—mainly relying on the Gu Commercial Firm, making the trip every six months.

Many of the extra individual equipment and artillery were used to establish new troops.

These troops were distinct from the native troops of the Luman Kingdom. Gu Hang required that the new troops absorbed by Perbov into the Black Arrow Corps must be reported to the Alliance Military and Political Department, following the official establishment process of the Alliance army; at the same time, he demanded that in this troop, the initial ratio of officers from the Alliance should exceed 70%, and 10% of the army's total members should be from the Alliance.

On this basis, the Alliance Military and Political Department would grant this troop an official Alliance designation, under the Black Arrow Corps. All recruits would be given a probation period, and those who passed could obtain Alliance military ranks and Union Citizen benefits directly. Once they acquired their Alliance identity cards, they could normally be promoted in military rank and position within the troops.

The troops established on Heijian Star comprised seven divisions, totaling over forty thousand people. They were regulated like garrison divisions, which are third-line troops.

This was fairly standard.

The elite and heavy weaponry of the Alliance were still not enough for its own direct-line troops, and there was also a lack of transport capacity to send them to Heijian Star.

They could only transport some light weapons and outdated towed artillery. At most, there were a few double-digit heavy blaster rifles.

Even ammunition supply and part of the weapon production had to be placed in the hands of the Luman Kingdom locally.

Fortunately, one of the G-series light weapon production lines that spilled over from Weixing City had been transferred and shipped to Heijian Star through maritime transport. Although the production capacity was still average, it could at least fill some of the gaps.

The training for these forty thousand people, as well as the over four thousand people spun off from the original direct-line troops of the Black Arrow Corps, all required supplementary training.

Luckily, Gu Hang didn’t need to attend to it himself.

After the establishment of the seven Heijian Star garrison divisions and the achievement of the required ratio of direct-line officers and total soldiers under the [Badge] system, it was directly reflected inside. Gu Hang just needed to click once, and with over four hundred grace points spent, the training for over forty thousand people could be completed.

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After completing the training for the Heijian Star Group Army, the remaining eighteen thousand grace points were the grace points Gu Hang was about to use for the technology lottery.

Without a second thought, he found the completed [Phoenix Will Die] from the event features, limited to Star Warrior Technology, and then injected six thousand grace points to do a six-time draw in the thousand-tier.

The thousand-tier prize pool was already very barren, with only a 2.5% probability for Elite level and 20% for Advanced level.

Out of six draws, he hit three, two at the Advanced level and one at the Basic level.

This was already considered very lucky.

The two Advanced level draws were [Thermal Melting Weapon] and [Rhino Transport Vehicle]; the Basic level was [Individual Rocket Nest].

These three pieces of technology… could also be considered special supplies for Star Warriors. Thermal melting was for Star Warriors who possess strong individual combat capabilities, to deliver fatal damage at close quarters when facing some big targets. For instance, if they encounter something like Titan Mecha that can't be taken down by blaster rifles and chain swords, a thermal melting bomb could solve the problem.

It's useful for Star Warriors. After all, they truly have the capacity to penetrate these big things' outer defenses, rush face-to-face to plant bombs, and then gracefully leave.

Other troops could use it too, as conventional explosives aren't as reliable as thermal melting bombs when a soldier encounters something that needs to be blown up.

And the Rhino Transport Vehicle is indeed the most commonly used vehicle by various Starfighter Battle Groups.

Compared with the Strider Combat Vehicle, the Rhino is bigger, heavier, has thicker armor, and more powerful firepower and load capacity. It also has special ports that can connect to the Interstellar Warrior Powered Armor, allowing these superhumans to control the vehicle directly through their willpower via the black exoskeleton.

In other words, in the hands of ordinary people, it's just a heavily armored combat vehicle; but in the hands of Star Warriors, this massive machine can achieve incredibly graceful and agile performance, completely different from its use by others.

Chapter 315, Power Armor Technology_2

Mortal Troops don't necessarily need to use the Rhino Troop Transports; it's just a waste. After all, the cost of a Rhino is five times that of a Walker.

The same goes for individual rocket nests. Compared to regular rocket launchers, they are larger, heavier, have a greater ammunition capacity, and include a power armor interface. Ordinary soldiers can use them, but they need to be mounted on a vehicle; and they can't fire with just a thought like the Star Warriors can, which greatly increases accuracy.

These pieces of equipment… I can't say they don't enhance the Phoenix Battle Group at all, but the actual effect is not significant.

Take thermobaric bombs, for instance. The alliance couldn't produce them before, but they could buy them, and they weren't that expensive. Rhino Troop Transporters aren't widespread among Mortal Troops due to cost and efficiency issues, but if they were only used by the Phoenix, with just about thirty people, four would suffice. With such a small demand, it's truly less cost-effective to manufacture than to buy.

The rocket nest, on the other hand, has some utility, not for use by the Star Warriors, but for the alliance's military departments. By removing the corresponding control systems and installing them on armored vehicles or directly on trucks, vehicle-mounted rocket launchers can be created to enhance the firepower of the artillery troops.

In essence, it's not that the equipment is inadequate, but without scalability, there's no need to produce it oneself. There are only a little over thirty Star Warriors; what kind of equipment couldn't be bought individually? It would be uneconomical to spend all that effort setting up a production line just to serve thirty-something people.

Of course, as a technological reserve, it is still necessary.

Essentially, the problem isn't caused by technological garbage, but by the scarcity of the Phoenix.

The core reason restricting the increase in the numbers of the Phoenix is partly the number of people and partly the power armor.

Next, what Gu Hang is hoping for is that the last 10,000 points of grace will pay off in the lottery at the 10,000-point level.

At the 10,000-point level, there is a 60% chance of drawing elite-level technology. Together with the Star Warrior Technology restriction, tactical power armor itself is considered elite-level. Overall, the odds are pretty good.

Of course, if he hits that 30% chance for epic-level technology and directly draws the manufacturing technology for something like Terminator Power Armor… that would be a bit of a prank, not knowing whether it's a blessing or a curse.

Gu Hang rubbed his hands together, said a little prayer, and clicked to proceed.

The last 10,000 points of grace disappeared like running water, and what they ultimately brought was indeed as hoped for.

[Fourth Generation 'Majestic' Tactical Power Armor]

He struck it lucky!

But soon, the smile that had just spread across Gu Hang's face gradually faded again.

Drawing the power armor technology he wanted was certainly good. Now, among the Phoenix, there are already several new recruits with superhuman organs who don't yet have armor to wear, not to mention, he had spent 15,000 points of grace to train twenty new Phoenix Newbloods.

These people won't have to worry about having power armor anymore.

But the problem lies in the fact that what Gu Hang drew was the fourth-generation ‘Majestic’ power armor.

By now, Gu Hang had already crammed once on knowledge related to the Star Warriors.

He also learned quite a bit about the power armor situation.

Currently, the power armor models worn by the Empire’s Star Warriors are very diverse, but the chaotic models are approximately developed from some generational baseline models.

The most basic Star Warrior Powered Armor is clearly of nine generations.

However, it’s not to say that newer generations are always better. In fact, over the past ten thousand years, not to mention power armor, even the entire Empire has not only failed to advance in many technologies but has actually regressed.

The Mechanical Church’s scientific research relying mainly on archaeology might not be a joke. Humanity’s current level of technology, after the great disruption, is far from the human Golden Age before the establishment of the Empire; it’s even somewhat inferior to the times when The Emperor was among the people.

Many generations of power armor are still in production today, with only variations in production volume.

For example, the most numerous model of power armor currently in the Empire is the eighth-generation ‘Sky Eagle Type’, which is what the Phoenix are all equipped with now.

The eighth generation is not the most widespread because it’s powerful, but because the technology is mature, mass production is easy, maintenance is simple, and performance is quite decent. These comprehensive factors make it stand out.

The fourth-generation ‘Majestic’ power armor that Gu Hang just drew, on the other hand, is different. Its performance is excellent, but production and maintenance are difficult. As of now, not many fourth-

generation armors remain. In some battle groups with a deeper history, this type of armor is even a ‘relic’ passed down for thousands of years, worn only by the most outstanding warriors, a symbol of honor.

It is said that some battle groups and Foundry Worlds still have the capability to produce this armor, but the output is probably pitifully small.

Well, now the issue is, Gu Hang can mass produce it here.

Subsequently, it’s likely that the entire Phoenix will be equipped with ‘Majestic’ type armor.

Although it’s not a sin, it’s… really an eyesore.

But what can be done about it?

Gu Hang deeply sighed.

Could I just let it go unused?

If there’s a problem, we’ll solve it later.

As for the power armor, the Black Box can churn out two units every month.

That’s practically free.

Apart from that, he glanced briefly, the power armor technology, the Alliance had the base technological capacity to pull out production lines and mass-produce it.

All sorts of technologies had been skimmed off earlier, such as Ceramic Steel Technology, Compressed Energy Technology, High-energy Anti-Gravity Engine Technology…

Yet, due to the many technical challenges within the ‘gigantic’ power armors themselves, even having the master machine Black Box, the production lines created will still demand a lot from the people during the manufacturing process.

The difficulty of mass production won’t be small. It’s estimated that the speed of subsequent self-production would be about three units a month.

Mainly because although the engineering volume is not considered large, it requires too many high-tech workers. Many processes need at least technicians or higher-ranked people to use production machines to forge them.

But as long as it’s producible, that will do.

Thus calculated, five units a month, by the time this batch of Phoenix Newblood has grown up, not only will they have enough to wear, but there will even be a surplus.

The rest can be saved for a sudden increase in soldiers later.

If it really comes to it, secretly sell them. a normal power armor goes for fifty thousand a set, this could sell for at least a hundred thousand a set—if historical factors weren’t considered.

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Fifty thousand points of grace spent, the changes it brought to the Alliance were quite significant.

Although the technologies drawn out were mostly exclusive to the Star Warriors, less stimulating the economy, it brought strong developmental momentum to both military construction and talent cultivation for the Alliance.

Moreover, the Alliance itself still had great potential for development to unleash. Apart from Weixing City being the industrial center, in many areas, the Alliance was still in a state of waiting for revival. A

vast workforce hadn't been fully utilized; on wastelands, people urgently needed to invest their labor to rebuild their homes.

When Osenia reported to Gu Hang, she said she was confident that by the next Imperial Tax payment, in a year and a half, she could raise the per capita output of Weixing City to above 3.5; the global per capita output to above 1.

This also meant, based on the current population, the Alliance could have an annual output value exceeding sixty-five million Tax Currency.

Gu Hang was certainly satisfied with this outcome; his Prime Minister had promised him a 20% GDP growth goal for two years, what was there not to be pleased with?

What's more, his Madame Prime Minister might have even overlooked the difficulty of fulfilling this promise.

Because the population of the Alliance was bound to grow.

Apart from the policies encouraging childbirth on the native soil, a large number of immigrants from other regions were also inevitable.

During Gu Hang's most recent trip to Korolya III, he brought along a batch of warriors from the Rage Bear Legion, rotating out the troops who had initially been struggling on Korolya III.

Additionally, he dispatched five more garrison divisions, the 21st to 25th, along with the 59th Mechanical Brigade, and a large amount of ammunition and supplies to Korolya III.

From this point on, the number of soldiers the Alliance had fighting on Korolya III would reach a scale of one hundred thousand.

The given reason was to support the fight of our human brethren, to offer some humble assistance.

But in reality, what Gu Hang did was no different from other powers ‘plundering’ Korolya III.

I’ve been helping you so diligently; it’s only proper to help evacuate some more refugees, right?

Chapter 316, I'm Going to Die

The Rage Bear Legion goes without saying, they fight according to the orders of the Military Affairs Department and the Star Domain Military Headquarters, and Gu Hang won’t fuss over the details with them.

But the supply of the Rage Bear Legion was delivered by Rage Owl Star, which is not provided by the Imperial Military Department. Don’t think ammunition is cheap, especially the shells for heavy artillery, ammunition for bomb guns, replacement parts for technical equipment… These are all expensive.

Moreover, the newly brought in five garrison divisions and one armored composite brigade are not from the Rage Bear Legion but from the Rage Owl Star’s Planetary Defense Army, they surely won’t fight for free.

The construction cost for these forty thousand troops has already reached one million Tax Currency.

The alliance also transported a large amount of food and freshwater.

This wave of investment by Gu Hang has already reached nearly two million Tax Currency in total cost.

In this situation, Gu Hang, on Korolya III, signed an evacuation agreement for the refugees with the government on the other side.

In the future, the alliance will still further dispatch troops, provide ammunition, military weapons and equipment, food, freshwater, textiles…

The total aid is estimated to reach the scale of seven million Tax Currency.

This amount of money is substantial, but the alliance can afford it.

A considerable part of it is direct military participation in the war offsetting wealth; aid in various forms of ammunition, technical equipment, is also replenishment for the alliance's troops on the frontlines, not given to the Korolya people but counted in this seven million support.

The only thing really handed over to the Korolya people are some light weapons.

This is normal; the alliance's military factories also need orders. The various types of heavy weapons are eagerly awaited by the alliance's own troops and they have no spare to give to the Korolya people; but some G-series rifles and such, have plenty of excess production capacity.

The same is true for ammunition; war on the homeland of Rage Owl Star has largely quieted down, ammunition consumption immediately decreased, and the surplus must be "sold" off, right?

Freshwater and food follow the same logic. Rage Owl Star still has a relatively abundant freshwater resource, with extensive oceans suitable for desalination.

As for food, the Green Valley Region had a bumper harvest last year, and the Rage Owl Star people couldn't even consume it all; it would just be left to age if not exported.

Moreover, a substantial part of these resources will be provided to refugee camps. And the people living in the refugee camps… in the future, they will all be people of the alliance!

And the seven million Tax Currency "aid" in exchange, is that the alliance will "help" Korolya III evacuate ten million refugees.

Among all forces plundering the population of Korolya III, this agreement is considered to be quite ruthless.

The reason for such ruthlessness is the result of Gu Hang's efforts.

This is the role of "reputation," starting to slowly show its effectiveness.

Of course, there's also the political influence of the Gu Family.

In fact, not only did he earn, but the Gu Commercial Firm did as well. A significant portion of the transportation orders, not only from Rage Owl Star but also from other major forces. Whether transferring materials or personnel, a substantial number of ships are needed. The Gu Commercial Firm got pretty fat just from these transportation orders.

As for the population transferred from Korolya III, Rage Owl Star is very welcoming; the quality of the population is actually not bad.

In stark contrast, the population from Heijian Star is very troublesome.

Heijian Star has also migrated hundreds of thousands of people, all from the Luman Kingdom. They are truly illiterate, the vast majority come from serf backgrounds, can't read, don't hold any skills needed in an industrial society, and the cost of intermediate training is substantial.

Compared to the Rage Owl Star People, although there's a considerable percentage of illiteracy, it's nowhere near as high as the illiteracy rate of the Heijian Star People.

Even among the illiterate, there are disparities.

There's a reason for that; Rage Owl Star is a wasteland planet, its residents may not be literate, but they must have some skills. He may know how to drive, repair cars, assemble and use firearms, tinker with some junk machinery…

Without these skills, one couldn't survive in the wastelands.

Quite a few wastelanders, under the system established by the alliance, entered schools and learned enough characters during adult education, even just a few hundred or a thousand, to read and understand written articles, and communicate in writing, which is enough to become a qualified industrial population.

The population from Korolya III has similar attributes. Many of them mingled in the underbelly of Nest Capital, living worse than livestock, but their literacy rates are stronger than those of the wastelanders, with many having experience working in factories and mines – work is necessary to survive.

Even in Nest Capital, there is still the most basic education, where children around five or six years old go to school for a couple of years before they can work as child laborers.

The difference in population quality means that the value that different immigrants can immediately bring to the table varies greatly.

However, overall, at this stage, Rage Owl Star is welcoming all comers.

Even if they come from Heijian Star and need some time to be cultivated for modernization before being sent to work as farm laborers in the Green Valley Region, that's fine too.

A qualified labor force, given normal opportunities and a platform, can create far more value than it consumes, there must be surplus labor value.

What's more, the efficient system of the alliance, which eliminates the middle layer, requires no taxation, yet surpasses it, is much stronger in collecting surplus value than the conventional private property system.

Chapter 316, I'm About to Die_2

Nearly half a year whizzed by, with the Alliance developing methodically.

As the Alliance Premier, Osenia was constantly overwhelmed.

But she had gotten used to it.

Ever since she took up this position, she had never been free from busyness.

Overtime?

Except for eating and sleeping, there was no time for rest!

Talking about exploitation, she, as the Alliance Premier, was the most severely exploited.

Under her leadership, the Alliance Government had already achieved some of the goals set earlier. This was the third year since the Alliance's establishment and the first year of unification. It was estimated that the total annual output for the coming year could grow from over 50 million to more than 68 million.

That was three million more than what she had promised the governors for a two-year increase.

Of course, this was a joyful achievement, yet another goal, the per capita productivity index, was estimated to be unattainable—

Mainly because Rage Owl Star was about to experience a population surge of ten million, and a substantial amount of the development budget was spent on settling and assimilating these people, which resulted in the neglect of construction projects in remote provinces.

Certainly, the added thirteen million in annual output did owe a great deal to the immigrants.

Most immigrants headed to Weixing City and Beiqing Valley. The former, as an industrial center, needed people, while the latter had ample land resources to be opened up, with enough capacity to absorb a large population without becoming congested and overburdened.

Gu Hang didn't have any dissatisfaction with this situation; he was quite satisfied with Osenia's work results. As for not meeting the per capita output target, it was expected.

Besides, wasn't it still short of two years?

Just half a year so far.

During this period, Gu Hang's time was mostly spent shuttling between Korolya III and Rage Owl Star.

On the one hand, he maintained his presence on Rage Owl Star to make some overarching decisions on planet development, and on the other hand, he actively participated in interstellar politics.

At the same time, he was also waiting for the investigative team from the Sun Lord to arrive.

On Korolya III, due to the same reason, many people who were stranded there were many. Some were present at the scene when Galaraldo disappeared, and others belonged to the investigative teams at the star sector, star domain, and space domain levels.

Everyone was waiting.

But today, the Sun investigative team suddenly issued new news—

They were not coming.

This message spread to Korolya III, causing an uproar!

Complaints and curses were heard everywhere.

What did they mean by not coming suddenly?

In previous communications, they had even set off and had been on the road for half a year. To say they wouldn't come and to suddenly turn back—what was the meaning of that?

So what were we waiting for, for more than half a year for?

Waiting in vain?

Amidst the grievances, some politically astute individuals immediately sensed a lot from this information and perceived certain special signals.

Firstly, there were potential changes within Tianma Star Sector.

The apostle of war isn't being sought after anymore? Responsibility not pursued?

Of course not.

The Sun investigative team still issued their demands and orders.

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First, they approved the joint investigation conclusion given by the third-level investigation team, acknowledging the disappearance of Galaraldo and demanding that the Dragonhawk Star Domain maintain a team to continue searching for the missing War Apostles—in life or in death.

The words were stern, but compared to their previous attitude, there was no question that it had softened a great deal.

The Space Domain Government had directly taken itself out of the equation; the Star Domain Government only needed to dispatch one team to maintain the investigation—that is to say, they just needed to go through the motions. After searching with such great effort for a year and finding nothing, could they really expect that a mere investigation team could find the War Apostles as time went on and clues grew fewer?

It was unrealistic.

As for the matter of responsibility, such a significant incident had occurred, yet no definitive culprit had been found, so the only conclusion could be an accident, a scheme of the Abyssal Demons. This also meant that it was impossible to find a 'person' to take the blame.

Well, you couldn't expect the Demons to be responsible, could you? And you couldn't solve it, either.

So, who should this responsible person be?

…

“I am about to die.”

When Pei Desi uttered these words, his gray hair was a bit disheveled. Despite having tried to conceal it with makeup, his bloodshot eyes inevitably revealed his despair.

This was the first time Gu Hang had seen him like this. In his memory, the head of the Pei Desi was always particular about his image: his hair never out of place, his demeanor full of energy, his smile always refreshing.

It seemed that, in the face of death, everyone was the same.

The others present, regardless of what they thought about this matter, at least outwardly, all showed grief.

This was a meeting, attended by the Tianma Star Sector circle centered around the head of the Pei Desi, six people in total. Aside from himself, there was his brother, little Pei Desi.

Beyond them were two other families of the ‘Tianma Iron Triangle’, the Gu Family and the Fufana Family.

Representing the Gu Family were Wang Qi and Gu Hang. Wang Qi was the actual operator of the Gu Commercial Firm, while Gu Hang was the Family Head and also represented the soon-to-rise Tianma Star Sector Psychic Association and Rage Owl Star.

The two members of the Fufana Family were General Fufana, dressed in a navy uniform, and Colonel Yelisia. The former was the Family’s stalwart sea anchor, while the latter was a rising star within the family and the future successor.

This meeting was the head of the Star Sector, Pei Desi, settling his affairs.

Little Pei Desi, beside him, had a gloomy face.

His shrill voice rose, “We could resist…”

He hadn’t finished speaking when his brother interrupted him:

“What nonsense are you talking?!. We Pei Desis have been loyal subjects of the empire since our ancestors! No matter what treatment we receive, we should accept it gladly!”

He scolded sharply and then observed the expressions of the four people from the Gu and Fufana families.

Being scolded like that, little Pei Desi eventually shut up.

Gu Hang maintained a serious expression on his face, but upon hearing little Pei Desi’s words, he almost laughed out loud.

Resist? With what would they resist?

If they really started some form of resistance, the first to cut supplies would be the Gu; the first to fire cannons at Flying Wing Star would be the Fufana.

Pei Desi sighed and faced the four ‘allies’ again, repeating his sentence, “I am about to die. The Sun Lord’s investigation team may not be coming anymore and have accepted the third-level government’s investigative conclusion, but they demand someone take responsibility. That person is me and Governor Akuna. Akuna tried to flee but was already intercepted by the Star Domain Justice Department, and by now, he is probably dead. I am ready to calmly accept my fate. The Star Domain and Space Domain, in a show of respect for me, will allow me some time before I end it myself, and with that, the matter will be closed.”

Pausing, he continued, “But what I… can’t let go of the most is my brother.”

Little Pei Desi stood on the side with a stern face, silent.

“After the death of Akuna and myself, our…” he emphasized ‘our’, “our biggest problem will be the weakened control over the Star Sector political situation and over Korolya III; no new heads or Korolya Governors have been appointed yet. The Fatches Family will surely not miss this opportunity.”

“I have no other requests, but we must not let go of these two positions. At least, they cannot fall into the hands of Fatches, or else we will all be in great trouble.”

With that, he looked at General Fufana, “General, I hope you will come out of retirement to run for the position of Star Sector Head that I leave behind.”

Having said this, without waiting for General Fufana’s reply, his gaze turned to Wang Qi and Gu Hang, “The Gu Family might have someone who can take on the responsibilities of the Korolya Governor.”
Chapter 317, Not Only Interested, But Also Very Much So

After concluding their discussion with the leader Pei Desi, several people took their leave, and Gu Hang returned with his mother.

On the way, they were silent, each lost in thought.

Only after they got back to their secure residence did they begin to discuss the whole matter.

Wang Qi reminded Gu Hang with great concern, “Korolya Governor… you mustn’t be confused. Right now, it’s a huge trap, incomparable to when you went to Rage Owl Star on your own. If you handle it poorly, it could spell death for you, as well as for the entire Gu Clan without a place to be buried.”

“I understand, I won’t be fooled,” Gu Hang nodded and then sighed, “It’s such an enticing piece of fat, it’s a pity it’s covered in dog shit.”

Gu Hang’s lament was heartfelt.

Honestly, when Pei Desi proposed to promote someone from the Gu Family to assume the role of Korolya Governor after Akuna's death, he was indeed very tempted.

How could he not be moved? By comparison, Korolya's population was a thousand times that of Rage Owl Star!

If Gu Hang could control this planet, and with the Black Box, complete the political and economic transformation of the entire planet, igniting the strong productivity of its tens of Nest Capitals and a total population of forty billion, then the value of this planet would become immensely vast!

But… the difficulty was too high.

Korolya III isn't Rage Owl Star; there are massive and intricate native forces here; objectively speaking, while there is potential, the huge population also brings with it terrifying environmental pressure.

Gu Hang couldn't replicate his success on Rage Owl Star straightforwardly on Korolya III, with its entirely different ecology.

Moreover, the situation here on its own was bad enough, compounded by the political struggles of the Tianma Star Sector—a core vortex; further compounded by the massive invasion of the Plague Demon that hadn't just been controlled but was showing a trend of worsening…

That was what Gu Hang meant by "fat covered in dog shit."

Now was absolutely not a good time to take over Korolya III. At this point, whoever took the helm would be the scapegoat, a sacrifice.

"Old Fufana also didn't accept Pei Desi's invitation to run for the next Star Sector head, did he?" Gu Hang quietly asked.

"Yes, General Fufana seems to have no such intention," Wang Qi responded.

Gu Hang slightly nodded, “That’s easy to understand. They are a military family, why run for Star Sector head? To unnecessarily stand out, yet lacking the support of political forces. The difficulty of getting elected is not small, and the key issue is that even after being elected, there’s no tangible benefit but instead direct pressure from Fatches.”

Wang Qi sighed, “Ah… it’s difficult.”

Gu Hang knew what his mother was lamenting about.

With Akuna and Pei Desi’s deaths, the investigation teams from the Sun Lord no longer came, the Star Domain and Cosmos Domain investigation teams left without a fuss, leaving behind a huge mess.

The original balance of power in the Tianma Star Sector was going to be directly shattered.

Objectively speaking, Pei Desi was a very competent Star Sector head. Although there was Fatches, a political opponent within the Star Sector, who also had immense influence over the Star Realm Army there, he was still able to support his own brother to become the Flying Wing Star Governor and ally with Korolya’s Governor Akuna. With population and production he firmly suppressed the Fatches Family. Additionally, the alliance with the Fufana Family and the economic strength of Flying Wing Star, especially its shipbuilding industry, strongly affected the Imperial Navy Troops.

In this situation, he was unquestionably very advantaged within the Star Sector, not like those Star Sector heads who are mere figureheads in many other Star Sectors.

Even more valuable, he was a man who knew restraint. Despite his great advantages, and even though relations were very bad, he never pushed Fatches to a dead end, lest the super powerful family who controlled three planets with a total population of over ten billion be driven into a corner. All struggles were mostly kept under control, also objectively ensuring the stability of the entire Star Sector.

Although there were some missteps—such as trapping Gu Hang’s predecessor on Rage Owl Star to become the governor—on the whole, he was an outstanding head, largely able to maintain the stable situation of the Tianma Star Sector.

If this situation continued uninterrupted, the Tianma Star Sector could foreseeably continue to enjoy decades of peace. In the foreseeable future, no one could adjust this stable situation in the Tianma Star Sector.

But… the disappearance of Galaraldo completely shattered the foundation of stability. The deaths of Akuna and Pei Desi represented a huge power vacuum that had suddenly emerged.

In the past few years, what action would the Fatches Family, which has long been suppressed, take?

How would one quell the increasingly severe Demons invasion in Korolya?

Those above seemed to have hardly considered this problem, hastily and brutally killing two people, holding them “responsible,” and thus declared an end to it all.

And Gu Hang, despite being powerless over this… oh, looks like I triggered all of this?

But honestly, even as the instigator, he had not anticipated that things would unfold in this direction.

It could only be said that the existing political contradictions within the Star Sector, coupled with the crisis Korolya itself was facing, after a poke from Gu Hang, could no longer hold.

…

Later, Old Fufana came to visit Gu Hang and his mother with his granddaughter Yelisia.

In conversation, as expected by Wang Qi and Gu Hang, the Fufana Family had no intention of taking over. After Pei Desi’s death, they did not wish to be pushed to the forefront to confront those sinister forces lurking in the dark.

Chapter 317 Not Only Interested, But Also Huge_2

But the situation that followed began to descend into chaos.

The next day, Pei Desi ended his life with dignity, and the various investigation teams hastily departed Korolya III with Akuna and Pei Desi's corpse in tow. What followed was an all-out war between two factions within the star sector.

One side was the opportunistic Fatches, who began to vie for the positions of Korolya III Governor and Tianma Star Region's Head.

Unlike other places, Fatches had the capital of three civilized planets on one hand and significant influence over the Star Realm Armed Forces' Dragonhawk Third Legion on the other. If they took over Korolya, they really had the capacity to stabilize the situation here.

Currently, the Star Realm Army struggling here numbered seven million, but they were fully capable of doubling that figure within a year; if that wasn't enough, the planetary defense forces from the three planets could transfer tens of millions more.

This was a tremendous advantage in terms of volume.

Once they gained control over Korolya, combined with the original Fatches I/II/III planets, the population they would control would exceed fifty billion, nearly eighty percent of the entire star sector's population.

With this might, taking on the position of Tianma Star Region's Head would make them the undisputed rulers of the entire star sector, returning the family to its former glory.

This so-called family glory referred to the history of the Fatches Family.

Before the Tianma Star Sector was reclaimed by the empire, it was the Fatches Family in charge here. After the Golden Age of humanity, when major worlds fell into disarray and ruled themselves, the Fatches Family rapidly grew in this dark era. They controlled three planets within their star system, formed a tri-star political alliance, and became the rulers of it.

After the dark age ended and the Imperial Navy arrived at the Fatches Star System, they offered up the three planets, submitted to the empire, and actively participated in the empire's expeditions; this allowed them to retain the governorships of the three planets, permanently keeping them within their

family. They even held control over the entire Tianma Star Sector at one point. Many of the past heads of the star sector were under the control of the Fatches Family.

Until the arrival of Pei Desi, this high-ranking official from the Star Domain Government, who, during his decades as Tianma Star Region's Head, aggressively diminished the Fatches Family's control over the entire star sector, almost pushing their influence back within their own star system.

Now was their chance to reclaim their family's glory and become Tianma's 'shepherds' once again.

But similarly, the other faction wouldn't sit back and give up so easily.

Pei Desi was dead, but only he was dead. The political legacy he left behind was far from extinct, and even his brother remained the Flying Wing Star Governor—this also showed how rough the empire's handling of Tianma Star Sector's issues were.

But this was also very much the empire's style.

Before his death, Pei Desi managed to secure enough for himself. He already had extensive connections within the Star Domain Government, and quite a number of people sympathized with his death, feeling that the Sun Lord was acting recklessly—they all knew he was being scapegoated.

He made good use of this to secure his brother's position, ensuring that Pei Desi wasn't implicated, and even attempted to continue tying the Gu Clan and Fufana together.

If all of Pei Desi's previous requests had been fulfilled, it would've indeed been quite stable.

Fufana as the head, accompanied by the Imperial Navy, was still from his own faction; the Gu Clan would pick someone to be the Korolya Governor, also from his faction; and Pei Desi remained the Flying Wing Star Governor.

In this way, the political entity that had been comprehensively suppressing the Fatches Family initially could still largely be preserved.

Originally, Pei Desi might have had many ways to ensure that the Gu Clan and Fufana obediently followed his plans. But no matter how many methods he had, they were useless now. He was out of time. After the Gu Clan and Fufana rejected his plans, he couldn't even manage a second round of persuasion and lobbying before he was killed.

And Pei Desi… in Gu Hang's view, was completely lacking his brother's abilities.

After his brother's death, he openly turned hostile, cursing the Gu Clan and Fufana as 'traitors' at multiple meetings and banquets, while also fully mobilizing the political legacy his brother left, starting a comprehensive political war against Fatches.

This war mainly took place on two battlegrounds: one within Korolya III internally, the other being the Star Domain Government.

A new governor could be appointed by the empire from above, but the Central Empire couldn't manage everything. After all, it boiled down to reports from each level of government and, generally speaking, if there were no major issues, the Central Empire would approve them. Here, the voice of the star domain level government was very significant.

But equally, being a governor meant that one must have sufficient control over the entire planet. He was the top military and political leader, burdened with the heavy responsibility of collecting imperial tax, and he must be able to quell the planet's troubles to ensure the tax was properly collected.

No matter what the methods employed were.

Were there instances of governors being parachuted in? Of course. But unless it was a foolhardy death sentence, any parachuted governor had to be a 'strong dragon' arriving with powerful resources to suppress the local 'snakes.'

Would the Star Domain Government want to send such a strong dragon?

Probably not.

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Although the Star Domain Government is large and powerful, its resources are still limited.

The other approach is to choose someone from among the local powers, which eliminates this problem.

If this model is used, the Star Domain Government will fully consider the situation within the star sector and planets to find a person they believe can stabilize the situation.

This is exactly the point that Fatches and Pei Desi are competing over.

On Yunluo Star, officials at all levels of the Star Domain Government who have a say will probably keep welcoming lobbyists in the following period.

The other battlefield is within the planet itself, which involves selecting this “local power.”

To put it plainly, both families are looking for a spokesperson. This spokesperson needs to be strong enough to unite other local forces and also needs to stand on their side.

In this, there will undoubtedly be all kinds of alliances and interest trades.

And that’s just what’s on the surface.

In the dark, assassination, lies, conspiracies, framing, and slander… none can be spared.

The Gu Clan and Fufana huddled together, somewhat revealing a hint of neutrality, but who can truly be neutral?

The Gu Clan is still alright; at least not long ago, they had a history of trying to mend relations with Fatches; when Gu Hang cleaned out Blackbird Heavy Industries on Rage Owl Star, although he slightly

coerced Fatches and made them bleed a little, in essence, he was cleaning up after them. The evidence of the Ironmen rebellion he obtained from Blackbird was also hidden and not handed over to Pei Desi.

But it's different for Fufana; they had not refrained from taking part in suppressing Fatches in the past.

They had a grudge.

Over the years, the intertwining close relations between the Gu Clan and Fufana and their alliance with Pei Desi have become complex and difficult to cut off at once.

Simply put, the Tianma Fleet is present in the star sector; Gu Commercial Firm primarily operates within the star sector, and Rage Owl Star is also within it. You simply cannot avoid being involved in this whirlpool that is gradually affecting the entire star sector.

Wang Qi had become visibly busy and had repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with her son's carefree attitude, which was equivalent to a hands-off shopkeeper.

But each time, Gu Hang just smiled and perfunctorily brushed off a few sentences without truly getting involved.

It wasn't that he didn't take it seriously, but rather, he had other matters to attend to.

What does your squabbling have to do with me?

Taking advantage of this opportunity to gain some real benefits is what truly matters.

He had set his sights on two things.

First, of course, was the population.

On Korolya III, the least valuable thing, yet the most precious in Gu Hang's eyes, was its population.

Apart from the population, this world was worthless in his eyes.

Previously, there was still Governor Akuna with Pei Desi backing him. Now, all that is gone, and for Gu Hang to harvest the population, it has become much easier and more convenient.

As for the second thing he was eyeing, it was the position of Governor of Heijian Star.

He had no interest in being the Governor of Korolya, at least not for now; he was neither a local power nor strong enough to dominate in such a vast place as Korolya.

But his interest in becoming the Governor of Heijian Star was not only existent but also significant.

Chapter 318, Heijian Star Strategy

Theoretically, the position of total governor of Heijian Star is now under the control of Gu Hang.

The current 'governor' is Nes Luman, and this King is indeed under the control of Gu Hang. Not only is his mind controlled by Gu Hang, but the military, political, and economic aspects of the country are also under the alliance's control.

However, this type of control does not represent the alliance's control over the entire Heijian Star.

The position of Nes Luman as governor comes from the special political ecosystem of Heijian Star: the King's Council.

Those elected by the King's Council will temporarily hold the position of governor of Heijian Star until the next election.

After the last session of the King's Council, the Luman Kingdom, which had chosen the wrong side during the previous war and was beaten by the military of Rage Owl Star, rightfully lost its seat as governor.

According to the political traditions of Heijian Star, Nes was supposed to resign after the previous tax collection was completed.

But after the King's Council, he forcibly held onto the position without resigning. Specifically, he did not proceed with the official resignation and nomination of the next governor to the Star Sector Government.

In the past of Heijian Star, there were those who did the same, but their ends were quite unpleasant.

At its core, the governor of this planet is still the 'King's Council' entity.

The King's Council, of course, does not possess power in itself, but the meaning it represents is very crucial. The seven most powerful countries on the planet, along with a host of smaller nations, discuss major issues within this council. The most important issue is finding a way to pool the Imperial Tax each country has to pay and submit it together to maintain the stability of the entire planet.

Holding on to the governor's position and not paying?

It has never been the case that one becomes the governor to dominate the planet, but that one must be able to dominate the planet to become the real governor.

No matter how this ability to dominate is acquired.

Clearly, the current Nes Luman, or rather, the alliance behind him, does not possess the ability to dominate Heijian Star. The other kings on that planet are also not convinced.

After Nes Luman refused to hand over the governor's position, they independently elected a new governor within the King's Council. This person is from the first great kingdom of Heijian Star, Panbos.

They have already begun to initiate their relationships, attempting to secure the empire's recognition.

Of course, this bunch of kings is too weak in political influence; forget the Star Domain Government, even here at the Star Sector Government, they have hardly any paths to take, not to mention that the current political situation in the Star Sector is chaotic.

Their past connections were mainly with the Gu Commercial Firm and the Sect of Mechanics in the Tianma Star Sector. But the former is now firmly on Nes Luman's side; when they seek them out, the people at Gu Commercial Firm generally just advise them to accept their fate. As for the latter, the influence of the Sect of Mechanics is extremely low in the Tianma Star Sector, even resembling the domain of a state religion more. The organizational structure is well-established, its influence significant, and there is even a headquarters for the Sisterhood.

In any case, when it comes to political maneuvering, they are set to be severely suppressed.

But they obviously did not place much hope in this aspect.

While actively engaging in politics, their actions within the planet are of even greater importance.

They have already declared that they refuse to submit Imperial Tax to the Luman Kingdom. The tax collection work is being handled by Panbos Kingdom and has almost received the support of the remaining 85% of the countries.

The annual Imperial Tax of Heijian Star is forty million Tax Currency.

This shortfall is definitely something the Luman Kingdom cannot fill on its own, and Gu Hang cannot possibly sell everything to shoulder it either; it must still be paid by the entirety of Heijian Star.

So what to do?

The only choice was to fight.

Actually, a battle had already taken place.

However, it was not Gu Hang's side that made the move.

On the other side, the King of Panbos, upon being elected as the new ‘governor,’ rallied an army and issued a warning to the Luman Kingdom, also sending a warning through the Star Language Tower to the Gu Commercial Firm.

Their warning to the Luman Kingdom was harsh, labeling Nes Luman as a traitor and enumerating nine grave crimes;

But the warning to the Gu Clan was relatively tactful, roughly meaning, we have been doing business for many years, and our relationship has always been quite friendly. Heijian Star is very poor, and there is nothing worth taking for the Gu Commercial Firm by means other than trade; in addition, the people of Luman are very brave, and if even the little they have is taken away, they would also fight to the bitter end with all their might.

This was essentially a declaration of their stance, but Gu Hang did not respond to them.

The army rallied by the King’s Council, seeing this, then advanced into the territory of the Luman Kingdom.

However, their determination to wage war was clearly not that strong, and their logistical supply capabilities did not support them in truly assembling a very large and elite army for a massive invasion of the Luman Kingdom.

Among them, even Knight Titan, there was only one from the Panbos Kingdom.

The newly established army of the Luman Kingdom was certainly no match for them; after all, the Luman People hardly had any sentinel mecha left now.

But then the Black Arrow Corps moved out.

Under the fierce assault of the armored units, the alliance of kings was soundly defeated. If they hadn’t retreated quickly, even that Knight Titan would have been left behind.

The army of Perbov gave the people of Heijian Star a bit of a shock from the alliance.

Chapter 318, Heijian Star Strategy_2

But even at this stage, it was only a matter of repelling one attack from the enemy, far from enough to make those kings submit.

They didn't have the guts to reassemble their troops and launch another large-scale attack on the Luman Kingdom, so they could only opt for an economic blockade and minor border harassments to continue their hostilities.

Of course, they certainly wouldn't be paying any Imperial Taxes to the Luman Kingdom now.

This was somewhat tricky for Gu Hang, but it was also within his expectations. With Nes Luman insisting on not giving up the governorship of Heijian Star, the reactions of the other nations there were predictable.

This matter was bound to end in war.

Gu Hang harbored aspirations to annex the entire Heijian Star, and the other kingdoms, not made of mud, would naturally resist.

This situation was less an accident than a result fostered by Gu Hang himself.

He had long been prepared for a war.

Especially now that the conflict within Rage Owl Star had almost completely subsided, the Alliance had sufficient strength to cope with this war.

And Gu Hang was confident enough to win it.

Heijian Star had a population of four hundred million, and counting the new immigrants, Rage Owl Star had just fifty-five million—a seemingly huge disparity in scale, but in reality, not so much.

The gap in industrial capacity and mobilization ability between the two was too large.

The main military forces of the kingdoms on Heijian Star, namely the kingdom armies, were at best militiamen in terms of quality, and differed greatly from the Alliance's regular forces in all aspects. Not to mention organization, discipline, and tactics, just their hardware equipment alone was lacking, with many not even equipped with the G-series rifles; much of their armament was self-produced 'crude guns and cannons' with range, power, and accuracy all being serious concerns.

The only equipment that could be considered cutting-edge and deserving of the Alliance's military's respect were the Sentry Mechas and Knight Titans. However, the former performed only average in head-to-head battles, while the latter were too few in number.

What made things even worse was that the high-tech equipment of those kingdom armies relied entirely on foreign trade, and this trade was facilitated by the Gu Commercial Firm. This made their sustained warfighting capability very weak; once a war broke out and the Gu Commercial Firm blocked trade routes, their military would soon crumble over time.

However, despite Gu Hang feeling very confident in winning the war, and possibly even sustaining minimal losses, he also faced his own dilemma:

The pretext for war.

Certainly, he could use Luman's name to declare all the other kingdoms on Heijian Star as rebels for not paying the Imperial Tax, and then appeal to the Rage Bear Legion—a Star Realm Army unit—for assistance in quelling the rebellion. The Alliance Army, under the guise of responding to the Star Realm Army's call, could then head to Heijian Star in large numbers to carry out the 'suppression' mission.

This whole rationale was smooth and by-the-book.

But it was a bit too shameless and forced.

After all, a governor's ruling right was guaranteed by the Empire, but beneath that were local bureaucratic squabbles. Forms like the King's Council, which nominated the governors, received Empire's support depending on the political climate of each planet. The King's Council of Heijian Star was also registered and recognized by the Empire Government.

Moreover, for thousands of years, Heijian Star had operated under such a political system. No matter under what pretense Gu Hang acted, others were not blind or foolish; how could they not see that he was engaging in annexation?

If it were the past, Gu Hang would not have dared to do this.

While the Star Sea was a world where the strong prey upon the weak, under the human race, under the unified government of the Empire, such actions would draw too much criticism, and it would be exceedingly easy for him to be interfered with by other political forces at some step along the way and fail under external meddling.

Moreover, even if successful, there would be a lot of difficult post-war work to do, and a bad job could mean throwing up as much as had been swallowed.

After all, Gu Hang still needed to operate within the system of the Empire.

The main reason he could act now was that the political landscape of the entire Tianma Star Sector had become thoroughly chaotic, which allowed Gu Hang to seize the opportunity.

Furthermore, due to the political turmoil, things that previously required a lot of interest trading and political compromise to accomplish had now become relatively easy to obtain.

Gu Hang, in the name of the Gu Family, issued a notice to the two major powers within the Star Sector, stating his intention to quell the rebellion on Heijian Star.

This was almost a clear declaration that Gu Hang intended to annex Heijian Star.

And for these two major forces, there was one central issue revolving around Gu Hang that they had been vying for beforehand.

That pertained to the issue of the Ironman rebellion on Rage Owl Star, involving assets controlled by the Fatches Family at Blackbird Heavy Industries.

When the Fatches Family initially sent the Star Realm Army to quell the Ironman rebellion on Rage Owl Star, General Cai Minjin received the mission to storm Blackbird City first, gather related clues, and then destroy them.

For them, it was a given.

Indeed, the people of our Fatches Family have caused you trouble, so now I have dispatched a million Star Realm troops to solve this problem for you, we should then be even.

But obviously, what really matters is the specific method used. Cai Minjin couldn't make it into Blackbird City first, and in the end, it was looted by the Alliance Army.

Fatches felt guilty, they didn't know what was there, Gu Hang hadn't said, but… isn't that fear?

At this critical juncture, they certainly didn't want this thunder to explode.

On the contrary, Pei Desi wanted Gu Hang to hand over this thunder to them, which would give them a weapon to attack the Fatches Family.

Not to say how lethal, but associating the Ironman rebellion, originally deemed an individual act, with the entire Fatches Family would evidently cause them a great deal of trouble.

And here, Gu Hang thus had the capital to exchange with both parties.

Heijian Star was originally just a marginal small place, with a population of four hundred million, not even half as many as Korolya's Nest Capital; it had no rich special products, just an agricultural planet under feudalism, it really wasn't critical.

Moreover, Gu Hang wanted it for himself, he was to take it himself, without any special help from others, he just needed their nod of approval.

So, after some exchanges, Fatches eventually agreed not to trouble Gu Hang over this matter. As long as he could stabilize the situation on Heijian Star before the next Imperial Tax payment, they would consider the matter settled.

After receiving a satisfactory response, Gu Hang quickly reassured them:

“I definitely won’t give Blackbird Heavy Industries’ information to Pei Desi as a weapon to attack Fatches.”

…

“I definitely won’t hand over Blackbird Heavy Industries’ information to Fatches, to let them be completely without worries.”

Then Gu Hang also gave Pei Desi a reassurance on his side.

Gu Hang heard that Pei Desi was furious about this. He had already been angry about the ‘betrayal’ of the Gu Family and Fufana, and now, Gu Hang hadn’t fully met his demands, hadn’t handed over the goods to him, and was certainly not going to come forward to identify the Fatches Family.

But after all, Gu Hang hadn’t completely flipped to the other side.

After repeated persuasion by staff and other cooperative forces, based on the principle that even if the support of the Gu Family couldn’t be garnered, at least relations shouldn’t become hostile, they finally nodded in agreement, their attitude roughly the same as Fatches.

They wouldn’t help, but they wouldn’t cause trouble either.

That was enough.

Having resolved the political issues, Gu Hang could finally get down to business.

The Central Group Army, half of the Rage Bear Legion on Rage Owl Star, the Phoenix Battle Group… The combat forces that Gu Hang confirmed began to get ready to set out.

They were to board the transport ships summoned by the Gu Commercial Firm, embarking from the Rage Owl Star Port, which had already expanded many times over, and head to Heijian Star, taking the first step in the Alliance's conquest of the Star Sea.

In this war, Gu Hang would participate personally.

Chapter 319, Iron Curtain Queen

In the palace of the Kingdom of Stefano, as sturdy as a fortress, on Heijian Star, it was a hive of activity.

Today marked the 42nd day since the invasion of the Kingdom of Stefano.

Two months ago, the armies of the Alliance descended upon this world, causing nearly all the nations on Heijian Star to tense up. Even without access to a starport, the Rage Owl Star People relied on ground rail transport ships and landing craft to continuously transport troops, equipment, and supplies to the surface.

The spies stationed in the Luman Kingdom by various nations became noticeably more active.

They were investigating the specifics of the army that had landed on the planet, trying to understand their objectives, their military strength, and the state of their weapons and equipment…

However, before they could figure anything out, the war operations of the Alliance Army had already begun.

In the morning of the first day, Nes Luman delivered a global address, with the signal openly accessible, shamelessly claiming the identity of the governor of Heijian Star, denying the legitimacy of the King's Council, and presenting documents from the Star Sector Government to declare all 'nations' that resisted taxes as Imperial traitors, claiming that a Star Realm Army had arrived at Heijian Star to quell the rebellion.

By midday, urgent intelligence came out from within the borders of the Luman Kingdom, indicating the massing of troops suspected to be heading towards the Kingdom of Stefano.

By evening, the border defenses of the Kingdom of Stefano had been crushed into dust by the Alliance's Lion Tanks.

This series of news arrived extremely swiftly and frequently.

One report had just detailed the kingdom's soldiers making a desperate stand at the border, estimating they could hold back the enemy for ten hours and hoping for reinforcements soon when the minister of the military was already fervently debating from where to dispatch troops and how to arrange the entire defense line to block the enemy. But before they could come to a conclusion, the next message announced that the defense line had been breached.

This presented them with tremendous difficulties.

The plans of the entire day seemed to be in vain. Often before a discussion could conclude or a plan could take shape, the basis for its feasibility no longer existed.

This scenario repeated over the course of 42 days.

The military operations of the Alliance were akin to a blitzkrieg.

The kingdom's defenses were like butter to a hot knife, easily pierced.

After the border, one defense line after another barely formed — some still in the process of being built — were overwhelmed by the Rage Owl Star People's armed forces, with artillery and armor.

As of today, the latest news indicated that the enemy's vanguard had reached a distance of 330 kilometers outside the fortress capital of the Kingdom of Stefano.

In front of the capital, only two lines of defense remained.

Within the court, a mood of tension, bewilderment, and even a bit of despair was spreading everywhere.

Those generals and ministers, who under normal circumstances were either graceful or steadfast, were still trying hard to maintain their dignity and calmness. However, as monarch, Queen Isabel could discern that her ministers and generals were in utter disarray, incapable of producing a coherent idea.

Honestly, she felt the same way.

But at the same time, she also harbored deep anger.

The Kingdom of Stefano, the second-largest kingdom on Heijian Star, had a population of seventy million people, ranking one above its neighbor, the Luman Kingdom, and nearly double its size in both population and land area.

Stefano was the most powerful among all the neighboring countries of Luman Kingdom and a force to be reckoned with on the planet.

Furthermore, Stefano had a strong military tradition. The nation had always prided itself on its military might, with a prevailing martial culture from top to bottom. The Stefanians were renowned throughout the world for their bravery and skill in battle.

Even the capital of the country was a huge fortress; the court within it was also a castle with maximum defensive capabilities.

Although Queen Isabel was a woman, she always took pride in her ancestors' bravery. Ascending to the throne at nineteen and now thirty-five, she had upheld the will of her ancestors during these sixteen years. From initially being seen as nothing more than a 'transitional monarch,' she had become a true queen.

All across the kingdom, who did not submit to the rule of the Iron Curtain Queen? Who dared to overlook the queen, who at a little over twenty years old, had won the affection of the Imperial Guard,

daring to stage a coup in the court and personally executing fifteen powerful nobles with her own hands?

She ruled this country with an iron fist and was not about to watch her most important ministers, one by one, become so panic-stricken and clueless.

She knew well that this was the time for her to step forward.

Tapping lightly on the table, the ministers and generals seated below in the military conference fell silent and raised their heads, looking towards their queen.

The once youthful face of Isabel now appeared even more hardened.

She made the decision, “Stop discussing those worthless things. We have already concentrated most of our forces. Over two-hundred thousand warriors are ready to hold their ground in the capital fortress. At the same time, across the country, more than half a million warriors are converging towards the capital, and they only need a month to gather. After another month, we can expect a further half a million troops. Our allies have promised that within a maximum of two months, an Alliance Army of no less than half a million men, organized by the King’s Council, will come to our aid.”

Chapter 319, Iron Curtain Queen_2

“We will prepare for the worst, and we shall fight a desperate battle with the enemy in our capital, our heart! We have a defensive line that spans 330 kilometers, a capital Fortress manned by 200,000 people, and the million-strong army that is soon to come from our allied forces! I will ensure that those alien invaders crash and bleed against the Fortress that Stefanians have built with their flesh and blood!”

“No matter how powerful the alien invaders are, no matter how advanced their weaponry, we will make them witness the valor of the Stefanians!”

“In the name of the Queen, I swear that I will fight alongside my subjects to defend this nation, and we will not take a single step back!”

“I believe that we will ultimately achieve a complete victory in this war!”

Under the Iron Curtain Queen's speech, generals and ministers shouted and raised their arms in cheer!

Their morale was boosted, they trusted their Queen, and they were willing to shed their last drop of blood for Her Majesty!

However, just at that moment, a muffled sound penetrated the shouting of the officials, unclear but still firm enough to reach everyone's ears.

The cheers and applause gradually ceased, followed by more and more frequent muffled sounds that kept coming, seemingly getting closer and closer.

Many thought it sounded like gunfire. But they also found the idea too incredible; under the Iron Curtain of the Queen, who would dare to fire a gun inside the Stefano Fortress?

As for that more terrifying possibility…

No one wanted to believe it was real.

Logically, how could the Alliance Army, which was still 300 kilometers away this morning, possibly have come so close in the afternoon, past the defensive line of 100,000 soldiers, past the strong Fortress defended by 200,000, that their gunfire could be heard by these individuals?

Were divine troops descending from the sky?

Even if there really were such divine troops descending, they would be shot down!

The Stefano Fortress had a complete orbital defense system. No matter whether it was airdrops from planes or orbital drops, it would not be so easy to break in.

So, what was really happening?

At this moment, the Iron Curtain Queen's face really was as stern as iron.

Without her needing to give an order, the close attending military officer had already rushed out to find out what exactly had happened.

However, barely a minute or two later, the military officer who had left came back.

Isabel's close attending officers, all of whom were promising young elites, were born into military families with solid military training. The Iron Curtain Queen established the position of close attending officers to gather these young talents, to develop their abilities, their loyalty, and to facilitate their future deployment to various armies, replacing the Queen in controlling the military power of the Kingdom.

They were supposed to maintain a poker face in all situations.

But when truly facing a catastrophe, how many people who prided themselves on their composure could actually remain calm?

The returning officer looked panicked, his steps frantic.

He said, "Your Majesty, the enemy has breached the Fortress!"

This officer's father, a general of the Kingdom, was present. He couldn't stand the sight and stood up, scolding, "What's with the panic?! It's probably just a small group of infiltrators…"

Yet, the officer defiantly retorted, "It is indeed a small group, but they are Interstellar Warriors!"

Now, there was a real silence.

Interstellar Warriors? The ones known as the Emperor's Death Angels?

They remembered the intelligence.

About two years ago, during the turmoil initiated by the Luman Kingdom against the Gu Family, the forces that had beaten up the Luman military indeed included the appearance of Interstellar Warriors.

Even though many thinkers within the Kingdom concluded from their limited understanding of the Interstellar Warriors that this unexpectedly powerful force was only invited occasionally to deal with Luman Kingdom affairs. Given the rarity of the Interstellar Warriors, it was unlikely they could be recruited repeatedly by a single power.

But, adhering to the spirit of expecting the worst in every plan and preparing for it as comprehensively as possible, they still included the extraordinary force of the Interstellar Warriors in their defense planning.

The Kingdom's military thinkers wracked their brains with the limited intelligence they had, estimating the combat capabilities of the Interstellar Warriors, and conceived many ways to deal with these Super Soldiers.

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But now, the frontline battlefield hasn't even encountered those Angels of The Emperor, yet the capital, which should have been extraordinarily safe, has been struck first?

How is that possible? Even if they are Interstellar Warriors, how did they get in?

In the midst of silence, that military officer couldn't help himself. He spoke up again: "I saw the surveillance, those red-armored giants wiping out the stationed Knights as if there was no difference between them and the unarmed civilians they slaughter. The Royal Knights couldn't stop their advance at all! Your Majesty the Queen, generals, ministers, you must retreat now while you still can!"

"Shut up!" The general, who was the officer's father, spoke out once again.

He was worried his son might anger the Iron Curtain Queen.

Just moments before, Her Majesty the Queen had proclaimed before all the ministers that she would live and die with her subjects, and fight to the end against the enemy, without retreating. And now his boy was clamoring for people to run?

Do you have a death wish, doesn't Her Majesty still care about her dignity?

With some concern, he glanced towards the head of the table, only to see Her Majesty the Queen, pale with anger, wordlessly turning and walking away.

…

Anat put down the bomb gun in his hands, still smoking from the barrel, watching as the last Sentry Mecha, painted orange-red, fell before him.

Although he had only been an Interstellar Warrior for two years, he was already accustomed to battle.

His gaze shifted to a middle-aged woman in military attire, trembling but holding a pistol, trying hard to stay calm, and the group of people following her. Inside his helmet, he whispered in a volume that couldn't be heard outside: "Group A has cleared all enemies, target captured, confirmed as the Queen of the Kingdom of Stefano, Isabel."

He didn't think he had said anything wrong.

Even though the Queen was holding a gun and a few young officers nearby, and those so-called generals and ministers at the back were also holding self-defense weapons, in his eyes, there was indeed no danger anymore.

New orders came through the built-in communication system of his helmet: "Take all targets to the rendezvous point, try to ensure they do not die."

"Understood."

After acknowledging the order, he looked up at the local dignitaries in front of him and said: “You have been captured. Now, please follow me and do not attempt any form of resistance.”

Behind him, five other warriors slowly stepped forward, using their gun barrels to direct the captives back the way they came. Anat himself walked directly towards the Queen.

A young officer, mustering his courage, stepped in front of him, opening his mouth as if to say something, but Anat just waved his hand, the iron backhand striking his face and taking his head off.

Anat’s stride didn’t falter as he came up to the ‘Queen’: “Isabel.”

He spoke her name flatly, without any superfluous words, but the barrel of his gun adequately conveyed his intent.

The Iron Curtain Queen clenched her teeth but could only stagger along in the direction indicated by the barrel of the gun, totally powerless.

They returned to the conference hall where the military meeting had begun.

Six red-armored giants guarded all the entrances and exits. Anyone who dared to come in or tried to sneak out would be turned to dust and smoke under their bomb guns.

Inside, including the Iron Curtain Queen herself, more than twenty people hadn’t even been disarmed.

Nonetheless, they couldn’t even think about resisting.

They didn’t even dare to speak.

It was in this way, as they occasionally heard the sounds of gunfire, that they spent half an hour until they saw two more squads of Interstellar Warriors walk in.

“All anti-air systems have been shut down.”

“In one hour, the Special Forces of the 10th Brigade will be air-dropped here.”

“To take control of the entire Fortress region, we have to ensure that when the main corps arrives two days from now, this city will be without obstructions.”

“We guarantee to complete the mission.”

Chapter 320 A Larger Scale Raid

“The thirty-first.”

Anat pulled the bloodstained chainsaw sword from the chest of the fallen Sentry Mecha before him, while his other hand, holding a bomb gun, fired nonstop, blasting Stefanians who tried to threaten him into pieces.

Seconds later, the magazine was empty.

It was his last one, and there were still many enemies.

But he felt no panic.

The chainsaw sword swung into action as his other fist clenched, becoming as heavy as a sledgehammer.

Those grazed by the chainsaw sword would find their bodies torn apart, blood and flesh flying everywhere. Under the chainsaw sword capable of tearing through steel plates, the human body was frantically fragile; the Interstellar Warrior’s fist was just as lethal. Even without the Gravity Gauntlets or similar devices, just the strength of an Interstellar Warrior, combined with the output of the powered armor, meant that the iron gloves could completely pulverize any part of the human body they struck.

Anyone who tried to obstruct him, anyone who dared to get close, was ruthlessly eliminated. Soon, Anat was drenched in blood, which wasn't so noticeable only because it splashed over his fiery red battle armor.

However, he didn't attempt to kill all the enemies with his ammo depleted; instead, he chose to break through to the rear.

The enemy was numerous, but few dared to block his way.

The death of the 'Knight' had a significant impact on the remaining soldiers' will to fight.

This was precisely Anat's purpose in taking the initiative to strike. He wanted to take down the Sentry Mecha with one thrust, destroying this small group of enemies' will to resist.

Once he succeeded, it was time to retreat.

Even though his bomb gun was out of ammo, the retreat wasn't difficult,

as the remaining enemies were only ordinary soldiers.

Those with low morale had already collapsed, fleeing in disarray. Those with more courage dared only fire a few shots from a distance. Not to say whether they could hit their mark, but even if they did, the LR Series Laser Guns, standard issue weapons in the hands of the royal guards, were ineffective against the powered armor.

Everybody knows what happens with a flashlight.

Of course, that's a joke. The LR Series Laser Guns are much more powerful than the G Series projectile weapons.

Anat cherished the armor he wore dearly. Damaged armor could take a long time to repair, and currently, the Phoenixes didn't have the luxury of providing each of their ranks a spare set. He was not

keen on getting hit by those ‘flashlights’ too much, as the surface coating could be melted off, and severe metal fatigue could lead to armor damage.

He dodged bullets, casually killing enemies that came close, and quickly retreated to his own line of defense.

Two brothers-in-arms guarding the already blasted gate, using the ruins of buildings for cover, nodded slightly to him.

He nodded back briefly and then saw an old veteran commander behind them, to whom he reported mission completion and refilled some bullets from the nearby ammo box.

Glancing briefly, he saw that the bullets remaining in the ammo box were already scarce.

Before long, everyone would run out of bullets.

This was indeed the predicament they were currently facing.

Before this, his group, after intercepting the Iron Curtain Queen Isabel and her entourage, didn’t retreat with the captives but instead returned to the heart of the Kingdom of Stefano.

This clearly was a perilous move.

They hadn’t fully taken over this city yet. Here, two hundred thousand Stefanian troops were still holding their ground. With their queen captured within the palace, the reaction the Stefanians would have was all too predictable.

For whatever purpose, they would mobilize all their efforts and assemble all forces to take back their queen.

This was also the goal of the Interstellar Warriors—to use the queen as powerful bait, holding the enemy firmly in place.

After converging with two squads that had completed the destruction of the anti-air systems, Anat and his comrades, a total of twenty Phoenixes, stood guard at the center of the kingdom, beginning a confrontation—more accurately, a one-sided slaughter—against the countless enemies coming to rescue the queen.

Isabel's so-called 'brave Stefanians' indeed weren't just hot air. The so-called 'Knights,' the kingdom's nobles who piloted the Sentry Mechas, along with a large number of royal guards, charged forward with abandon, striving to break through the pathways guarded by the Interstellar Warriors to rescue their queen.

But they achieved nothing.

In this not very lengthy period, the twenty Interstellar Warriors annihilated thirty Sentry Mechas and killed more than two thousand royal guards.

Mecha debris and warrior blood stained every area red, with limbs and metal wreckage strewn all about.

And the Interstellar Warriors were unscathed.

Even the valiant Stefanians couldn't help but feel their morale sink in the face of such desperate disparity.

They had tried everything and sacrificed without reservation, yet they still saw no glimmer of hope for breaching the defense line formed by the twenty Phoenixes.

Yet they kept striving.

After enough sacrifices and lessons learned, the Knights and Stefanian soldiers who followed didn't blindly charge forward anymore. They kept shouting, instructing the ordinary soldiers to carry their weapons and cover a few individuals carrying high explosives, rushing towards the Interstellar Warriors.

They gambled on luck and bet that the Interstellar Warriors also had limited ammo.

Chapter 320 A Larger Scale Raid_2

Indeed, that was the case.

The interstellar warriors' ability to carry heavy loads was exceptionally strong, and their tactically designed backpacks made full use of every inch of space, so they could bring as many supplies as possible.

However, the size of the bombs was there to see, much larger than ordinary bullets, so the quantity that could be loaded was ultimately limited.

Each Phoenix had taken at least six hundred bombs, but after the previous battle and fighting here for a long time, they were finally running low.

They had already started to consciously conserve ammunition in battle, but even interstellar warriors couldn't be forced to kill an enemy with every shot. Necessary fire suppression, reconnaissance by fire, and long-range shooting mishaps were all normal circumstances.

Not to mention, even if they could manage to kill an enemy with each bullet, the number of enemies was still greater than their ammunition.

Facing the new enemies' defensive tactics, Anat volunteered, seizing the lull after one wave of enemy offensive to break out alone. He circumvented their line of sight and, under fire, once the enemy became aware of him, used his chainsaw sword to eliminate the command sentry mecha hiding behind.

After accomplishing his objective, he indeed achieved his purpose.

No matter how brave the Stefanians were, it couldn't conceal the fact that this was a feudal army at its core. After the loss of the noble officers, the remaining common soldiers were clearly bewildered and hesitated.

At that moment, Phoenix's defensive line was finally able to breathe a little.

They shouldn’t have to be so tense until the next batch of enemies reorganized, and the consumption of ammunition could be slightly eased.

As for what came after, the bullets would eventually run out.

But what of it?

Anat checked the panel built into his tactical helmet.

There were only around ten minutes left to the scheduled time.

…

At this moment, above the capital fortress of Stefano, there were consecutive howling sounds.

Over a hundred Windfalcon Fighters had arrived in the skies above the city.

Previously, the Windfalcon dared not come.

Conventional anti-air firepower was one thing—a mere formality. With an elevation in flight altitude and maintaining speed, dropping bombs would generally not be a problem. After all, the local forces of Heijian Star were downright pathetic in terms of air force construction. Although they also possessed Windfalcons, a kingdom had no more than a dozen, hardly daring to fly out for a fight.

However, they had spent a lot of money to build an orbital defense system. The Defender Real Ammunition Air Defense System, along with many precision anti-air missiles, could guarantee a certain interception efficiency even against starship to ground bombardment, let alone dare the air force to fly over the city’s airspace.

But now, the interstellar warriors’ raid had already destroyed the city’s defense control system.

The Windfalcons could swagger over.

They brazenly circled at the very top of the court fortress, the first to unload soldiers and ammunition materials went down. The rest bombarded any potential targets that could threaten the airborne operations with all their onboard missiles, even lowering their altitude for dive shooting.

When the Windfalcons that finished unloading flew up to take over their duties, the remaining ones continued to unload personnel and supplies.

After rotating in this fashion for four or five rounds, all the equipment had been unloaded.

The entire process went smoothly.

Interstellar warriors did their jobs reliably. It wasn't just about anti-air gunfire coming at them—the areas around with potential threats had been cleared, with hardly a few common soldiers seen firing rifles into the sky.

After using up their missiles and machine gun rounds, the Windfalcons departed, satisfied.

What they left behind were over a thousand exoskeleton-equipped special forces of the Tenth Brigade and enough ammunition for them to fight intensely for an entire day.

After the Windfalcons went back, they would load up another batch of warriors and supplies and make another trip. Counting load times and travel, the next arrival would not exceed eight hours at most.

On the ground, the three special forces battalion commanders of the freshly landed Tenth Brigade, three majors, gathered before Matins.

They, clad in exoskeletons, saluted with awe the towering Battle Group Leader donned in the Terminator Power Armor before them with an Alliance Army salute.

After returning the salute, Matins began to assign tasks without any idle chatter.

Soon, each of the units took their personnel and dispersed in all directions.

Matins gazed at the entire city.

Hasty and chaotic, flames of war spread everywhere.

He was all too familiar with this scene; for the past several centuries, this was how he had lived.

Interstellar Warriors indeed always dealt with all sorts of formidable enemies resembling monsters and evil spirits, who were the most memorable. But digging a little deeper into memory, those routine rebellion suppression missions against laughably weak foes were actually the most frequent battles.

Sometimes he didn't understand. Even when his Battle Group, at its peak or later during the redemption expeditions, had been split into dozens of groups of a few dozen men, operating on the scale of companies, constantly on the move in the Star Sea, responding to support requests from Planetary Governors and the Imperial Military at the far corners of space, most of the battles were about helping planets suppress rebellions.

They truly did not have much time to rest, yet Planetary Governors always complained that requesting imperial reinforcements, especially Interstellar Warrior support, was something unattainable; by the time reinforcements might arrive, the conflict had already cooled down.

This contradiction often perplexed Matins.

He always felt that as The Emperor's Death Angels, as the Imperial Military's most formidable warriors, their enemies should be those Aliens, Demons, the great adversaries of mankind. Yet most of the time, their opponents were just humans, continually suppressing rebellions, over and over again.

Of course, he knew it was because the Empire's territories were so vast that, even though the Battle Groups were running themselves ragged everywhere, they could only quiet one rebellion at a time.

But what he truly did not understand was why there were rebellions everywhere? Even more so, why did rebellions they had just quelled sometimes resurface after a few years?

He had a long life, but his life had always been filled with battles, hardly providing him enough time to ponder this question.

But now, it seemed another person had come to contemplate this question in his stead.

On the Rage Owl Star, he had not only witnessed but also participated in Governor Gu Hang's unification of the world. He was initially indifferent, for he had assisted too many worlds to achieve unification and suppress rebellions.

However, he rarely saw that when so-called unification truly arrived, every single person, every group that had come under Governor Gu Hang's rule, significantly began to live a better life than before; the evil-doers also truly received their punishment.

He knew the state Rage Owl Star was in when Gu Hang first arrived, so he felt even more that everything they had done appeared to have real value.

At least, he saw no signs whatsoever of a large-scale rebellion arising on Rage Owl Star.

This scenario was also somewhat confirmed on the Heijian Star. The Luman Kingdom, after its conquest, also quickly settled down.

Though its development wasn't notably spectacular due to not being native and not having changed its political system completely, one no longer saw people dying of hunger or freezing to death.

Matins knew he wasn't particularly astute politically, but with his shallow understanding, he believed the Luman people wouldn't rebel anymore.

The Governor he had sworn allegiance to, seemed to have a more comprehensive thought process and an exact method to 'why people rebel' and 'how to eradicate rebellions' compared to himself, a warrior who only knew how to fight.

Let’s just wait and see.

He had to admit that after he had sworn allegiance to Gu Hang, although the Battle Group was flourishing and showing signs of revival, there was a sense of shame in his heart that ‘I once pledged loyalty to grand causes like The Emperor, the Empire, and humanity, but now it has become loyalty to one person, how shameful.’

Sometimes, he even asked himself if it was worth sacrificing the Battle Group’s honor for the sake of its continuation.

And now, those inappropriate feelings of shame were gradually waning with what he was seeing and hearing.

“Then let me wait and see.”

He said softly, hoisted his gun, and advanced toward the battlefield before him.