Governor 351

Chapter 351, ‘Prey

As the soldiers on Korolya prepared for the final desperate effort required by the Governor; as the officials and citizens within Mingyan City worked tirelessly for the Governor’s war plans; and as the special envoy of the Lois Star Domain bore the pressure on behalf of the Governor, what was the Governor himself doing?

The Governor himself was on a field trip.

Accompanying him on the field trip were six people.

First was Phoenix Battalion Leader Matins, who naturally needs no introduction.

Second was Eureka Pambos. He hailed from Heijian Star, originally a prince of the largest kingdom, Panbos, and the pilot of the Knight Titan of Heijian Star. Later, with the support of an Alliance diplomat, he forced his father, the King, to abdicate and became the King of Panbos—of course, in the era of the Alliance, the title of King was almost purely honorary, as almost all administrative authority lay with the Alliance Government.

He himself, as King, also joined the Alliance National Knights, still shining as the pilot of Knight Titan.

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This was a significant political signal, signifying the Alliance’s acceptance of the old forces of Heijian Star.

“If even your king can continue to wield important power within the Alliance, what do you have to worry about?”

Originally, his position in the Knight Order had more symbolic than actual meaning—did the Alliance really lack a pilot? However, as time passed, Mr. Gu began to grant him more authority.

The reason for this was simply that Mr. Gu had discovered on the [heroes] interface that King Eureka truly acknowledged the Alliance and his loyalty was guaranteed. Then, having sent him to the Loyal Heir Academy on Rage Owl Star and spending grace points to activate his hero attributes and train him into a political commissar to ensure loyalty, Gu Hang simply allowed this actually outstanding pilot to lead the Alliance's knights using his royal status.

He was not afraid of any incidents.

Nothing could go wrong.

Third and fourth were Leonardo Neves and Aéro Lacroix. Both from the Tenth Brigade of the Alliance, the latter was a super soldier with distinguished service. He had also donned Feedback-Type Power Armor and, apart from interstellar warriors, was among the strongest in the Alliance. His personal level had reached LV5, with extraordinary potential. In truth, some of the Phoenix new recruits couldn't even beat him.

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However, Lacroix had no talent or capability for commanding troops, nor did he wish to do so. Neves was the commander of the Tenth Brigade, an Alliance Brigadier General. At a time when the military leadership of regular division-brigade level units was only at the rank of lieutenant colonel, at most colonel, his brigadier general rank clearly showed the importance of the Tenth Brigade.

Fifth was Dannie Dress, who was the leader of the Alliance Storm Mage Corps.

All five were members of the Alliance.

And the sixth had a more special identity.

She was the Superior of the Sainte-Lys Nun Association, Mrs. Georgette.

Sainte-Lys was a Battle Nun Association. Before the war, they had over four hundred battle nuns. Their main duty was to garrison and defend the propagation of the Church's teachings on Korolya III,

incidentally to proselytize on their own. Additionally, they participated in warfare in other star systems, responding to the call of the Empire and the Church.

Sainte-Lys originated from the Holy Flame Rose Convent and was a third-order association under the Holy Flame Rose. Compared to the most famous and large-scale convents of the Church, such as their former order, Sainte-Lys was small, but for Korolya, they were a highly important defense force.

Indeed, before this, Mrs. Georgette and the other battle nuns of Sainte-Lys had mostly been fighting on the frontlines, especially in Fino City.

Over the past few years of conflict, Sainte-Lys had lost over a hundred nuns. They had always fought on the frontlines, rushing wherever danger lurked. They had indeed provided significant assistance.

But they still couldn't stop the spread of the epidemic.

Not until Fino City was abandoned, could they only retreat along with the rest, and now they had reconvened in Mingyan City.

The number of remaining nuns now totaled over three hundred.

Strictly speaking, even though Gu Hang had become the Korolya Governor, he had no authority to directly govern Sainte-Lys. After all, they belonged to the Church, and while also part of the Empire, were entirely distinct systems.

However, a warzone commander was another matter.

And even setting aside this power dynamic, Sainte-Lys itself was willing to contribute to the war against the Plague Demon.

After discussions with Zhao Qinghong, the bishop of the Church in Korolya Sector, and the leader of the Sisterhood, the Grand Superior Medici, they were willing to dispatch a hundred-person team to partake in Gu Hang's campaign.

Leading this team was Sister Chang Ge Ruite, who had previously collaborated with Gu Hang and greatly helped during the formation of the Alliance.

At this moment, their field trip destination was located to the west of Mingyan City, on the edge of the military defensive line that was under construction—on a cliff.

The six waited in silence for Mr. Gu, who had his eyes closed yet assumed a gazing posture, to descend from mid-air.

Mrs. Georgette was the most impatient.

Unable to hold back, she asked, “Mr. Governor, is this the place? Is this where we were looking for?”

Gu Hang slowly opened his eyes, turned around, and said, “Although the conditions aren’t perfect, we can’t always seek perfection in everything. Let’s choose this place.”

Chapter 351, ‘Prey’_2

He paused, then continued, “Next, I will assemble a division to establish a secret camp on this side of the cliff. After returning, you all should bring your troops here separately. We need to make some preparations in advance.”

General Nevys asked, “What about you, Governor?”

“I will wait here for all of you,” Gu Hang said in a low voice, chuckling, “Transporting over a thousand people, along with Ranger Knights and the hulking Warhound Titans, to the heart of Fino City is not an easy task. We have to pass through numerous obstacles and deceive a Great Demon; there is much to do.”

Upon hearing the term ‘Great Demon,’ everyone grew solemn.

Gu Hang spoke earnestly to the six people, “The Empire’s forces are on full alert, and the Empire’s citizens are doing their utmost to contribute to the battlefield. But the most critical part of this war still lies with us. We bear the heavy responsibility of stopping that den of demons in its tracks, even crippling

its Void Shield, severing its link with hell. Although every person involved in this battle is an elite, even a hero in their own right, we still don't know how many will be able to return alive. You must prepare your troops mentally."

Georgette and Matins were among the first to stand out, "For the Empire!"

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The rest hurriedly followed suit.

Gu Hang responded with equal seriousness, "For the Empire!"

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One hundred and three Terra standard days later, the crawling Nest Capital 'Fino City' was now within striking distance.

The distance between it and Mingyan City was now just over six hundred kilometers.

But in reality, it had already encountered the western defense line of Mingyan City.

More than sixty million troops, making up over eighty Army Groups, covered a battlefield over two hundred kilometers wide, stretching out a strategic depth of more than six hundred kilometers. Bunkers, trenches, and watchtowers were densely packed between them, forming layers of defense lines.

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General Hans was indeed competent. Organizing an army of sixty million exceeded most people's imaginations. Even with a massive staff and a large number of field officers possessing strong executive abilities, organizing such a behemoth over such a vast area was still an incredibly daunting task.

General Hans could no longer manage units at the division level; at most, he could only oversee up to the Army Group level. Each of the more than eighty Army Groups had their own defensive zones and were ready to be mobilized at a moment's notice.

Even so, the human army still wove a vast net across this prepared battlefield of over one hundred thousand square kilometers, waiting for the 'prey' to arrive.

And now, the 'prey' had come.

But who exactly was the prey?

Fino City, as it crawled, seemed to consider the humans who had set the net as the 'prey.'

The city, after swallowing another Nest Capital, had further expanded in size. The front facing the human forces was eighty kilometers wide.

Once Fino City came within range, the artillery barrage began.

The Empire's artillery launched their fiercest firepower, slamming it onto the crawling Nest Capital.

A Void Shield composed of Subspace Dark Magic suddenly materialized, enveloping the entire city within it.

The shells stirred up waves upon the Void Shield, with a rather significant effect.

In previous battles, the firepower produced by accompanying self-propelled guns was far less than the density of fire prepared over several months. Now, under the arrangement of the generals and officers of each Army Group and division, the artillery was positioned most rationally. The current artillery arrangement was most suitable for intensive bombardment.

The impact of the countless shells falling was even close to matching the previous artillery barrage from the Tianma Fleet.

If Fino City had no response and simply let the countless human guns bombard it like this for a day or two, the Void Shield would indeed be broken.

Ants can overcome an elephant if there are enough of them, not to mention bona fide Land Forces heavy artillery.

But things were obviously not going to be that easy.

The Nest Capital, enhanced by Subspace Dark Magic, how could it possibly remain unresponsive?

Plague Fly Swarms blotted out the sky, howling forth from the city's high towers. Wherever they flew, sunlight was obscured, and the sky darkened.

Countless anti-aircraft fire began to shoot upwards, without any need to worry about hitting their targets. With the swarm so dense, hitting them was inevitable.

Innumerable sparks exploded in midair, scattering countless charred, broken bodies of giant flies onto the ground below.

But despite this, it was still impossible to stop such a massive number of Plague Fly Swarms from launching their attacks.

They were both living creatures, the lowest grade of Plague Demons, and 'projectiles' at the same time.

Group after group of Plague Giant Flies dived from the sky. When they descended to a certain height, even the firearms in the hands of human soldiers could kill them. Yet these mindless Demons persisted in diving downwards, aiming straight for various predetermined targets: artillery positions, anti-air defenses.

Seven corrupt Demon Dragons appeared under the cover of the Plague Fly Swarm. Their dense, corrupt breath enveloped vast swaths of ground fortifications in a plague toxin. Human soldiers directly engulfed in the breath screamed in agony as they died; even steel would temporarily animate into flesh

under the terrifying power of these Plague Demons, only reverting to its original steel state after the breath dispersed, albeit already twisted and misshapen.

It was for this reason that soldiers on the front line were all issued protective masks and hazmat suits in these years. Otherwise, not only would everyone in the direct path of the breath perish, but even soldiers farther away might breathe in the virulent plague and contract the disease on the spot, losing their ability to fight and swiftly dying in the following days.

The sky above the battlefield was almost entirely occupied by Demons.

On the human side, there were actually thousands of combat aircraft.

However, this number might seem not small, but compared to the enemy, it was far too few. On the current battlefield, there was simply no way to rely on these few aircraft to wrest control of the sky.

But if we cannot compete, should we just give up?

Despite the huge numerical disadvantage, the first few hundred combat aircraft of various types took off from the ground. Their main objective was to work together with the ground's anti-aircraft fire and reduce the number of the Plague Fly Swarm in a certain area as much as possible, protecting our valuable anti-aircraft positions and artillery positions.

Plague Giant Flies couldn't fly too high and weren't very fast either—these weaknesses allowed the human aircraft to seize numerous opportunities. After firing, they could climb to a higher altitude to disengage and refill their ammo before returning to the fight.

However, there were also those unlucky enough to be destroyed in the air—the corrupt Demon Dragons had none of those weaknesses!

They could even use Dark Magic to treat the Plague Giant Flies around them as 'projectiles', accelerating them and 'throwing' them high into the air; or, they would stealthily approach beneath the aircraft amid the cloud-like cover of the Plague Fly Swarms, then suddenly surge upwards, reaching the side of the aircraft at high speed, tearing it apart with sharp fangs and claws…

But the sacrifice of the human aircraft had value, as long as creatures of the grade of the corrupt Demon Dragons were still few, with only seven appearing in total. When their gaze turned towards the sky, the pressure on the ground would lighten a bit.

However, no matter how ferocious the anti-aircraft firepower was or how full of heroic spirit the human pilots were, the sky that could not be reclaimed remained irrecoverable.

The ground assault of the Demons also began.

Countless Demons surged out of the Nest Capital like a tide.

Unconcerned with ‘roads’, on any living wall, they might create a breach and then hordes of Plague Zombies would rush out chaotically.

In the hands of these corrupted enemies were firearms. Some resembled corrupted versions of human military weapons; others were simply firearms conjured on the spot from Subspace Dark Magic, firing venomous dark magic bullets.

The brutal ground combat began just like this.

The essence of human troops had to engage with the enemy in close combat under conditions where air superiority had been lost, long-range heavy firepower was continuously harassed by enemy air attacks, thus support was not timely.

And the huge cannons of the Nest Capital began to assert their power, savagely bombarding human positions again and again.

By the sixth hour after the battle officially began, the human army’s first line of defense had completely crumbled.

And during this process, the advance of Fino City did not slow down in the slightest, the human military had not managed to penetrate deep into the body of Fino City, failing to threaten its fleshly core, naturally unable to slow its advance.

Thus, Fino City steadily pressed forward a distance of twelve kilometers.

Chapter 352, Going Against the Current

And yet, Fino City was still advancing. Over six hours, it had pushed forward by twelve kilometers.

The Plague Demon Army that surged from its ‘body’, with the support of aerial superiority and the fire support of Fino City, the War Fortress come to life, had already pierced through over fifty kilometers of the human army’s front lines.

The human army on the second line of defense had already engaged these Plague Demon forces in battle.

At this moment, back at the main command post, General Hans had just received the latest intelligence.

“…Our first line of defense has been breached.”

“The 55th, 60th, 61st, 71st, 72nd, and 83rd Armies of the homeland have all collapsed completely.”

…

“The 3rd and 5th Armies of the Dragonhawk Legion have also retreated.”

This was shocking news.

Everyone in the command post, from General Hans to numerous staff officers, remained silent, allowing the staff officer who was delivering the report to continue, his voice trembling, with the frontline situation.

“The frontline battle is too intense for accurate data. Currently, twelve divisions are completely out of contact and presumed to have completely lost their structure; the remaining troops that have retreated

have all suffered losses. It is estimated that in the past six hours, we have lost a total of over four hundred thousand men…”

Six hours, four hundred thousand men.

Everyone present was a seasoned veteran, who had fought countless wars, big and small.

But a war like this, they had truly never fought.

Go to

The entire campaign would mobilize sixty million people and, within six hours, several army groups, millions of people forming the first line of defense, directly collapsed, losing twelve divisions, four hundred thousand men… It was too exaggerated.

A division, on average, lasted only a few minutes on the frontline before retreating, and every half an hour a division was completely wiped out.

Of course, it couldn’t actually be calculated so evenly. Over hundreds of kilometers in width and fifty kilometers in depth, the troops were spread out, and the battles almost happened simultaneously. Normally, a division holding the front could last several hours of fighting.

Yet even so, these figures sent back from the frontline were still chilling.

Moreover, the development of the battle exceeded their original plans by far.

Initially, General Hans intended to bring the battle into Fino City. As Nest Capital approached, the troops would rush into it under the cover of firepower, using incendiary weapons and bombs to cause as much damage as possible to the living body of Nest Capital.

Although doing this would subject them to fierce counterattacks by the Plague Demon Army, the initial trial attack involving a million men had failed but still managed to achieve some results.

More importantly, the forces they prepared for this offensive were not on the million scale but the tens of millions.

As long as the frontline troops could gain a foothold inside Nest Capital, follow-up support would immediately come from the second defensive line to join the fight and pull out the first wave of troops, which were expected to suffer heavy casualties.

By rotating like this, continuing to push deeper and increase troop commitment, perhaps they could ultimately destroy this living city at the cost of the blood of countless human soldiers.

But unexpectedly, the first wave of troops didn't just fail to breach Fino City, the Plague Demon Army, under the cover of aerial superiority, didn't even let the human troops touch the edge of Nest Capital; instead, they broke out and directly overwhelmed the human army's first line of defense.

The collapse was too fast, and the severity of the casualties too high, entirely beyond their expectations.

More crucially, if they were trembling with fear in the command post, what about the front line troops?

Snapping back to reality, Hans was the first to focus on this issue, "What's the situation with the troops on the second line of defense?"

"Very bad." The intelligence officer immediately responded, "The front was defeated too quickly. The routed army was retreating without any chance to reorganize, and the enemy pressed on. Multiple homeland army groups on the second defensive line have reported incidents of organized desertion. Although it can still be controlled for now, as the battle fully ignites on the second defensive line, the situation will likely become even less optimistic, even…"

"Even what?"

"Even the second line of defense might not hold as long as the first did." That intelligence officer still gritted his teeth and voiced his judgment.

An atmosphere of panic and despair entirely enveloped the command post.

They could all foresee the consequence: if the worst-case scenario occurred and the human army's second line of defense also quickly collapsed, then countless Plague Demons, sweeping up the vast numbers of fleeing soldiers, could possibly trigger a chain reaction, toppling all the subsequent arrangements.

Regardless of the tens of millions of people, once organization was lost, no amount of personnel would help; the entire situation would collapse like a giant set of dominoes. Any reinforcements would only make the collapse appear even more massive.

And just at that moment, an intelligence officer burst into the command post.

Everyone was startled by the loud opening of the door, fearful of even worse news coming.

The newly arrived intelligence officer was a bit baffled, but with important information at hand, he hurriedly spoke up, "Commander! There's news from the third defensive line. Major General Li Kexi reports that the Rage Bear Legion he leads is launching a counterattack with the objective of stabilizing the front line ahead of his position and arranging for the retreating troops to reorganize in the rear. He hopes that command will make a decision soon to deploy elite troops for the counterattack and not spare the aerial support any longer. We must stabilize the situation, or the consequences will be dire."

Chapter 352, Swimming Upstream_2

General Hans was momentarily stunned.

In the face of a full retreat, there was actually a legion moving against the current?

He hadn't ruled out the idea of moving the rear troops forward, but one question always lingered in his mind: would it be of any use?

They could still hold their own for now, and if the enemy's offensive slowed down, especially it moved further away from the support of the Nest Capital's Sinister Energy Cannon, their assault would inevitably weaken with increasing distance from the active Nest Capital. He had already prepared himself to abandon the first few defense lines and regroup further back.

But if he really moved the troops from the remaining defense lines forward, and if they could hold off the enemy, all would be well. If they couldn't, a massive collapse could come even sooner.

How should one choose?

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No matter how conflicted General Hans was behind the scenes, Li Kexi nevertheless took action.

The Rage Bear Legion currently had a complete roster of one million two hundred thousand troops, with a total of 49 divisional and brigade-level units, the equivalent of an army group, solely responsible for a segment of the third defense line.

Without a clear command for a full-scale assault from the high command, Li Kexi couldn't possibly commit his entire force.

He still had his own defense zone to manage.

However, according to the intelligence returned by the scouting units and information from allied forces at the front, Li Kexi astutely judged that the situation ahead was unsustainable. Watching the allies take a beating without moving, if the second defense line collapsed, all the pressure would come to him, and he wouldn't be able to withstand it either.

Consequently, he extended two "tentacles" outward to probe.

Go to

The 77th Kologa Armored Composite Brigade, the 92nd Kologa Heavy Infantry Division, and the 21st Garrison Division comprised one tentacle.

The other was similarly equipped.

The Armored Brigade, as the spearhead, surged forward with a force of forty thousand. The heavily structured infantry division followed behind to provide support while the Garrison Division patrolled nearby, ready to fill in any infantry gaps in the armored division.

In this formation, it took them just over an hour to reach the second defense line.

Even on the way, they encountered and annihilated some of the enemy units that had overrun their positions.

And when they reached the second defense line, the intensity of the battle suddenly increased.

The entire area was completely engulfed by raging flames of war.

It covered several hundred square kilometers, but with a large number of troops stationed there, practically everywhere were trenches and semi-underground bunkers dug up in recent months. Here, the human troops engaged the Plague Demons in a fight to the death.

Many positions had already been overrun, while others were still resisting. Both sides contended for every inch of land, every trench, and every firepower point, fighting repeatedly for control.

But on the whole, the human side was on the brink of collapse.

Initially, the 56th Local Defense Corps, with over twenty large-size divisions, was stationed in this area. But with a large number of units retreating from the front line and needing to be managed, and a sudden attack during reassignment, contact with several divisions could no longer be established. Many positions were split, and at the same time, the troops' will to fight was not strong. The frightening appearance of the enemy and the loss of the skies further damaged their morale.

Under these compounded factors, the entire Army Group was close to falling apart.

The front-line troops had already begun to retreat, and the reserves that moved up could not hold out for long. In some places where a breakthrough occurred, a large number of enemies poured in, causing significant chaos in the rear of the Army Group.

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Yunrao quietly infused the subspace around the area with dark magic, sneakily inputting electronic garbage code into the human legion’s communication channels. This caused the communication channels between human forces to be disconnected for one third of the time, and for another third, the situation was even worse, with channels filled with the Demons’ whispers and sinister laughter, causing anyone who heard it to feel extremely uncomfortable, breaking out in cold sweat, vomiting, and that was just the mild effects; some even went mad because of it.

Only in the final third of cases, if luck was on their side, could they communicate normally. The human forces could only rely on this completely unreliable method for communication.

The problem of poor communication greatly affected the cohesion of the entire force.

Within the advancing Rage Bear Legion’s armored forces, there were specialized communication vehicles and communication companies who, relying on the stability of their equipment and their ability to resist interference, were faring much better.

The vanguard force successfully made contact with the 56th Army’s headquarters. Upon hearing of their arrival, the commanding officer was overjoyed and immediately shared intelligence, pointing out where the largest gap currently was.

The commander of the 77th Armored Brigade only considered briefly, communicated slightly with the forces behind, and then led his troops straight toward the target area.

The Lion Tanks, with their turrets held high, continued to fire as they moved, blanketing the visible enemy groups with high-explosive shells; armored personnel carriers accompanied them, firing rapid-shot machine guns in coordination, annihilating large numbers of enemy forces; self-propelled artillery units set up an urgent artillery array, covering fire in the direction of troop advancement, and the garrison division following behind simultaneously deployed their own artillery in coordination, while also

securing their positions, to avoid the enemy, who had already broken through the friendly lines, from directly threatening the artillery array from other directions.

As for the Rage Bear Legion's large formation division, they were a bit further back. Artillery had also set up their attack formation; massive troops, organized into companies and battalions, took over many of the friendly positions, ensuring a clear rear for the frontline troops.

The firepower of a single unit from the Rage Bear 77th Brigade was comparable to several large formation divisions of the local corps. After they joined the battle, the situation changed significantly.

At least, the gap was plugged.

The turning point occurred when an advancing tank company discovered an area heavily guarded by the enemy. After calling for several rounds of artillery support from behind, eleven Lion Tanks from the company charged in a cluster. The roars of the steel behemoths' engines and the heavy pounding of the tank cannons not only stunned the enemies who had just withstood the bombardment and hadn't recovered yet but also awakened the combat will of several local companies that had previously fled in defeat.

These infantrymen, at the request of the tank company commander, plucked up their courage and conducted a joint attack.

After sacrificing two tanks and destroying one flesh monster larger than the Lion Tank with five or six armor-piercing rounds, the enemy's most important resistance force was shattered.

The infantry rushed forward and wiped out the remaining enemies, discovering what this force of plague monsters had been protecting—a crawling flesh machine with antennas, from which a piercing and shrill noise was emanating.

The captain commanding the tank company roughly guessed what it was—likely a hub where the enemy released electronic garbage code.

Regardless, it was a demonic creation, so without a second word, they fired several shots and destroyed it.

Sure enough, his guess was correct.

As the antenna-laden flesh machine was destroyed, communication conditions in the surrounding large area improved significantly.

The troops that could now be reorganized and mobilized no longer collapsed so easily.

As the Armored Brigade pushed forward along the frontline gap, the entire battle line's situation thus stabilized.

This attracted a swarm of Plague Flies.

The destructive power of these creatures' suicide bombing dives was not to be underestimated. However, the Armored Brigade within the alliance was equipped with a large number of anti-air armored vehicles, anti-aircraft guns, and anti-air high-explosive shells, which took a significant toll on these not-so-fast and dive-bombing monsters. Even the infantry's handheld guns could bring about substantial results.

Albeit a significant number of the giant flies succeeded in their suicide bombing, the losses were within an acceptable range.

Then, as the Aviation Forces of the Corps from the rear joined the battle with a large number of Wind Falcons, the aerial threats were further mitigated.

For a time, the Rage Bear Legion's dispatched vanguard forces, against the odds, launched into an advance!

Chapter 353, It's Not the Time Yet

The forward units of Rage Bear Legion had blocked the two breaches in the defensive line, which significantly impacted the battle.

From a strategic standpoint, once the gaps were plugged, the surrounding troops were no longer subject to being attacked from multiple directions. Also, as the forces from the first line of defense withdrew, they now had a route to retreat.

Even more crucial was the aspect of troop morale.

Since the outset of the battle, the human army had been continuously losing ground. Positions held by companies were wiped out entirely, while battalion and division-level positions could often only withstand a few hours of assault. The enemy was advancing as if into an uninhabited land, not just resisting; those who retreated a little slower were entirely surrounded and then lost contact. Due to this, even Army Group sectors experienced a terrifying waver.

It was a choice between annihilation and flight. With constant defeats, how could morale not be affected?

But now, the counterattack by Rage Bear Legion, importantly, was effective; it was like lifting a torch in the darkness.

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Although on the overall battlefield, this could at best be considered a localized victory, even the so-called victory was only temporary. Yet, it did convey to others that the enemy was not invincible.

Units that had suffered heavy losses could now retreat and regroup; the same went for the troops from the collapsed first line of defense. Following this, the 56th Army's reserves began to move up, taking over the positions that Rage Bear Legion's troops had recaptured.

By this stage, it was the Plague Demon Army that was a bit embarrassed.

Before this, the plague monsters that had flooded in through the breaches were pushed back by the offensive of Rage Bear Legion's armored forces. However, many were trapped before they could retreat, and within a few hours, they were nearly exterminated.

At this point, calling it a localized victory was no exaggeration.

Of course, the armored units of Rage Bear Legion had also suffered significant losses, unexpectedly, with the greatest losses not occurring during the offensive but in holding the recaptured positions.

The main enemy forces in front had not ceased their fierce attack. To not lose the fruits of victory, they had to firmly block the breaches. At this time, one disadvantage of the Armored Composite Brigade became apparent: a shortage of front-line combat units, especially in the number of infantry. In defense, the armored units' role could at most be a fire support platform.

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You can't use valuable armored vehicles as cover.

There are plenty of trenches and bomb craters on the battlefield that can be used for cover.

Thankfully, the 92nd Infantry Division, which accompanied the offensive, arrived to help, mitigating the lack of combat infantry. Later on, local Defense Forces from the 56th Army also sent multiple battalion-sized units, further bolstering their numbers.

They held the line.

The battle situation thus tended towards stabilization—at least it appeared so for the moment.

Of course, stable does not mean the fighting was not intense. In fact, the battle was still extremely fierce, and the casualties were massive. The relentless attacks by the Plague Demon Army, with no regard for their own losses, turned the front lines into a veritable meat grinder.

Every second, countless soldiers cried out and died, and with them, an even greater number of monsters.

In continuous fighting, even a unit like Rage Bear Legion that met Star Realm Army's standard training requirements and was well-equipped was hard-pressed to withstand such ferocious combat.

The 92nd Division lost over five thousand soldiers in just a few hours. A casualty rate of just over 12% might not seem like much, but in reality, it greatly affected the division's combat effectiveness.

The division had a full strength of forty thousand, but a significant portion of that number included logistics, communications, artillery, air defense, engineers, division headquarters… and other non-frontline personnel. The troops lost in combat were almost exclusively from the front-line units.

In fact, the 92nd Division's combat effectiveness had been reduced by more than a third.

It wasn't until a fully staffed reserve Homeland Infantry Division arrived that the situation improved significantly.

But the reserves were ultimately limited. Without further support, the cruel grinder of battle couldn't be sustained indefinitely.

Fortunately, the Central Command of the human legions finally made the correct decision. A large number of troops in the rear were ordered to move forward to support.

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The victory by Rage Bear Legion was the only piece of good news the Central Command had heard since the start of the war.

No matter what, the deployment and assault by Rage Bear Legion had helped the 56th Army hold the line and even pushed it back slightly.

On the entire second line of defense, this was the only solid ground now.

The previously overwhelmed Central Command finally issued orders.

The troops from the third line of defense began to press forward, fully supporting the front; simultaneously, following the example of Rage Bear Legion, General Hans moved the main elite units under his command, which were the armored forces of Dragonhawk Legion.

In all honesty, though the Dragonhawk Legion was a bona fide part of the Star Realm Army, its combat capabilities were not nearly as proficient as those of Rage Bear.

Actually, the difference was quite substantial.

Chapter 353, It's Not Time Yet_2

The difference in personnel was significant; only about forty percent of the Dragonhawk Legion soldiers met the Star Realm Army standard. And in terms of equipment, the gap was even more pronounced. The infantry divisions might be roughly equal, but the disparity among the armored divisions was huge. An armored division with a large organization, numbering over thirty thousand people, might have only two-thirds the heavy equipment of a single Rage Bear Legion's combined brigade.

Yet, there were as many as forty such large armored divisions in the Dragonhawk Legion.

Moreover, within their ranks were a few Lion King Tanks. By name, these seemed like upgraded versions of the Lion Tanks, but in reality, they were completely different. In the Star Realm Army classification, Lion Tanks were only considered as standard tanks, while Lion King Tanks were bona fide heavy tanks. Their size was three times larger than that of the Lion Tanks. They possessed extremely thick armor and even had a small, movable Shield Generator that could protect one side. Its main gun was a super-heavy artillery piece, supplemented by two secondary guns equivalent to the Lion Tanks, as well as two heavy explosive machine guns. Nearly twenty crew members were needed inside to operate this tank effectively.

The difference was that one Lion King could destroy dozens of Lions—the main reason being that its internal gunners and multiple auxiliary targeting servoskulls could operate with very high accuracy. Its main gun, no matter where it hit a Lion Tank, could inflict devastating damage—the secondary guns could too, they just needed to be more precise.

Conversely, Lion Tanks could hardly inflict effective damage on the Lion King. Even if they managed to bypass the energy shield and surround the Lion King, the weakest parts of its armor – the rearmost or the side track guards – still offered protection far exceeding the frontal armor of an ordinary Lion Tank.

Such heavy monsters could even destroy Knight Titans in a head-on conflict!

…

However, these behemoths were few in number within the entire Dragonhawk Legion, averaging less than one per armored division. But when General Hans decided to commit, he did so decisively, no longer holding back. Eighteen of his Lion King heavy tanks, his final ace in the hole, were brought out, half of them dispatched to the most perilous battlefield.

At the same time, the armored divisions of the Dragonhawk Legion also began to mobilize.

Tactically, they followed the example of the Rage Bear Legion's Armored Composite Brigade.

The combat effectiveness of these Dragonhawk armored divisions was far from that of the Rage Bear Legion, but with their number and the support of heavy tanks, they managed to breach the enemy's lines and stabilize the overall defense.

The originally teetering second defense line thus became stable.

Even the meat grinder situation slowed down considerably afterward.

At first, the human side was surprised, but soon, the human military staffers, regaining their wits, figured out the reason:

Go to

The enemy's losses were also significant. Those Plague creatures could also be rendered ineffective.

Though the lowest level of Plague creatures, such as the Plague Giant Flies or Plague Zombies, were brainless and possessed no concept of morale, fighting with reckless abandon, it was clear that their commanders, the leaders of the enemy, were not so mindless and would not waste their troops meaninglessly.

If they could maintain a destructive assault on the human forces, break through human battle zones directly, then the sacrifice would certainly be worthwhile.

However, once the human defensive line stabilized, there was no need for such losses.

The most crucial factor was that, during the previous offensive phase, the losses of these Plague creatures were actually far greater than those of the human side.

Previously, as the human military was in constant retreat, it was difficult to count the enemy's losses. But once the second defense line stabilized and the situation became a stalemate, some estimates could be made.

Even though they weren't accurate, they served as a reference.

The human casualty exchange ratio with those Plague creatures was roughly 1 to 8.

This was a high rate, the cost of the enemy's relentless attacks along every sector of the hundreds of kilometers long front line.

Humans were initially stunned by the assault, but now they had recovered.

Up until now, the battle had been raging for a whole day, and even without counting the Plague Fly Swarms, just the ground forces had nearly a million human casualties, while the enemy's losses were estimated to be over eight million.

The Demons could no longer sustain the assault.

Additionally, there was another objective factor: when the frontline reached the human's second defensive line, it was already more than eighty kilometers from Fino City.

At this distance, Fino City could not offer much support.

Within Fino City, the most powerful Sinister Energy Cannon dared not target the ground combat, instead aiming at the sky. The Human Fleet also flickered in and out of orbit, occasionally unleashing a barrage of fire onto Fino City, delivering a strike from orbit, declaring their presence in this manner.

Although it was difficult to rely solely on a not-so-powerful Fleet firepower to destroy Fino City's Void Shield, the presence of the Fleet still brought significant meaning to the battle.

If it weren't for the Fleet's diversion, those Orbital Cannons on Fino City would level their barrels against the human army's positions, with each shot piercing through effortlessly, leaving no room for negotiation.

Moreover, the Fleet's orbital strikes could also support the direction of the Plague Demon Army's offensive.

It's just that the level of support was not sufficient.

When faced with threats from Fino City's Anti-Orbit Cannons, the Fleet could not act too recklessly; losing a single ship would be unbearably painful.

Under such mutual constraints, as the battlefield moved away from Fino City, the number of conventional Sinister Energy Cannons capable of reaching as far as eighty kilometers away significantly reduced. And those Plague Demon Armies, lacking the heavy firepower support from the rear, could not press forward anymore.

To continue fighting, on the human's stabilized frontlines, under the heavy artillery fire from behind, their losses might not just be as low as eight to one, it could probably double up, if not more.

Even the Plague Demon Army could not withstand such losses.

Fino City originally had a population of one billion, and before the city was completely overrun, six hundred million managed to evacuate; most of the population of Nest Capital, which Fino City devoured, also fled before being consumed, with just over a hundred million swallowed.

The Plague Demon Army could not possibly transform all these seven hundred million people into military forces—at least half would be lost in the transformation process.

Considering the combined losses and the lack of fire support, the Plague Demon Army slowed down their offensive.

As a result, the human army could catch their breath.

The nearly twenty Army Groups originally in the first and second defense lines all retreated to the rear, resting under the walls of Mingyan City; fifteen Army Groups originally in the rear were now on the front, with dozens more Army Groups waiting as reserves behind them.

Except for the Rage Bear Legion. General Hans did not wish to use such a combat-capable force as a conventional line filler and kept them ready to be redeployed at any moment.

With such arrangements, the defense lines were finally completely solidified.

However, General Hans still felt unease in his heart.

He initiated communication with Gu Hang.

“Mr. Gu, although you haven’t told me, I know you’re preparing something very special,” General Hans spoke gravely, a guess he had formed from observing Gu Hang’s various actions, “Now, the balanced situation at the frontline can’t be maintained forever. In fact, by tomorrow, once Fino City advances thirty kilometers forward, bringing our frontline back within their firing range, our pressure will become immense, and we may have to retreat from the second defense line.”

“Whatever plans you have, you need to act quickly!”

However, in response to General Hans' words, Gu Hang only replied, "Now is not the time."

Chapter 354, Meritorious Unit

"Is it still not time?"

General Hans was somewhat angry.

"Then just when do we have to wait? A million casualties in a day, twenty Army Groups need to be rotated out from the front line, my lord Governor, my lord Commander of the War Zone, do you even understand what that signifies?"

"I've been in the military for forty years, and I've never fought such a brutal battle! Even in the Golden Pass Star Sector, when we were fighting desperately against those Green Skins, the scale was larger, but we never lost so many warriors on such a narrow front in a single night and day!"

"Continuing on like this, how long do you think our forces can hold out?"

"Wait until the Army Corps collapses, wait until Mingyan City is also swallowed up, all your myriad and ingenious plans will be meaningless!"

…

General Hans unloaded on Gu Hang with a fierce tirade.

And Gu Hang, in response, offered only a modicum of consolation, "I understand the heavy sacrifices made by the corps. They are my subjects, my army; am I not saddened, not pained by their sacrifices?"

"But these are all for a greater victory."

"Do I not even have the right to know about this so-called greater victory?"

“Whether you know or not, has no significance,” Gu Hang said, instead making further demands, “I need your troops to do one more thing.”

“What?”

“The next stage of our war mission, is to attack Fino City.”

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General Hans almost laughed in exasperation, “Do you even realize what you are saying?”

“Of course, I do.”

“It can’t be done!” General Hans decisively refused, “That is an impossible objective.”

“General Hans, I must remind you,” Gu Hang’s tone grew stern, “I am not here to discuss combat plans with you, but to issue the most explicit military order.”

Gu Hang’s tone became even more severe, forbidding, “You and your troops must complete the mission of attacking Fino City within the next eight days, without delay! Do you understand?”

Hans took a deep breath.

He was holding in his breath, feeling an urge that wouldn’t be satisfied until it was released.

But in the end, he held it in anyway.

He was a soldier; obedience to orders was his sworn duty.

And Gu Hang was now his clear superior. He had no choice but to carry out Gu Hang's orders without question.

No matter how much he disagreed, how little he understood.

Clenching his teeth, he replied, "Yes, Commander."

…

After the communication ended, Gu Hang stood on the edge of a sheer cliff, gazing down at the battlefield below.

The distance was vast, stretching hundreds of kilometers wide and deep, with no end in sight.

Yet, despite this, what caught his eye was an immensely majestic scene.

All the brutality and cruelty of war, the deaths and severed limbs, the sacrifices and wails, were invisible and inaudible here. All that could be seen was sheer splendor and magnificence.

Explosions were the most beautiful fireworks, and the battle line visible in the distance meandered and twisted, changing moment by moment.

But none of this stirred any feelings of valiance in Gu Hang.

He knew that what Hans had said was true. Countless human warriors were making tremendous sacrifices on the battlefield below.

But if one wasn't ready, one simply wasn't ready.

At such times, Gu Hang had to be resolute.

The unprepared were not his concern.

For the past four months, the elite troops slated for deployment had been ready and waiting.

At the same time, he had long calculated the specific methods of spiritual energy transmission with his own Mage Corps. Gu Hang himself had also immersed himself periodically in his Storm God Kingdom, working out how to use the Divine Realm to smuggle through subspace and reach the heart of Fino City.

But he had not forgotten their ultimate goal for this risky venture: to destroy the Anti-Orbit Cannon and Void Shield at the center of Fino City.

To achieve this goal, it was necessary to reach the target location as soon as possible, which required precise teleportation; at the same time, he hoped that the enemy's defense forces around the target would be as few as possible, which required external pressure so that those demons would draw away the target area's defensive forces to engage the enemy.

Of course, having General Hans' troops launch a fierce attack on Fino City to draw the enemy's attention was only a secondary goal. More importantly, when Fino City came under direct attack, especially as more human warriors entered the activated city, the link between Fino City, a node overlapping subspace and reality, and subspace would correspondingly weaken.

And this would directly affect the extent to which some powerful demons, from the depths of the Abyssal Hell, could exert influence on the real world.

What Gu Hang was most concerned about was the Great Demon, the Ge Wajia Demon Lord.

Clearly, the plague disaster on Korolya Planet was a major move by Ge Wajia. It had been waiting a long time, already gorged and yet unsatisfied. Its greedy eyes were already set on the hundreds of billions of people in the entire world, unwilling to give up.

In fact, it was indeed very close to success. Once it devoured Mingyan City, the entire planet would be powerless to resist it.

If it sensed any risk of its schemes failing, there was no doubt that it would do everything in its power to prevent it.

At first, in Rage Owl Star, Ge Wajia couldn't directly traverse the veil of reality, but in Fino City, it was different. The subspace corruption was too severe here; the veil of reality was already fragile. If it were willing to pay a sufficient price, it could come through.

Chapter 354, Meritorious Unit_2

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Currently, we are at this critical point.

Gu Hang needs the human military to set foot in Fino City. It's not necessary for them to accomplish the task of capturing Fino City, just having enough people step onto it will strengthen the reality veil; as long as the body of Fino City is set ablaze, creating enough pressure on this living city, it will help reduce the erosion of subspace.

This will directly slow down the likelihood of Ge Wajia, the Great Unclean One, personally intervening in the battle.

Even if it doesn't completely prevent it, the more substantial the cost and the longer the time Ge Wajia takes to pass through the reality veil, the more it will directly impact the success rate of the special forces' mission.

This is a key operation to save the lives of forty billion people on the entire planet, so even though knowing that ordering General Hans to carry out the attack will result in enormous casualties, there is no room for anyone to be soft-hearted at this moment.

…

Of course, besides the sacrifices that ground troops will have to make, Gu Hang also hasn't forgotten the difficulty of their task.

It’s not as if simply being willing to make the sacrifice guarantees that the troops can break through.

Gu Hang also needs to secure some extra help for the ground forces.

His options, in reality, are not many.

He made contact with Envoy Nell Lavis.

“I need more support from the space fleet…”

…

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This was bound to be a sleepless night, whether for the warriors on the frontline holding out against the Plague Demon Army, the second-line troops responsible for transporting logistical supplies, or the combat strategists working through the night on stimulants; no one could sleep this night.

The ground troops and the strategists at Central Command had made an all-out offensive combat plan, breaking down the tasks among the subordinate Army Groups. The Army Groups’ staff were also at work, and the corresponding tasks were further delegated to division-level units, and so on…

On the first day of Mr. Gu’s order and the second day since the battle began, the entire defense line remained stationary, continuing with a defensive stance.

On this day, the human military didn’t face too severe a test— at least, not as severe as the first day of battle. Casualties along the whole defense line were roughly over two hundred thousand.

This was still a horrifying number, but it was much better compared to the first day, with casualties of four hundred thousand within six hours, one million for the entire day, and the complete rout of more than a dozen Army Groups.

By the third day, the entire defense line was even retreating.

However, unlike the first day, this retreat was relatively orderly, a deliberate relinquishment of the position.

Furthermore, the troops stationed on the defense line were rotated out for a fresh batch.

The main reason for this was that Fino City had advanced nearly sixty kilometers in these two days. Without retreating, the human military's defense line would once again fall within the firing range of many Sinister Energy Cannons deployed within the living city.

This was also to avoid the Plague Demon Army, which would start another round of relentless attacks bolstered by more substantial fire support, putting too much pressure on the defense line.

This was trading space for time.

General Hans also explained his strategy to Mr. Gu: To break into Fino City, apart from actively attacking to penetrate it, there was another way, which was to wait for Fino City to come to them.

After all, that living city was moving.

It advanced sixty kilometers two days earlier, while the human military's defense line retreated fifty kilometers.

In the following days, the same pattern continued.

Fino City advanced thirty kilometers each day, and the human military's defense line retreated twenty kilometers daily.

The reason for this, rather than fiercely holding a single position, was because as Fino City drew nearer, the pressure on the human military would become greater. Furthermore, after several battles, the

forward positions were severely damaged, while the rear positions, newly dug out, were relatively intact, which helped reduce casualties.

At the same time, some time was needed for the various units, especially those native defense forces, to adapt better to such brutal battlefield conditions.

Of course, this could also result in the total collapse of the native troops' morale.

But there was no choice, it had to be done. It was impossible to rely solely on the Dragonhawk Legion's forces for this battle. The native troops numbered over fifty million, and the extent to which they could be effective would have a decisive impact.

All that was left was to hope that they would adapt to the battlefield, not completely fall apart.

So far, the situation had not progressed in the worst possible direction.

At the rate of nearly ten kilometers a day towards Fino City, by the dawn of the seventh day, the front line of the human army was less than thirty kilometers away from Fino City. By then, a large number of Sinister Energy Cannons had entered range, significantly increasing the pressure on the front line.

But aside from enduring Sinister Energy Cannon fire, airstrikes, and being severely beaten, the enemy's ground assault was not too frenzied.

Up until now, the human army's total casualties had reached nearly four million. In general, the human army maintained an exchange rate of at least one to seven against the Plague Demon Army in combat, which meant the Plague Demon Army also suffered losses in the realm of thirty million.

Although the majority were plague zombies, wielding the most rudimentary weapons, the consumables required to transform these creatures were significant, not to mention the loss of many powerful flesh monsters in combat, as well as the death of numerous plague wizards, eternal devotees, responsible for creating, controlling, strengthening, and commanding the rank-and-file, during the battle.

This made the enemy somewhat hesitant to continue fighting.

It was during this time that General Hans's devastating counterattack began.

All the Lion King Tanks were committed to battle at once; several armored divisions formed a fist, with many Armored Brigades from the Rage Bear Legion also participating, initiating an armored cluster thrust in the very center of the battle line. A large number of elite infantry followed closely behind, ready to provide support.

And it was at this moment that heavenly fire descended.

Almost simultaneously, the starships of the Tianma Fleet arrived directly above the battlefield. Among them were even some Escort Ships and Destroyers left by Envoy Lois's Tax Fleet.

Most of the Tax Fleet had already left the Tianma Star Sector, having the important task of collecting Imperial Tax elsewhere. But the few escort ships and destroyers that remained supplemented the firepower of the Tianma Fleet.

This time, their targets were not limited to suppressing Fino City. The starships, undaunted by the exchange of fire with Anti-Orbit Cannons, began to apply more pressure on Fino City, forcing them to divert more of their Sinister Energy Cannons towards the sky for counterattacks and orbital interception.

This, in turn, significantly reduced the Sinister Energy fire that the human armored clusters on the ground had to endure.

At the same time, a massive amount of orbital strikes bombarded along the armored clusters' advancement line, conducting intensive bombing.

In particular, several shots from L-class heavy cannons caused earth-shattering effects.

The results of the bombardment, the number of enemies annihilated were secondary. The main thing was that the direction of the armored cluster's assault was so bombarded that the enemy was scattered and disoriented.

For a while, the ground forces' assault was incredibly smooth!

The distance was less than thirty kilometers in total, and by evening, the Void Shield of Fino City was within sight. The spearhead forces could even see the artillery fire from starships in the sky, intercepted by Sinister Energy Cannons, or those unintercepted ones causing large ripples as they smashed directly into the Void Shield.

"Charge, charge, charge! Long live the 35th Brigade!"

The forefront unit was a Composite Camp from the 35th Brigade of the Rage Bear Legion.

The 35th Brigade could be considered a meritorious unit of the Alliance, established early, they had earned their stripes during the unification war on Rage Owl Star, contributing to the reclamation of the North Territory. Then many of them followed Gu Hang into what was once the domain of the Primal Fury Owl, occupied by the Evil God, where they battled Storm Beasts and ultimately slew the deity.

Thereafter, they participated in the war against Blackbird Heavy Industries, which had violated the ban on Smart Mechanisms. Also, they were part of the first batch of founding forces to be integrated into Rage Bear Legion from the start, arriving early in Korolya to fight and achieving many victories. The unit's honor wall was filled with numerous awards from the Central Government, Star Realm Army Command, and the Military Affairs Department.

And now, this unit of distinction had once again risen to prominence. In the massive battle for Korolya, they took the lead, becoming the first unit to break through the Void Shield and charge into Fino City!

Chapter 355, I Promise You

In the process of the advance, the 35th Brigade experienced losses.

Although the orbital strikes had created a path for them, their duration was not particularly long nor the firepower sufficiently intense. The main reason was that Fino City's Anti-Orbit Cannons had increased their output, shifting their focus away from the attacking ground troops and directing more firepower at the combating starships.

This caused significant trouble for the Tianma Fleet; several ships had their Void Shields and energy shields blown apart, forcing them to retreat urgently. Even worse, two Escort Ships had their shields shattered so suddenly that they could not evacuate from the range of the Anti-Orbit Cannons in time and got hit by several more rounds. Although they didn't explode, the armor was penetrated, resulting in substantial damage to the hulls, and they were heavily damaged.

This was exactly the sort of situation the proud naval officers disliked.

When Gu Hang made the request, the Tianma Fleet was reluctant to comply. Although Gu Hang was the commander of the war zone, the navy officers' temperament, unlike the 'stubborn' Land Forces, meant that they would lament, protest, and even escalate issues when faced with what they deemed 'unreasonable' missions.

A grand naval decisive battle, perhaps, but to deploy the precious Fleet against ground fortresses armed with Anti-Orbit Cannons was downright foolish—like a naval force from the 2000s bombarding coastal defense cannons.

…

However, for the sake of a greater goal, they were ultimately coerced into doing the job.

Now, with losses incurred, the two ships that had gone to the shipyards for repair might need two to three years to fix, and the total cost might exceed two billion.

This loss made the already displeased mood of the Tianma Fleet Commander even worse.

He communicated with the ground forces and Mr. Gu, reporting the issue that continuing the fight in this manner would result in ever-increasing losses.

But Mr. Gu insisted they proceed according to the plan.

After expressing his strong dissatisfaction, the Navy Rear Admiral could only indignantly state that they would follow the plan at most and could not possibly take on any more; if the Fleet suffered more

losses, he would decide on his own whether to retreat. If it came to a review by the Military Affairs Department, then so be it.

Gu Hang paid him little attention.

Go to

Issues of attitude aside, completing the task at hand was paramount.

The Tianma Fleet's Deputy Commander, who had been left in charge, ultimately dared not fully abandon the battle.

Although he refused to take on any more responsibility, he still continued to fire at Fino City's Void Shield as the battle plan had outlined, maintaining the suppression.

As for the enemies outside the city?

Since the battle plan only called for one round of orbital bombardment, why fire a second round?

Besides, the armoured units on the ground had already begun their advance through the blasted zone; what was the point of continuing bombardment?

And as for providing covering fire for the enemies near the advancing route…the operation plan specified that this task was to be carried out by two Destroyers and six Escort Ships, yet the number of ships that had withdrawn from the battle sequence due to shattered shields had already exceeded this. Therefore, the inability to assist was normal, and surely not a naval issue.

In light of the Navy's somewhat weak support, the Land Forces' offensive naturally could not proceed smoothly forever.

If the orbital bombardment was only for one round, not every inch of the ground could be covered; even if it were, there would be survivors at the edge of the explosions, inside defensive structures, or simply those lucky enough to remain alive.

After the bombardment, the Plague Demon Army, which had not been covered by the orbital firepower, also hurried to support from all directions.

All these factors greatly hindered the route of the human armoured forces.

But despite these challenges, the armoured group's progress was still rapid. The hastily assembled forces that attempted to block their way rarely received support from Fino City's Sinister Energy Cannons and were relatively scattered and rushed.

Under the iron tide, these obstructing monsters were mercilessly crushed.

After paying a certain price, the 35th Brigade became the first army to breach Fino City's Void Shield.

And as their boots, wheels, and tracks stamped across a mass of writhing flesh, the most arduous part of the battle commenced.

Their forces carried with them ample specialized weapons.

Incendiary rounds, flamethrowers… As the troops moved forward, they burned the surface every step of the way, incinerating the living flesh, forcing it back, revealing the grey concrete underneath, with exposed steel rebar in some places.

They used artillery, tank cannons, machine guns, and even threw bombs into the fleshy buildings beside them, smashing and collapsing them. The goal was to eliminate any potential enemies inside these flesh structures as well as to destroy the flesh itself.

However, after the 35th Brigade's large-scale entry into Fino City, the rate at which the living city advanced slowed significantly.

Yet, it was then that immense numbers of the Plague Demon Army surged from all directions, willing to sacrifice their flesh and blood in a siege against the human forces, determined to slow their advance; swarms of giant flies circled above the battlefield, braving the anti-aircraft fire from vehicles and infantry to perform dive-bombing suicide attacks.

Chapter 355, I Assure You_2

Even a corrupt magic dragon had flown to the battlefield. With a great breath, it sprayed a Lion Tank for several seconds, causing flesh buds to grow on the armor during those seconds. The tank was paralyzed, half flesh, half steel, unable to move—and the soldiers inside perished as a result.

The casualties borne by the 35th Brigade began to escalate at an alarming rate.

Yet, there was nothing that could halt their advance.

…

“Brigade Commander! The 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Company on our flank has been breached, and the Artillery Battalion has been ambushed by a group of demons!”

“The Tank Battalion reports a loss of 60% of their combat vehicles!”

…

“The Anti-Air Battalion has been attacked by that magic dragon again, and our anti-air interception capability has dropped by 70%. The vehicle of the Commissar who was overseeing the Anti-Air Battalion has been destroyed, and we’ve lost contact with him.”

“The 4th Battalion has lost all contact, we can’t reach any of their companies. It’s possible they’ve encountered jamming entities, but a complete annihilation cannot be ruled out.”

All Colonel Jikov, the commander of the 35th Brigade, heard was bad news.

By conventional wisdom, the entire brigade was at the end of its rope by now.

But there was not a hint of hesitation in his eyes.

He grabbed the communicator, switched to the all-unit channel, and began to speak, “Comrades of the 35th Brigade, this is your Brigade Commander Jikov. Now is the time to prove our loyalty!”

“I order all units to advance at all costs! The brigade headquarters move forward at full speed, from the command post to the Guard Battalion, support the frontline with all your might!”

Go to

“We must do everything in our power, at any cost, to ensure that the breach we’ve opened is wide enough!”

“For the Empire! For humanity! For the Alliance!”

“Advance, advance, advance!”

The Chief of Staff beside him widened his eyes as he looked at Jikov; after he put down the communicator, he said bitterly, “Our 35th Brigade will be finished, we’ll all die here.”

But Jikov just smiled, “Then let us die with honor, and die great!”

“Drive!” These two words were addressed to the driver.

The command vehicle, with the throttle fully opened, along with the entire command post and the Guard Battalion, began to press forward. Following the commander’s orders, the two Guard Companies joined the front line in their Infantry Fighting Vehicles, while the Guardsmen on foot filled in the excessive losses of the front-line infantry.

The 35th Brigade's strength was rapidly diminishing, and even as their objective combat power declined, the speed of their attrition quickened due to maintaining the offense.

However, no matter what, they were indeed still fighting forward.

…

In the depths of the writhing Nest Capital 'Fino City,' within a huge flesh nest, Thomlison was looking up at a wriggling wall.

Projected upon it was the ongoing offensive of the 35th Brigade.

His body no longer bore the frailty of humanity. Blessed, he stood three meters tall, swollen and powerful. His body, sheathed in robes, twitched from time to time.

Only his eyes remained firm and piercing.

Watching the projected images, his body heaved restlessly.

He, Thomlison, was the current leader of the Sublimation Sect, an apostle of the Great Demon, a spreader of the Korolya Plague, a recipient of the blessing.

He had long forgotten the many years ago when, as a human warrior handed over as Imperial Tax, he was conscribed into the Star Realm Army after surviving countless battles.

But today, watching those impassioned warriors, advancing despite the grievous casualties, the dusty years of glory emerged once more in his mind.

But these resurfacing memories did not evoke nostalgia; instead, they fueled his rage even more.

And even if he set aside the anger in his heart, just considering the war situation, he knew he couldn't let this unit keep charging forward like this.

The breach inside Fino City was being torn wider and wider. The deeper this human force charged, the easier it would be for more human armies to enter Fino City.

They were destroying the body of Fino City, forcing the living Nest Capital to divert more of its strength to repair itself. This would lead to a weakening of Subspace power.

At the moment, Fino City had come to a complete halt.

Indeed, according to the current situation, that human force should have been annihilated by now. But in fact, this should have happened an hour ago.

"Eradicate them," Thomlison spoke, "Let the magic dragons go down; send the Father's beloved hounds; release the blessed ones! You must destroy them for me! After destroying them, you must drive all the enemies out of our city along this road!"

"As you command, messenger."

Within this fleshly nest, another voice echoed.

Not long after, Thomlison saw a change in the battlefield scene.

Several different units appeared on the battlefield.

The so-called 'Father's Loving Dogs' referred to the 'Rotting Flesh Beasts,' monstrous creatures of sickly and extreme ugliness, with their lower halves resembling long, wriggling maggots; their upper halves rose high, with a giant mouth opening in the belly, and limbs beside the maw that aided in movement and in seizing prey to feed; their upper limbs were in the form of powerful arms.

The so-called ‘Blessed Ones’ were known to humans as Chaos Spawn. These entities stood two to three meters in height, roughly humanoid in shape but completely twisted beyond recognition. They were the result of humans undergoing a mutation after receiving, yet failing to endure, the blessings of gods.

Five or six behemoths, accompanied by dozens of Chaos Spawn, appeared at the front lines, immediately causing a direct shift in the tide of battle.

The Chaos Spawn couldn’t withstand tank shells, but bullets were largely ineffective against them; once they charged and got close, they could flip over armored vehicles with their physical strength.

The Rotting Flesh Beasts could even take direct hits from tank shells, with chunks of their bodies being blown off, spraying flesh and blood yet not fatal. Their writhing flesh would quickly regrow. The corrosive pus spewed from their giant maws could melt tanks.

Brigade 35, resolute as their fighting spirit was, finally couldn’t advance any further under such resistance.

And the demon dragon in the sky, at that moment, dived directly!

Sustaining some damage from anti-aircraft fire, it nonetheless destroyed two anti-aircraft vehicles with its breath. After landing, its position was not far from Colonel Jikov’s command vehicle.

It had already set its sights on it.

Confronted by the approaching demon dragon, Jikov’s command vehicle was fearless, its only mounted weapon—a heavy bomb gun—continuously firing at the demon dragon.

Even with heavy bombs and without the Plague Fly Swarm from Yunrao for cover, the dragon’s rotting body was blasted, flesh flying everywhere.

Yet it still rapidly charged beside the command vehicle, flipping it over with one sweep, then with ferocious claws, it struck seven or eight times, smashing the entire command vehicle to pieces.

After venting its rage, the demon dragon roared towards the sky with insolent pride!

But just as the roar had not yet ended, a heavy cannonball struck its head, blowing it off.

Thomlison saw it all clearly; this was certainly not a simple human artillery or tank shell.

The projected image panned out, and he saw a steel beast with a smoking barrel in the distance.

It was a Lion King Tank.

Following the opening created by Brigade 35, the armored contingent of the human army finally had its main forces arrive!

Its two secondary cannons were also firing, and the main cannon that had just delivered a fatal blow was once again charging.

The next shell blasted another Rotting Flesh Beast to ruin.

Thomlison's voice was deep as he ordered, "We must hold back these humans, send more troops forward!"

…

"Send more troops forward! We must not let Brigade 35's sacrifice be in vain!"

Li Kexi shouted loudly.

He had been appointed the frontline commander for this armored advance, and was currently issuing orders to his staff.

His face was intensely flushed, pained by the sacrifice of Brigade 35. But pain did not prevent him from seizing this opportunity with all his might.

After issuing the orders, he ran some calculations and dialed an encrypted communication frequency.

“Mr. Gu, fifteen divisions have entered Fino City, reaching the target you expected. Following that, I’m confident that within an hour, another fifteen divisions can join, including some infantry divisions, amounting to over three hundred thousand troops!”

“Good, you all have worked hard,” Mr. Gu’s voice arrived shortly after, “You must maintain the offensive.”

“I understand!” Li Kexi replied, and then hesitantly asked, “We have made huge sacrifices, victory must be ours in the end, right?”

“I assure you.”

Chapter 356, Subspace Smuggling Plan

“You all can see, without any need for me to say it, countless imperial warriors are fighting bravely on the battlefield below. Our armored units, after making tremendous sacrifices, have already charged into Fino City, this den of evil. They will continue to assault it until their last breath.”

“This is an offensive filled with despair. Many commanders among them understand that their attack doesn’t carry much significance, that they cannot possibly succeed; yet it is also an offensive brimming with passion and boundless loyalty. Precisely because they know this, their greatness and loyalty are even more pronounced when they offer up their lives amidst blood and fire.”

“And all that they do, they do for us!”

“Every one of you is the elite of the elite, the shining brilliance of humanity. It is precisely for this reason that you must never forget the millions of imperial foundations who have sacrificed themselves in this war. Carry them in your heart, take their will with you, and execute our mission.”

“I have already promised the front-line commanders that the ultimate victory will be ours. Now, I need you to promise me, will victory truly be ours?”

Gu Hang was giving his final address to the troops who were about to participate in the action.”

…

In front of him stood about six hundred, no more than seven hundred people.

The largest contingent was a group of three hundred elite soldiers from the Tenth Brigade. Half of them were equipped with standard Exoskeleton Armor, handpicked from within the brigade. The other half, a special formation of 150 people from the Tenth Brigade—Fang Camp.

What set them apart from other units of the Tenth Brigade was that all of them were equipped with the ‘Servant God-Type’ Feedback-Type Power Armor. Unlike the Demon Hunters’ silver-gray coating, the ‘Fang’ members’ paint job was mainly bright yellow with some orange accents.

The next three contingents each numbered one hundred people.

One hundred Spiritual Energy wielders from the Storm Mage Corps, all equipped with Exoskeletons to assist their movements, their leader, Mrs. Deres, had a Feedback-Type Power Armor painted sky blue.

One hundred Interstellar Warriors from the Phoenix Battle Group also were present.

There were also one hundred Battle Nuns from the Holy Benevolence Lily.

Go to

Beyond these six hundred people, there were also twelve ‘Ranger Type’ Knight Mechas and four Warhound-class Titans. The drivers, together, added up to sixty people.

Adding Gu Hang himself, the total number of participants was six hundred sixty-one.”

These people were listening to Mr. Gu’s pre-battle mobilization speech.

Among them, even the veterans were moved by his words. The four century-old veterans from Phoenix were fine; without a word, they fully understood what they had to do. As for the Battle Nuns from Holy Benevolence Lily, many of them had decades of combat experience. On any other battlefield, they might not have been so stirred. But now they were in Korolya, on their own home soil. Seeing so many people, including Korolya people and those who had come from other planets to support them, making huge sacrifices to save this world, they had long been filled with the will to fight; at this moment, that will was further ignited.”

If this applied to them, it was even more so for the new recruits.

Some of the more emotionally expressive warriors even began to shout:

“Victory belongs to us!”

“For The Emperor!”

“For humanity!”

“For Korolya!”

“For humanity!”

The shouts were not uniform; they had never rehearsed such a thing beforehand, but there was no doubt that they expressed their emotions and attitudes.”

Gu Hang showed a smile.

“Then let’s move out!”

…

Gu Hang issued the order to move out.

At this moment, nearly a day had passed since that conversation with Li Kexi.

According to Li Kexi, he could transport the equivalent of thirty divisions into Fino City within an hour.

He did it.

And what he did was even more than that.

Not just thirty armored divisions, they had torn a sufficiently large hole into Fino City and struck multiple gaps from other directions. And after the front-line forces had advanced deep enough, a large number of infantry units also followed suit.

At least twenty infantry masters entered Fino City.

They were already moving with the armored units, so as soon as the opportunity arose, they desperately surged in.

Moreover, their assault was not just limited to the ground.

The initial area they attacked was only the surface of Nest Capital. They dared not dig down, but they were bold enough to strike upwards.

The living Nest Capital had undergone significant changes, and the distributed maps of Nest Capital were not much useful; the armored units found it hard to find a way up. But for the infantry corps, finding the way up was not so difficult.

Currently, over a million human troops had been deployed into the Nest Capital of Fino City.

And they discovered that pushing the front lines into Fino City had another advantage—the Sinister Energy Cannon fire they endured became less. Likewise, they were also less likely to suffer aerial attacks."

Those heavy cannons were clearly not easy to reposition and fire within the city; although Nest Capital had significantly changed, many areas were still defined, and the circling dragons, as well as the Plague Fly Swarm, couldn't strike from the air anytime and anywhere.

Of course, disadvantages also existed. Inside the flesh body of Fino City, small but very maliciously placed Sinister Energy Cannons occasionally emerged from a mass of flesh beside them, unleashing sudden attacks on human forces.

Chapter 356, Subspace Smuggling Plan_2

At the same time, as they penetrated deeper, the enemy's movements became increasingly elusive.

Wherever the flesh and blood structures or the ground had not been cleansed and were imbued with activity, a cavity door might open at any moment, and Plague Demons would emerge, causing significant casualties to the human forces.

Equally troubling was the indication that routes blasted by the Orbital Cannons and then stormed by armored troops were starting to get resealed.

There seemed to be signs that the Plague Demon Army planned to break through the human forces' rearguard, trapping them within the city before beginning an encirclement and elimination campaign.

As it stood, unless they abandoned the assault and promptly withdrew their forces, the human military had no other means to counter the situation. The main demon army outside the city had not been annihilated, merely a direct passage had been blasted through them. This passage was flanked by battle lines stretching tens of kilometers in depth on both sides.

The troops responsible for maintaining the human military's rear simply could not withstand the pincer attack coming from the enemy.

…

Even within Fino City, the human forces could no longer sustain the vigorous offensive they had launched the previous day. They shifted to hunkering down on the spot, and it was already commendable if they could maintain the positions they had secured.

The situation had reached a critical point.

However, at the same time, Gu Hang believed the moment to strike the final blow had ripened.

In fact, having 300 to 500 thousand human troops within Fino City was already enough to meet his requirements. The current situation was even more than twice as favorable as the one he had originally hoped for.

This granted him and his subordinates with Spiritual Energy a significant margin for error.

The Storm Mages, prepared in advance, swiftly formed an array around everyone just as they had practiced over the previous months.

At the very heart of the array stood Dress.

Go to

Her spatial Spiritual Energy talent would play a central role in the entirety of the endeavor.

This was a primer for opening a spatial gateway.

And if it were simply a matter of conventional teleportation, why the necessity for the prelude of millions of brave soldiers' blood?

Gu Hang, floating above Dress, was in fact the mastermind behind this transit, an incursion involving the teleportation of hundreds over a mere distance of slightly more than 200 kilometers.

The entire teleportation array was under his control.

And he, discreetly opened a subspace rift.

This rift, of course, connected to his Storm God Kingdom.

The next moment, a deep blue radiance enveloped all the people above the array.

Over six hundred people, along with numerous heavy machines, disappeared from their original location in an instant.

…

Many among them were experiencing teleportation for the first time and thus found everything to be normal. Their nervousness was simply due to the unfamiliarity and the previous warning about certain safety risks of teleportation, added to the arduous task that lay ahead.

But, at the same time, there were quite a few among them who had been through teleportation before.

Like Mrs. Georgette.

She sensed that the Spiritual Energy teleportation this time was somehow different from the experiences she had been through on other battlefields in the past.

Previously, point-to-point teleportation in the real world was almost instantaneous—a sensation of dizziness followed by a blinding white light that obscured everything. After that, it would be over, and they should have arrived at their destination.

If lucky, there were no enemies nearby, and the teleported team could have time to organize their gear, deploy their formation, and ascertain their precise location—teleportation had its variances.

If unlucky, they might land right amidst the enemy, which was still relatively fortunate as they could simply fight chaotically with a debuff of dizziness and disorientation. After all, they were teleported for that very purpose, and it's not like the ambushed enemy would be in any better shape.

The worst-case scenario was being teleported into a stone. Half of the body inside, and half outside—that would be fatal—literally. The spatial power of the teleportation would 'push aside' the entities in that area, whether it was air or other substances, to place the teleportee there. Pushing aside air was akin to a gust of wind, but forcefully pushing aside something else under high pressure often caused fatal injuries to the person who was halfway or fully immersed.

Even if they survived the damage, it was quite common to be stuck and unable to get out.

However, this risk was low as the teleporters would eliminate it as much as possible—just like they would try to make the teleportation more accurate.

As for accidents… accidents were a part of Spiritual Energy teleportation. What could one do?

But the difference this time was that the feeling of dizziness was much more intense.

It was even worse than when teleportation malfunctions occurred over distances of thousands of kilometers.

Moreover, the intense light before their eyes was not white, but blue.

And crucially, she did not feel that she had reached her destination but was 'stuck' in some environment.

The blue light, not even blocked by closed eyes, prevented her from seeing her surroundings. She only felt her body floating.

She seemed to have heard the sound of lightning as well.

Her dizzy, nauseous state was rapidly easing, but her heart was becoming more and more panicked—could there have been a teleportation accident?

…

Of course, this was no teleportation accident, but rather Gu Hang's doing.

At this moment, everyone was within his Storm God Kingdom.

This place was already in subspace, and also the springboard he intended to use.

The plague demon sword that had been purified was now firmly grasped in his hand.

With the demon sword in hand, he swung forcefully, tearing open a rift in the space before him, and the space filled with evil, the rotten smell was just beyond this spatial crack.

Although extremely unpleasant, this force did not show any hostility, nor did it backfire.

At this stage, Gu Hang's heart finally settled.

Although, according to previous calculations and estimates, the outcome should be just like this without a doubt, he still felt a lingering trepidation as there had been no conditions for experimenting.

And now, his conjectures had turned into reality.

The subspace surrounding and eroding Korolya belonged to Ge Wajia, the great unclean one. And the power source of the demon sword in his hand was as well, an incarnation of Ge Wajia.

And by using this holy instrument to touch this piece of subspace, there would be no counterattack.

Next, Gu Hang enveloped everyone with his own power, and continued the teleportation, crossing through the split created by the demon sword, arriving at the subspace area closest to Fino City.

Though it was still subspace, the environment here was drastically different from the Storm God Kingdom.

A thick green aura wafted through the place, and within each inch of 'air', it seemed there were countless tiny organisms. They were content, they were unruly, they had received a promise from some great existence, ensuring they would exist forever and could do whatever they desired. And these drifting tiny organisms had no intelligence—the only thing they wanted to do was to proliferate, proliferate, and proliferate some more.

And the human body intruding this subspace was apparently the best carrier for their reproduction.

Their instincts drove them to eagerly try to enter the human body through any available means—breathing passages, skin, exposed mucous membranes, and the like.

But they were kept at bay by a force that was of the same origin as them, but much more powerful.

They could only wilt away where they were.

That force belonged to the master of this space.

Gu Hang, who was not rejected, was still very cautious.

He quickly followed a pre-calculated route, wrapping everyone with the power of Spiritual Energy, and arrived at the core area of ‘Fino City’.

From subspace, they had come to Fino City.

This might sound unbelievable, but in fact, it was quite simple.

The reason Fino City had ‘revived’ was precisely that the entire city had been completely covered by subspace rules, or to say, the whole city had been dragged into subspace and became a part of it.

The whole of Fino City possessed a dual overlap state of the real world and subspace.

The closer to the edges of Fino City, the weaker this overlapping state would be, and reality’s veil could still play a certain role; but the closer to the core, the more solid the overlap of the two. At the very heart, they were simply one and the same.

And the target of Gu Hang and his group was precisely at the core of Fino City.

Here was the cause of the city’s revitalization; at the same time, the Wicked Void Shield and dark energy Anti-Orbit Cannon that protected the revitalized city in the real-world, drew their powers from this very place.

To destroy these, they had to come here.

And now, they had arrived.

Ge Wajia made no reaction to this, and the subspace here showed no rejection to their arrival.

Utilizing the demon sword, sharing the same origin as Ge Wajia himself, to ‘deceive’ the subspace for the smuggling plan, it could be said to be half-successful already!

Normally, arriving at Fino City in this manner would be impossible. This place is saturated with Ge Wajia's power, and due to its presence in Subspace, it would manifest here in its complete form.

Defeating a Great Demon within its own domain is an almost impossible task.

The Ge Wajia here is even more ferocious than the 'God'-titled Primal Fury Owl that Gu Hang had encountered, the strongest individual he had ever faced.

Over the past four years, Gu Hang's experience had gradually filled up, and he was fortunate to have a generous number of favor points, so he had already increased his Psychic Level to eight.

However, according to the data shared by the Psychic Cultivator's Association, his strength as a Level 8 Psychic still ranked within the Grade A Psychic level in the Association's classification.

He would likely need to reach Level 9 to match the strength of a Grade S Psychic.

…

This was even considering he had various talent bonuses and event modifiers. If it were for heroes Gu Hang had activated, like Dress, they would probably need to reach Level 10 to have the strength of a Grade S Psychic.

Of course, if Gu Hang were to tear open the gate to Subspace and imbue himself with the power of the Storm God Kingdom, then his Psychic strength could instantly reach Grade S, or even surpass it.

But even so, Gu Hang didn't feel that this level of power would be sufficient to defeat a Great Unclean One within Subspace.

Unless he had a variety of advantages like when he fought the Primal Fury Owl, such as Ge Wajia being stuck between the veil of reality and Subspace or if Gu Hang could have an army under his command to gang up on the Great Demon.

Clearly, none of these options were possible.

Thus, the only chance of victory was to keep Ge Wajia out of the mix.

At least until they achieved their objective.

Go to

Using the demonic sword left behind by Ge Wajia's avatar after it was destroyed, they successfully overcame the first wave of difficulties.

Ge Wajia had no reaction.

That was to be expected.

This Subspace belonged to Ge Wajia; his power and presence were everywhere. What was so special about the demonic sword?

The Mage Corps led by Gu Hang thus successfully completed the teleportation and arrived in the core area of Fino City, a place where the veil of reality no longer existed, and Fino City was fully overlaid with Subspace at its core.

Even the Demons entrenched here had no reaction to the uninvited guests brought by Gu Hang.

Until, the bullets of human warriors descended upon their heads.

…

"Where did they come from!?"

Thomlison felt utterly bewildered and shocked.

He immediately thought of Psychic teleportation as the method used.

Only this power could allow an army to appear out of nowhere, ignoring physical distances.

Yet, Psychic teleportation could break through physical distances but not Subspace distances—or rather, it was not supposed to be so easy or happen without anyone noticing.

In truth, to prevent such a situation, the core area of Fino City had preparations against Psychic teleportation.

Completely blocking it was difficult, but with jamming devices in place, unless the teleporting Psychic was extraordinarily strong, they could easily be diverted to the outside; and given the presence of Subspace, even if an enemy managed a precise teleport, they could at most appear on the outskirts of the core area. If someone really did manage that, they would run headlong into their tightest defenses.

Moreover, an alarm system Thomlison had installed would alert him the moment an enemy initiated a Psychic traversal.

But none of these preparations had any effect.

The enemy simply appeared directly in front of him.

And the strength of the incoming foes was somewhat outrageous.

The images projected onto the flesh-wall before him were severely disrupted by Psychic interference. Still, he could see several renowned figures flickering in the unstable image.

Interstellar Warriors, Battle Nuns, Mecha Knights, and even Titans…

What in the world?

Why were there so many things in Korolya?

Apart from the Battle Nun whose lair was in Korolya, where did the rest come from?

Even in his current, utterly formless state, he was severely startled.

“Order all the perimeter defense troops to immediately…”

Thomlison’s muffled voice had just begun when a loud explosion was heard.

The projection in front of him went completely dark; the flesh-wall was blown to smithereens, exposing a large hole.

Thomlison’s reaction was swift.

His filthy, grotesque, enormous body suddenly caved inwards, forming a cavity. A thick fog erupted from within, precisely enveloping the two Phoenixes who had burst through the shattered opening.

The evil power rapidly corroded the taosteel armor on the Phoenixes.

The two Phoenixes experienced extreme pain.

Despite this, they persevered in raising their bomb guns and firing at the horrifying, massive lump of rotten flesh entrenched in the core nest before them.

In an instant, at least a dozen bombs hit Thomlison, flesh flying everywhere.

However, these injuries meant nothing to Thomlison, who was akin to a mountain of flesh.

The two Phoenixes could no longer hold on; they died a brutal death under the virulent poison, their powered armor corroded and pitted.

Even taosteel could not withstand such vile Dark Magic.

Chapter 357, Meat Mountain_2

“`

Thomlison felt slightly relieved.

He didn’t count on a cloud of poisonous fog to completely seal off the humans’ assault, but as long as it could buy some time, that would be enough. Just a little bit longer and the elites guarding outside the core nest would have time to fall back to defense earlier.

…

The sacrifice of the two Phoenixes pained Gu Hang quite a bit.

Despite knowing that this operation wouldn’t be easy and that sacrifices were inevitable, it still hurt all the same.

…

After all, training one was no easy feat.

Moreover, the sacrifice of these two provided intelligence on what lay ahead.

Georgette, Matins, and Rizzo discussed among themselves and decided to make another joint assault.

Matins was protected by more solid Terminator Power Armor; Rizzo and Georgette, on the other hand, were under the Divine Emperor's protection. Moreover, the Spiritual Energy wielders in the back could also provide them with additional protection.

With these multiple methods, the risk should be greatly reduced.

However, just then, Gu Hang's voice rang out, "Let me do it."

The three were stunned and immediately wanted to dissuade him.

Go to

But they were all stopped by Gu Hang's extended hand.

He was the highest commander, and he had the final say in everything here.

Gu Hang didn't truly have any quirks about risking his own life.

But the most critical aspect of this operation was speed.

He wanted to deploy full force without any delay.

The later the end time, the greater the sacrifice, and even the possibility of Ge Wajia arriving would increase.

He headed straight for the cave entrance.

Upon entering the range of the poison fog, his protective Spiritual Energy was immediately activated. The vicious Dark Magic clashed fiercely with his Spiritual Energy. At the same time, he also detected a huge tentacle shooting towards him.

Gu Hang remained calm, his eyes glowing blue, and Spiritual Energy surged from within him.

As a whirlwind swept through, the poisonous fog was quickly dispersed. At the same time, the huge tentacle was locked in place by an invisible telekinesis, stopping in its tracks at least twenty meters away from Gu Hang.

Matins and the others at the cave entrance noticed the dispersal of the poisonous fog and immediately charged inside.

They came in weapons raised, ready to unleash a ferocious attack upon the enemy straight away.

However, what they saw left them dumbfounded.

First, the opponent they had to face was a surprise: the strange, mountainous flesh enemy, from which emanated a stench so foul that even through the life support helmets, it was barely tolerable and extremely discomforting.

Next, its current state was astonishing—it was trembling, convulsing.

Many arcs of electricity still flashed intermittently across the mountain of flesh.

And Governor Gu, floating in front of the flesh mountain, raised his right hand high, gathering the arc into a massive spear of lightning.

Then, this spear of lightning, like divine retribution, was hurled by Gu Hang, striking the flesh mountain in front of him.

The creature reacted as if it had been hit by a ship’s cannon, a vast hole appearing in its body.

Rotten flesh writhed, attempting to heal the wound, but the continuous arcs of electricity hindered regeneration.

The struck ‘flesh mountain’ was unable to perform any action, merely convulsing there, taking hits for free, not at all reflecting the quick response it had when the wall of flesh was first blasted out of the cave entrance.

Lightning paralyzed its body; Spiritual Energy gripped its soul.

Of course, that left it no choice but to passively take the beating.

This was already the second lightning spear Gu Hang had launched.

And the third was already forming in his hands.

By that time, the warriors who had rushed in had finally come to their senses and began to assist their Governor in the attack.

It’s no wonder they had been stunned at first; the power of the lightning spear in Gu Hang’s hands was incredibly fierce and frightening.

At the end of the day, whether they assisted or not didn’t seem to make much of a difference.

The little wounds they could inflict with their grenade guns paled in comparison to the Governor’s lightning spears.

Of course, they could get closer and try with powered swords, holy gold halberds, or Gravity Scepters.

But… there was no need.

Mr. Gu was launching a lightning spear in just a few breaths, each one like a massive cannon.

They simply didn't need to intervene.

Better to follow the plan and set up a defensive line on the side.

Commanders did as such, swiftly moving the warriors inside and establishing a defense.

Yet, while busying themselves, they couldn't help but be drawn by the thunderous booms and inadvertently glance toward the center.

The flesh mountain had been leveled after Mr. Gu's nineteen strikes.

Such a display of might inspired awe in all present.

Even among the veterans of the Interstellar Warriors, and the experienced Battle Nuns, it was the same feeling.

Was this the power of an A-tier Spiritual Energy user?

The A-tier Spiritual Energy users they had seen before weren't this formidable!

Perhaps those A-tier users could perform similar-strength attacks, but they definitely wouldn't be able to launch nineteen in a row without even seeming to breathe hard.

Mr. Gu was… a bit excessively fierce.

At this moment, the Governor was floating in the very center of the nest, the blue light in his eyes not fading in the slightest but shining even more brightly.

His voice appeared in everyone's ears:

"I have located the Demon Engine that maintains the Wicked Void Shield, as well as the positions of nine L-layer Wicked Energy Railguns."

Chapter 357, Meat Mountain_3

"Commander Matins, I grant you full command. Please lead Team A to destroy the Demon Engine. Afterward, you may divide your forces, split into groups, or act together to destroy as many Sinister Energy Cannons as possible. But remember, you must return here within three hours."

"The rest of you, stay and fortify this location, under the command of General Nevys, ensuring nothing goes wrong. Dress and the Storm Mage Corps, please start establishing the transportation channel immediately. We will leave this place in three hours."

"Yes!" Commander Matins stood up, swiftly mustered Team A, and set out.

The so-called Team A was a team that had been put together before the action, consisting of about two-thirds of the entire group's personnel, excluding the spiritual energy users.

The remaining personnel also went about their assigned duties, doing as the governor-general had ordered.

With time pressing, no one could afford the slightest relaxation at this moment.

…

Among them, the busiest person was none other than Gu Hang.

He assigned tasks and duties to all his subordinates, getting everyone busy. As for himself, he had to deal with a task of utmost importance:

Blocking Ge Wajia with all his might.

Of course, Ge Wajia probably hadn't noticed the commotion here yet.

This was precisely why Gu Hang had chosen to strike this place first.

He had long realized that the 'meat mountain' he had just leveled was actually a spokesperson for Ge Wajia, a messenger of Ge Wajia, the core maintaining the overlay of Fino City with the Subspace, an extension of Ge Wajia's power into the real world.

But killing it didn't mean everything was over.

Go to

Fino City was already beyond salvation; the issue couldn't be resolved just by killing a cult leader or a Great Demon's messenger. The core area of Fino City had been completely dragged into the Subspace. The crux of the problem lay in the Subspace, in Ge Wajia, not in whoever outside was maintaining the erosion of Subspace.

What good would killing this monster do?

If Ge Wajia noticed, it could select another person at any time to perform a similar role.

In fact, if necessary, its very entity could descend.

The problem would remain unresolved.

However, the key point was that whether Ge Wajia decided to find a new 'spokesperson' after discovering the issue, or to descend itself, all this would take time.

The temporary disruption of the core, as well as Gu Hang's use of his spiritual energy and the Demon Sword to block this place, severed the interaction between the two worlds. Since the Demon Sword's

essence was Ge Wajia's power itself, it would make it difficult for that filthy entity to detect the problem immediately.

His current task was to make this unobtrusive isolation last as long as possible.

Yet such isolation couldn't last forever. Given time, Ge Wajia would ultimately discover it.

And what Gu Hang needed was precisely this time difference.

————

The following is free:

Regarding updates, I'd like to say a few words to everyone.

I also wish to write more, but honestly, writing is slow… four thousand words take me about two hours. Moreover, the further I get into the story, with more characters and events, the more difficult it gets to manage.

Sometimes before I start typing, I need to use pen and paper to sketch some thoughts, as it's my personal habit for thinking. One session can easily take up half an hour, covering one or two pages…

Plus, since I'm not a full-time writer, my time is really limited.

I can only work hard to maintain a daily update of four thousand words, ensuring a full attendance each month.

As for why I'm doing single updates rather than splitting them into two chapters, it's mainly because writing flows better this way, and it also reads more smoothly in one go. Forcing it into two chapters would disrupt the rhythm.

I'll try hard to get six thousand done tomorrow!

Chapter 358, Iron Heart

Gu Hang's actions at this moment were all for the purpose of creating a larger window of opportunity for Team A's mission.

The core of their mission was still to destroy the Void Shield and the Sinister Energy Cannon.

Even if these two things were destroyed, if the problem of Fino City wasn't resolved, new Sinister Energy Cannons and Void Shields would soon be "born" by Fino City.

But this would take time.

Without the protection of the Void Shield and the counterattack of the Sinister Energy Cannon, the Imperial Navy with its hands untied would be able to bring destruction to Fino City before new Void Shields and Sinister Energy Cannons could emerge.

This was Gu Hang's entire plan.

…

Logically, if he personally led the team to destroy the Void Shield and the Sinister Energy Cannon, it would be the fastest.

But regrettably, that wasn't possible.

If he left now, Ge Wajia would likely immediately discover the anomaly of Fino City.

After all, using the demon sword to seal the two realms and prevent the transmission of information was something only he could do.

He was already extremely busy.

The demons and cultists in this space, with the events happening at the center of Fino City's Nest, should all know what they need to know by now.

They continuously tried to pass this information to the subspace.

Go to

Normally, this would be very simple, just a thought, and Ge Wajia, the lord of this subspace integrated with Fino City—the Great Unclean One, would sense the thoughts of these lesser demons and thus be aware of the situation.

What Gu Hang was doing, however, was using the demon sword to intercept all of these thoughts.

It was a colossal task, but fortunately, the exit for the information was only at 'Flesh Mountain' Thomlison, whom Gu Hang had slashed. By blocking here, all information had to pass through him.

Merely blocking wasn't enough. Otherwise, if Ge Wajia couldn't receive a single piece of information for half a day and essentially experienced a 'disconnect,' it would certainly become suspicious right away.

Therefore, Gu Hang also had to fabricate some "thoughts" to maintain the appearance of normalcy and deceive Ge Wajia.

This part of the work was also very complex and exhausting.

The "thoughts" he wove were extracted and transformed from the intercepted ones he already had.

Some parts were illogical, strange, or even incongruent with the actual situation.

With such a large quantity to deal with, Gu Hang was no deity; he couldn't perform flawlessly.

But the Great Unclean One was not a deity either—oh, it might be considered as one, but clearly it was far from being omniscient and omnipotent.

The Great Demon couldn't possibly listen attentively to and discern every piece of information at every moment. Plus, whether it was demons or cultists eroded by the whispers of subspace, they all had foggy minds, living in confusion and madness, so it was normal to have strange and illogical content.

Gu Hang strived hard to maintain the balance of this place.

Eventually, Ge Wajia would find out; he was just delaying the inevitable time as much as he could.

This was not easy, and on top of that, there was something constantly disturbing him.

That was Thomlison.

It was the 'Flesh Mountain' that he had flattened with his thunder spear not long ago.

Of course, the fellow was still dead.

Thomlison was a powerful sorcerer at his core, and his patron was Ge Wajia, the Great Demon, possessing a soul that was twisted yet very tenacious. The aberration of his flesh was a mere surface-level effect, caused by subspace erosion.

Under Gu Hang's thunder, his physical body was completely destroyed, and his soul was torn into countless fragments.

This was certainly death in all senses of the term.

But because Gu Hang had taken his place, holding the demon sword and blocking here, Thomlison's shattered soul fragments could not dissipate and surrounded Gu Hang.

Under normal circumstances, Gu Hang could easily dispose of these fragments, but at the moment, most of his energy was focused on intercepting and fabricating information, and he couldn't spare the effort.

Fortunately, this influence was not critical.

It was just that occasionally, some hallucinations would appear before his eyes.

These hallucinations were mostly from the most impressionable experiences in Thomlison's past life.

One scene was of Thomlison's youth, where he watched his father being beaten to death in the street.

That year, there was a problem with the Imperial Tax to be handed over by Fino City; the human tax was sufficient but the material tax fell short. Thus, the factories stopped distributing food wages, claiming that they would defer the wages until after the tax was paid.

Thomlison's family, including his father, mother, and his nine-year-old self, along with his five-year-old sister – all working as child laborers – were left without wages.

The deferral lasted a month.

Living in the Lower Nest District of Fino City, just above the starvation line, if work ceased, people would stop eating. The suspension of a month's wages could lead to death by starvation. Left with no other option, he accompanied his father in an attempt to steal, got caught, and while his father held back the pursuers to let him escape, his father was beaten to death.

Hidden in a corner, he deeply etched that scene into his memory.

Soon after, his mother also died—she let her children have the food and starved to death herself.

The second scene was a naked corpse.

That was his younger sister, whom he had raised single-handedly since childhood, who at the age of seventeen, went against his advice and left with a man from the middle district of the city. A month later, her naked body was dumped on the street; once the guards identified the body, they informed him to collect her remains.

The third scene was his farewell to his family.

Chapter 358, Heart of Stone_2

That year, Thomlison was twenty-seven years old when Imperial Tax was levied upon him. His life had just started to improve, having formed a family with his wife, with a three-year-old son and a newborn daughter. He was working hard, with a chance for promotion in sight. But the Imperial Tax was supreme, and he had no choice but to comply.

He could only console himself: having paid the Imperial Tax, his family could be partially exempt from subsequent taxes; they would also receive a subsidy.

The fourth scene depicted him lying in a battlefield hospital.

By then, he had become an officer. Drafted by the Imperial Tax, he boarded a starship and was sent to the Golden Pass Star Sector to join a logistics team of slave workers in the Star Realm Army. After 29 years of war, he first earned his stripes on the battlefield, then repeatedly distinguished himself and rose to the rank of officer. At the same time, he had spent half of his life transitioning from a young man to an old one on battlefields against the Green Skin Orcs.

Compared to the comrades around him who perished and were replaced over and over again, having survived for twenty-nine years, he was considered lucky. But today, his luck had run out; he lost a leg and an arm on the battlefield.

But his life was tough enough to be saved back at the battlefield hospital.

…

His achievements and medals afforded him a choice—either to settle down in the rearmost areas on New Colony Star for the rest of his life or to return to his hometown.

He chose the latter.

Traveling on a supply transport ship, he was among the rare few who could return to their hometowns as part of the Imperial Tax. He had many hard-won medals, the most distinguished among them being a Warrior's Medal, which still held much value.

Upon his return home, at his request, he was assigned a government position in his hometown of Fino City. The first thing he did upon his return was to look for his family.

This was the fifth scene, still a naked corpse, but just an old photograph.

It was his daughter, found dead in the streets at the age of seventeen, purportedly attacked by thugs, her death bearing an uncanny resemblance to her aunt's. The photo was case information preserved by the police at the time.

His eldest son, twenty-two years into Thomlison's departure from Korolya, had been drafted for the Imperial Tax and was gone. Just three years later, a death notification was sent back home. His wife, worn down by years of toil and the loss of loved ones, succumbed to melancholy two years prior.

All of this broke him.

He had never held any fondness for the so-called empire; his youthful family had been shattered by the Imperial Tax; his own family, too, had been destroyed by it. After joining the military, for a time he believed in the propaganda of the political commissars, the Military Priests, thinking The Emperor supreme, a protector of humanity; believing he was fighting for the empire, for all of humankind, for a higher purpose, a greater good, sacrificing his life without regret or resentment.

But upon returning to his hometown, the disillusionment was so profound he couldn't move past it.

And so came the sixth scene: he shattered his Warrior's Medal with relentless force. It was from this moment that he began to hear the tender call of the heavenly Father.

The lies of the false emperor, the rotten and filthy system of the empire, made him sick to his stomach.

He wholly devoted himself to the divine Father, secretly preaching as a low-level official, and established the Eternal Life Sect.

He sincerely believed that Korolya needed change, that things could not go on like this, that the common people would never have peace.

He also sincerely believed that eradicating the false emperor's faith, dissolving the empire's governing system, and leading everyone into the warm, immortal embrace of the Father was a beautiful endeavor.

He tirelessly advanced this cause for fifty years.

Now, at last, his efforts were about to bear fruit.

But then he encountered Gu Hang, the terminator.

…

Thomlison's life did seem quite tragic.

But in this situation, Gu Hang was heart of stone.

No matter how many illusions flickered before him, his attitude did not change in the slightest.

First of all, Thomlison's experience, while horrible, wasn't unique or representative of Korolya. Not because it wasn't tragic enough, but rather because he was quite lucky, comparatively.

Both parents dead, a sister brutally killed—tragic, yes, but many on Korolya have experienced this and worse. Moreover, most of them never reach the stage of marriage, having children, promotions, and pay raises that he did.

The population drafted as Imperial Tax, 99.99% never make it back alive. Not only did he survive 29 years of war, making it to officer rank, but he also lived to retire and return home… his luck could be considered staggeringly good.

His wife lived past fifty, well beyond Korolya's average life expectancy of thirty-six; his daughter's death was unquestionable; his son drafted as Imperial Tax—Korolya had about seven to eight hundred million people taken every two years, so that was no surprise.

If even he could claim tragedy, then no one on Korolya was free from it.

But then again, if someone who was considered very lucky ended up like this, what about those whose luck was just average?

No wonder the Eternal Life Sect grew in strength; no wonder every Nest Capital on Korolya, with its Bottom Nest Districts, experienced periodic mass riots and rapid spread of plagues.

If Gu Hang had been born into such an environment, his mind would certainly be filled with thoughts of rebellion.

Individual tragedies are moving, but for a ruler like Gu Hang, he could see that what they reflected was a systemic issue.

Chapter 358, Heart of Stone_3

He would solve the predicament on Korolya, which might be an even more arduous task than the current war, but he was confident. He had a whole set of solutions, but everything had to wait until the demon invasion disaster on Korolya was largely stabilized before implementation.

First, ensure that the entire planet does not become a demon pit and that billions of people aren't turned into zombies, walking corpses. Only then could they consider next steps.

As for Thomlison's soul fragments, the many illusions that sprung up before Gu Hang's eyes, he regarded them as nothing more than the nonsensical babbling of a madman crushed by reality.

Gu Hang would not let these images hinder his mission to save Korolya.

He had no time to deal with these illusions, nor did he need to. He simply watched indifferently, his mind not focused on them at all, wholeheartedly blocking the transmission of information and weaving false information to deceive Ge Wajia.

But… it seemed Ge Wajia had begun to suspect something.

…

…

"We've lost seven warriors and have completed the task of attracting the defending army," Lacroix's voice transmitted to Matins's ears through an encrypted and reliable communication.

Soon after, Mrs. Georgette also sent her message.

"My sisters and I are now in position."

"Good," Matins replied to each, then took a deep breath and ordered, "Charge!"

Behind him, three Warhound-class Titans, spaced a certain distance apart from each other, broke their silence and began to run full speed ahead.

The fifteen-meter tall 'Warhounds' nearly touched the top of the flesh and blood nest with their heads.

Go to

Nine Knight mechas followed closely behind.

Around these colossal figures, hundreds of elite warriors from Phoenix, St. Cithaer Lily, and Fang Camp, were scattered among them.

In front of them was a wall of flesh.

The bombs, already installed on it, blew open the wall. Amid the flying flesh, three Titans charged through. The minor remnants of the wall could not stop the Titans' impact, leaving three large holes.

And behind this wall, there was a large number of demons. Their attention was almost completely occupied by the targets they were fiercely engaged with in front of them.

The sudden attack from behind caught them off guard.

Many demons turned around only to be aghast—the demons were afraid too.

Mindless Plague Stitched Corpses and rotting behemoths were just stunned for a moment: Why was the back wall broken? What were these three iron bumps bigger than themselves that had broken in?

And those with a bit more intelligence, such as the carriers of plague, Plague Wizards, were terrified.

They knew they were in mortal peril.

But what could they do?

Just wait to die.

The Titans began to fire.

Their shoulder-mounted Hellfire Missile nests launched a half volley of missiles in an instant. Eighteen Hellfire Missiles covered a large area in front of them.

The high-yield Hellfire Missiles had extremely destructive power; their effect was so exaggerated that all targets within the central blast area would be destroyed by the shockwave and the high temperature and pressure. Furthermore, with the explosion, thermite powder scattered and burned violently, burning huge holes in any substance it touched, even if it was just a bit.

For human-sized beings, they would be burned away; even for the rotting behemoths and Plague Giant Toads, if tainted too much, their bodies would melt everywhere.

With their powerful vitality, they might not be burned to death instantly, but the thermite dust, with no open flames yet capable of emitting very high temperatures, acted like miniature thermite bombs and would eventually burn them entirely.

In this area, eighteen Hellfire Missiles created a hellish scene.

And the three Warhounds were not so easily appeased.

Aside from the rear missile nests, each side of the Warhound's waist—or rather the sides of the head—also had main guns: one was a thermite cannon, and the other, a Kinetic Cannon.

The three Titans maintained their advance while keeping up the rhythm of their firing.

Whether it was a large-caliber Kinetic Cannon or the thermite cannon, they took aim and the large monsters around the edge of the previous Hellfire Missile bombardment area began to suffer one by one.

They were simply dying in different ways.

Those hit by the Kinetic Cannon became shrapnel, while those hit by the thermite cannon melted into a flow of glowing red remains that eventually cooled to black and gray.

The sudden attack from behind, seizing the initiative, and the full firepower of three Titans quickly disintegrated these demons' ability to resist.

Then, through the large holes made by the Titans' entry, nine Knight mechas and more elite infantry units rushed in.

The eight-meter tall Knight mechas, while not as powerfully armed as the Titans, were still formidable; even the bombs guns in the hands of Phoenix and Fang warriors could inflict devastating damage on some of the regular-sized beasts.

They chased down the demons in front of them, pursuing and striking relentlessly.

On the other side, the group of several dozen led by Lacroix, who had drawn the enemy's attention, also launched an attack.

The remaining demons, who had lost their combat formation and will to fight, began to collapse.

Human troops herded the demons toward their ultimate target location—that was, the Demon Engine that supported the existence of the Void Shield.

Chapter 358: Heart of Stone_4

Everything was going so smoothly that Matins even felt there was no need to arrange for Mrs. Georgette to lead an additional squad as a backup.

The frontal attack was about to break through, and the Demon Engine was within reach.

Once it fell within their firing range, a barrage of firepower from the three Titans with their heavy cannons would be enough to cripple it, and two more rounds would render it beyond repair.

The Void Shield Generator couldn’t conjure a shield to protect itself, and under normal circumstances, there was no need to.

In fact, they had now arrived.

It was a closed space, surrounded by walls of flesh. But inside, a continual stream of monsters kept spilling out as if squeezed from the flesh itself.

…

The demons they had previously routed were also regrouping in this place.

These chaotic creatures were certainly not the type to maintain order. A demon army would always experience similar situations, scattering while being attacked, with some fleeing and others mindlessly rushing into combat.

To organize them required the presence of an individual with sufficient strength.

Now, it seemed such an individual was present.

Matins saw a monster about two and a half meters tall, oozing pus, shouting something. The surrounding demons clearly feared it and dared not disobey its orders. The monsters that emerged from the flesh walls behind it were without question all following its commands.

It was a leader.

Having made this judgment, Matins sprung into action.

Go to

He raised his left arm, and the heavy explosive round minigun unleashed a metal storm at the head monster.

At the same time, his command reached several Knight Mechas. Their cannon fire, along with Matins's gunfire, covered the area.

The three Warhound Titans continued to advance as planned, with one casually firing a meltagun shot at that spot.

This was a deluge of overwhelming firepower, nothing should be able… Huh?

Amidst the carnage, a yellow-green figure dashed out at high speed.

It was that very monster.

And now, in its hand, it held a rust-covered greatsword.

Matins immediately sensed trouble.

He realized what it was—a Chaotic Vanguard!

A powerful demon evolved through the immense grace of the Evil God. It was said that one more level of growth would transform it into a Great Demon—a Plague Great Demon, the embodiment of filth.

This grade of monster had one prominent feature: distortion of laws.

In places dominated by Subspace forces, powerful demons like this had a special ability. Under its will, physics, science, and even sanity and thought, would be twisted.

It would ignore the force of technology, the damage of physics. Bullets, artillery fire, while not entirely useless, would see their damage significantly reduced.

Only two things could truly deal a fatal blow to it.

The first was Spiritual Energy.

But the Governor wasn't here.

The second was willpower.

And the embodiment of that was melee combat. With swords and heavy punches charged with the warrior's fiery will, defeating it could kill it.

Otherwise, it would become a terrifying killing machine, unstoppable by anyone.

The Warhound Titan closest to it didn't understand this.

The secondary cannon on its arm fired fiercely at the little monster daring to charge at it, instantly tearing the air with a metal storm.

However, the Chaotic Vanguard's stride only paused briefly. The large-caliber autocannon, which should have blown a creature of its size to smithereens, felt like tickling, not to mention most of the ammunition was deflected by some strange force, missing the target entirely.

Meanwhile, the Plague Vanguard had already reached the feet of the Titan.

The Warhound Titan's energy shield flickered slightly before letting the Vanguard through.

The controllers of the Warhound Titan were feeling the ominous signs. The massive war machine bent down, sweeping with a heavy punch, but the Plague Vanguard dodged it.

Next, its greatsword chopped fiercely onto the Titan's ankle.

With Matins's sight, he clearly and distinctly saw the steel at the Titan's ankle, which should have been incredibly tough, quickly develop rust as if it had endured countless years of decay, becoming brittle and weak, and then the greatsword cleaved through it.

The towering Titan tilted and crashed to the ground with a thunderous sound.

Chapter 359, Chaotic Vanguard

The rapid assault of this plague vanguard was too sudden.

Blasted by thermite cannons and numerous large-caliber weapons, even a Lion King Tank would crumble.

A demonic creature with a fleshy body two and a half meters tall would be reduced to ash, wouldn't it?

No one could have predicted that amid the smoke and dust, this demon would emerge alive. It bore some injuries, especially where the thermite cannon grazed it, causing its body to flame red, yet there was no normal melting effect. And as it ran, the flames seemed to die out.

The complete ineffectiveness of the large caliber machine guns, or their failure to achieve the expected results, was equally unexpected.

The entire human troops were in an assault state, with the core of the assault being the Warhound Titans. Not only were they the most critical fire support and offensive core, but they also used energy shields and their own thick armor to attract and block most of the damage for the whole unit.

…

And the Titan targeted by the Chaotic Vanguard was the one furthest ahead, even a bit isolated.

But it was only slight, and of no major concern, as the conventional units being severely battered had no ability to threaten the Titan.

Yet, out charged this thing.

As soon as they realized something was wrong, the few infantry units behind the Titan started running with all their might; when they sensed that their grenade rifles were unable to pose any real threat to this Chaotic Vanguard, they even abandoned their weapons and drew their close-combat blades, sprinting at full speed.

But even so, the two fastest among them could only just reach the scene as the Chaotic Vanguard cleaved through the Titan's ankle, temporarily robbing it of its mobility.

These were two elite soldiers from Fang Camp, both equipped with Feedback-Type Power Armor. The pair coordinated perfectly, with chainsword in hand, one on the left and one on the right, they struck at the pus-oozing monster.

However, at this moment, this terrible creature once again demonstrated its fearsome combat ability.

Go to

Having just delivered a full-strength blow, the plague vanguard, who should have been in recovery, moved faster than both armored Fang Camp soldiers. Although the Fang Camp's chainswords struck first, in the blink of an eye, the Chaotic Vanguard's rusty greatsword struck faster.

And it completed a double strike in an extremely short time.

In an instant, the rusty greatsword pierced one person's heart, the solid chest armor of their 'Servant God' Powered Armor was punctured as if it were made of paper.

In the next moment, its sword pivoted to pierce the throat of another, precisely finding the gap where the helmet met the chest armor.

Two elite Fang Camp warriors clad in Feedback-Type Power Armor fell one after the other in an instant.

Having done all this, the Chaotic Vanguard even had the leisure to leap high, avoiding a heavy punch from the Titan.

After all, it had only cut through the ankle, destroying its mobility, not the machine itself.

Matins, who was running towards the battlefield, felt his heart shake at the sight.

Such an enemy, even he wasn't sure he could defeat. Its swift movements, its freakishly precise swordsmanship, made Matins sigh in admiration.

Reserve Great Demons are indeed powerful.

But even with that realization, Matins didn't stop for a moment; instead, he sped up even more.

At the same time, he saw Priest Rizzo, the veteran of the Battle Group, carrying the Gravity Scepter, also rushing forward swiftly.

The two old comrades were in sync.

Now, only the two of them stepping in stood a chance.

Not to defeat, but at least to stop or entangle this Chaotic Vanguard to create an opportunity for the other units.

Faster than them were three new soldiers of the Phoenix.

Naturally, they had seen how their two compatriots had died and were aware of how formidable the enemy they were about to face was. After all, although they could defeat Fang Camp soldiers fairly easily, they could never do it like that creature.

But they charged without hesitation.

If they didn't, the Chaotic Vanguard and its rusty greatsword would easily dismantle the Titan.

They had to intercept.

Phoenix was simply not on the same level as Fang Camp. Even though Fang Camp had Feedback-Type Power Armor, there was a gap between the performance of 'Servant God' and 'Majestic'; there was also a difference between Fang Camp and Phoenix.

Although most of the Phoenix Warriors in the battle were considered new recruits by the standards of Interstellar Warriors, they were T1 grade elites who had come out of Gu Hang's [Soldier Tag] system, the highest grade achievable through regular training. They had also undergone Gene Seed implant surgery, with their superhuman organs fully developed and physically surpassing normal human limits long ago.

With these combined factors, the three Phoenix Warriors, at the very least, could clearly see the movements of the Chaotic Vanguard.

Though being able to see clearly didn't necessarily mean they could keep up, it was still a breakthrough step.

They weren't wholly defenseless.

However, they were still somewhat naive.

After the Chaotic Vanguard destroyed another missile nest of the Titan, the three of them arrived and surrounded it, launching a joint attack.

Chapter 359, Chaotic Vanguard_2

Then, in a split second, one died.

The new recruit clearly saw the sword that slashed towards him, extremely fast and precise. He struggled to keep up, trying to block sword with sword. Suddenly, he felt an overwhelming force, stronger than the Battle Group Leader's, a force he had only experienced during training.

He staggered backward from the slash, but saw that his opponent was unshaken and immediately followed up with another sword strike.

He lifted his chainsaw sword, clenched his teeth, and summoned all his strength, prepared to fight desperately, hoping his two fellow warriors would catch up and relieve some of the pressure. But in the next moment, the enemy suddenly changed tactics, causing his strike to miss entirely.

As his strike missed, the Phoenix Warrior had only one thought in his heart: "Damn it."

It was also the last thought in his life.

…

He had put all his effort into using his bulkiest shoulder guard, which often served as a shield in tactical maneuvers, to block the sword. But the blade was even faster than he imagined, slipping through the gap where the shoulder guard met his upper arm, piercing his shoulder, severing his scapula, and cutting through his neck vertebra.

His body quickly went limp, and apart from blinking, he could do nothing else as his consciousness rapidly dissipated.

The last scene he witnessed was his two brothers-in-arms, roaring as they fought the Chaotic Vanguard head-on.

And these two, their resistance lasted just a bit longer than the brother who was taken down in seconds by the previous moves.

They arrived together, at least able to cover for each other.

But the key point was that the movements of the Chaotic Vanguard had become somewhat sluggish, and it occasionally experienced ‘lag’.

That was Henrik Larson, the only think tank member of the Phoenix Battle Group currently on the field.

He had unleashed his awakened Spiritual Energy power onto the body of the Chaotic Vanguard.

It was not enough to harm it, but Larson was well aware of his own abilities. He was far from the great power The Emperor could wield. In terms of Spiritual Energy intensity alone, he was on par with the commander of the Storm Mage Corps, Dress—a B-grade Spiritual Energy user was his limit.

But like willpower, Spiritual Energy could be fully utilized to great effect.

He was very pragmatic, not seeking to deal damage but to obstruct.

And it was indeed his Spiritual Energy power that inflicted the first actual damage on the Chaotic Vanguard—and quite a serious one at that.

The two Phoenix warriors encircling it finally fell one by one as the Chaotic Vanguard, despite the Spiritual Energy interference, dealt with them. But, at that moment, a sudden surge of Spiritual Energy power stopped it for an instant.

A Titan’s heavy punch came crashing down.

It had broken free from the Spiritual Energy control, but could not dodge the fist, taking a solid punch squarely.

Then, getting up from the ground, it leapt up and climbed onto the Titan, severing its fist as well.

At the same time, Matins and Rizzo finally arrived.

Another strong burst of Spiritual Energy control ensued, but the prepared Chaotic Vanguard was not frozen in place this time; it was merely slowed down. Its rust-streaked greatsword clashed solidly against Matins in the Terminator Power Armor, wielding a power sword.

Neither gained the upper hand.

Looking at the monster that was only slightly shorter than the Terminator, Matins could hardly imagine why it contained such immense strength within its body.

He could barely match its strength, but the loss of agility in the Terminator Power Armor was a disadvantage.

But he was not a greenhorn of the Phoenix; his exceptional swordsmanship and vast combat experience taught him how to cope with the current situation.

Moreover, Priest Rizzo was assisting by his side.

And with Larson stealthily using his Spiritual Energy to tamper with the monster now and then from a distance, the battle between the two parties was at a stalemate for the moment.

Meanwhile, inspired by the rallying call of the Chaotic Vanguard, the Demons regrouped, some opening fire, some charging.

But on the human side, the main force wasn't compromised. Although one Titan was half-disabled, the other two were still active, pouring out intense firepower. Nine Knight Mechas also held their ground on the front line.

But because of the presence of the Chaotic Vanguard, the power that weakened the laws of the physical universe was expanding. The Demons charging ahead were not quite like it, almost immune to gunfire and shelling, but they, too, received significant damage reduction.

Although most of the monsters fell on the charge, many valiant carriers of plague, the Forsaken, and Chaos Spawn made it to close quarters.

The Phoenix, Battle Nuns, and the Fangs engaged these beasts in hand-to-hand combat. Overall, humanity held the advantage.

And the nine Mecha Knights of the alliance started to “shine.”

Each was armed with a massive chainsaw sword to match their size, and with firm and reliable ground control, they could freely exhibit knightly swordsmanship. Large-creature intruders, such as the rotting flesh beasts, were chopped into pieces after a few cuts by two or three Mecha Knights; for regular-sized enemies, a sweep of the huge chainsaw swords often obliterated a swath of the enemy.

Many Demons were destroyed beneath the blades of mankind.

The three types of elite warriors in Powered Armor were equally adept with their chainsaw swords and combat blades, their killing efficiency not slower than bullets.

However, although they were still efficiently slaughtering the enemies of The Emperor, their formation could no longer advance.

The Chaotic Vanguard was merely held back, tying up the two strongest forces on their side, and the entire team was blocked at the front by the huge demon army it had inspired.

In the brutal close-quarters combat, no matter how strong the human warriors were, casualties were inevitable.

If this battle turned into one of attrition here, the elite but numerically inferior human forces would undoubtedly face defeat.

But Matins had never intended it to be so.

He was waiting for something else.

And that something happened soon.

Not far away, at the location of the Demon Engine they seemed unlikely to break through, a violent explosion took place.

The explosion originated from within, and an internal blast even ripped apart the flesh wall on the outside.

The multitude of monsters trying to squeeze out of the flesh wall also vanished in smoke.

Then, a group of about thirty Battle Nuns clad in green and white charged in from the enemy's rear.

Against common Demons, these fierce women were cutting them down one stroke at a time.

Among them, the most dazzling was their leader, Georgette.

This Battle Group Leader, wielding a holy golden halberd, moved swiftly, cutting down every creature daring to block her way. At the same time, a pair of faint, unobtrusive but genuinely visible golden wings spread out behind her.

Although she could not yet fly, her speed in the melee was incredibly fast.

Several Mecha Knights and a Titan opened fierce fire, welcoming the arrival of the battle sisters.

Without the continuous replenishment of their numbers, the ranks of the Demon army thinned and were eventually breached.

Upon Georgette's arrival, she joined the siege against the Chaotic Vanguard without a word, wielding her holy golden halberd.

With this strong reinforcement, Matins and Rizzo both felt much relief.

In contrast, the Chaotic Vanguard now seemed clumsy and ineffectual.

Not only was it disrupted by Larson's distant Spiritual Energy but also, with Georgette's arrival and the illumination of the holy golden light, the evil power that supported its strength was suppressed, leading to a decline in its power and agility.

And the one to deliver the final, finishing blow was Prince Eureka.

This Mecha Knight pilot, after ending the battle in front of him, came to support. He leaped high into the air, and with the force of his descent, aimed the massive chainsaw sword at the powerful Demon, which Matins had chopped one leg off with a powered sword but was still resisting stubbornly.

Under this sword strike, the Demon, unable to dodge, was torn to pieces by the six-meter-long giant sword.

Chapter 360: Mission Accomplished

"Report, General! The Void Shield over Fino City has dissipated!"

Hearing this, Major General Du Shiliang, who was both the captain of the "Concerto" and acting commander of the Tianma Fleet, immediately ordered, "Stop the attack at once."

"What?"

"What do you mean 'what'? We have our people inside!"

"Yes, General."

The order to cease fire was given, and the person turned to ask, "When do we attack then?"

…

“According to Commander Gu… we’ll attack again tomorrow,” replied Major General Du Shiliang.

“Yes!”

After sending the adjutant away, he stood on the bridge, gazing at the planet in front of him.

He couldn’t help but feel emotional: everything was finally about to come to a conclusion.

He still remembered having an argument with Commander Gu.

But that had nothing to do with personal grudges; they merely had different views on work, on the mission.

He didn’t want the Tianma Fleet to continue bombarding Korolya’s ground forces. In his view, that was meaningless.

Go to

Unable to defy Gu Hang, who was now the war zone commander, he had no choice but to follow orders.

He would carry them out to the letter, and anyone expecting more from him was deluding themselves.

However, it wasn’t that he didn’t care about the situation. If he seemed indifferent, it was mainly because he didn’t believe they could win the war by fighting this way.

He didn’t believe Gu Hang’s claim that he could resolve the issue of the Void Shield over Fino City so quickly. He was only preparing for the orbital strike as ordered by Gu Hang.

When the time came, he would fire the ammunition that needed to be fired and nothing beyond that would be his concern.

But what he didn't expect was that Gu Hang actually did it.

An A-class Spiritual Energy user, as well as the elite troops led by Gu Hang from his so-called 'Alliance,' possessed such formidable strength?

How had they infiltrated the city? How had they shut down the Void Shield?

Du Shiliang didn't have the answers.

But it didn't matter.

If the Void Shield was indeed gone, that meant victory in the war was within reach.

Naturally, he wouldn't launch an orbital strike now. According to Commander Gu's instructions, they would strike at the earliest tomorrow. He understood that there should be time allotted for the retreat of the elite troops who had infiltrated.

Not just the elite troops, but a large number of regular forces within the activated Nest Capital also needed time to withdraw.

Firing now would be murder.

As for whether the Void Shield was temporarily shut down or truly destroyed… truth be told, Du Shiliang didn't know. But he decided not to seek immediate credit and just follow orders.

Commander Gu was a capable man; his orders weren't given blindly.

Subsequently, Du Shiliang experienced more changes in the battle situation.

The anti-orbit gunfire from the ground had decreased substantially.

Those Sinister Energy Cannons, especially the largest ones that posed a serious threat to the fleet, gradually fell silent over the next period of time.

Soon, one by one, they were rendered inoperative.

This further signified that the situation within Fino City was improving.

Du Shiliang's heart swelled with confidence.

…

Gu Hang's heart was heavy with pressure.

Ge Wajia must have noticed.

At first, it might have been mere suspicion, only dispatching a single Chaotic Vanguard.

When that being engaged in battle with Matins and the others, Gu Hang had sensed it. It was the appearance of the Chaotic Vanguard that made Gu Hang realize Ge Wajia must have become aware.

The Chaotic Vanguard was a reserve Great Demon. Although advancing to the next level was quite difficult, its status under Ge Wajia's command had to be high, and its numbers were definitely limited.

The fact that it had been deployed meant, quite unequivocally, that something significant was afoot.

And now, this Great Demon had been destroyed by Matins, Rizzo, and Georgette through combined assault.

Gu Hang blocked the transmission of the creature's thoughts, as well as the news of its death, and even fabricated false information, attempting to keep Ge Wajia at ease.

However, even he knew that deceiving Ge Wajia again would be difficult.

Due to the unique nature of the Chaotic Vanguard, Gu Hang couldn't fabricate a flawless lie, and more crucially, Ge Wajia's level of attention to its nearest and dearest offspring compared to ordinary demons was definitely not on the same level.

Under such close scrutiny, the lies woven by Gu Hang were easily punctured.

Gu Hang had already sensed the dangerous aura drifting in Subspace.

He checked on the actions of Matins and the others.

After destroying the Demon Engine that supported the Wicked Void Shield, they had abandoned the immobilized Warhound Titan. They divided their forces in two, heading to destroy the Anti-Orbit Evil Energy Cannons.

In the time that had passed, of the nine L-grade Sinister Energy Cannons, three had already been destroyed. Along the way, they also took out a few smaller ones.

With the core where Subspace overlapped with the real world—guarded by Thomlison—blocked by Gu Hang, and another important Demon Engine destroyed, the remaining enemy forces were somewhat in disarray. They broke upon contact and crumbled when charged.

In fact, they still had a considerable number left, but firstly, they could no longer receive nearly endless reinforcements, and secondly, once the command system failed, the demons became headless flies, their morale collapsed, and their already low level of organization and discipline became a moot point.

That's, in part, why the team of Matins and others had an easier time destroying other Anti-Orbit Cannons after taking out the Demon Engine.

Chapter 360, Great Success_2

The three hours they had been allotted were nearly up.

After a moment of thought, Gu Hang sent out a message using Spiritual Energy.

“Abandon your current targets and head back at full speed.”

The two squads, in the heat of battle, were mowing down the enemy with little resistance; the vital Anti-Orbit Cannons had been destroyed one after the other.

But there was no need to worry about the discipline of the troops.

Though somewhat confused, since it was Mr. Gu’s order, nobody would disobey.

…

Everyone began to retreat.

It wasn’t until the two teams reunited and returned to the central core area that Gu Hang felt his heart finally ease a considerable amount.

During this process, Ge Wajia hadn’t shown up yet.

However, in the subspace, the terrifying turbulence couldn’t be ignored anymore and Ge Wajia still hadn’t appeared.

Taking the opportunity to flee before it arrived was really the best choice.

Leaving a third of the manpower and nearly all the Spiritual Energy users here was precisely to ensure they could escape at any moment.

The demons trying to retake this position were held back by the troops; the Spiritual Energy users maintained the teleportation formation, ready but not activated, in case they needed to start it and escape instantly.

Source: Webnovel.com, updated on

That was Gu Hang's requirement.

The assault plan had been bold in conception, but extremely cautious in execution.

Cautiousness meant safety.

The few hundred men present were the elite of the forces Gu Hang had built up over the years. The Knights and Mecha, along with their self-produced Black Boxes, totaled just over twenty; there were six War Dogs. Most had been brought here. Not to mention the training of the Interstellar Warriors, not only consuming blessing points and productivity but also needing time for the growth of the new soldiers' superhuman organs.

Bringing over six hundred, close to seven hundred people, and now only over four hundred returned, the losses were indeed significant.

But Gu Hang had no time for sorrow.

Troops were raised for a thousand days, and a sharpened blade was meant to be used at a critical moment.

And now was that critical moment.

No matter how great the losses, achieving the objective was what mattered most.

And now came the last step—safe evacuation.

The rearguard was set in place, and they would be the last ones to go back; the others, according to the pre-arranged and rehearsed plan, stepped onto the teleportation formation one by one and were transported away.

The last rearguard squad, after tossing all the explosives and temporarily destroying the passageways to repel the enemies at hand, also stepped into the teleportation formation.

Leaving didn't require the same caution as sneaking in had.

There was neither time nor courage to use the subspace under Ge Wajia's control for illicit transit any longer.

However, the current location, the core area of Fino City, overlapped with subspace, causing high interference with Spiritual Energy teleportation.

To rip open space and perform long-distance teleportation to leave Fino City was too risky due to the high chance of getting lost in subspace interference.

Getting lost equated to total annihilation.

But Gu Hang had a solution.

The Storm God Kingdom was an excellent stepping stone, part of subspace and controllable by themselves, providing active support, with the highest safety for Spiritual Energy teleportation to leap there. After the leap, Gu Hang would tear open a gateway from the Storm God Kingdom to the real world. The required beacons had already been prepared inside Mingyan City, ensuring a seamless return from the Storm God Kingdom to the real world.

In fact, the entire journey went exactly as Gu Hang had hoped.

The terrifying turbulence in the subspace made everyone anxious, but in the end, Ge Wajia was a step too late.

Looking at the sky over Mingyan City, Gu Hang felt immensely relieved.

Now that they were here, he didn't have to worry about that fatso showing up.

A demon of that magnitude could only appear in places where the subspace erosion was particularly severe—like the core area of Fino City.

The marginal areas of Fino City couldn't sustain its existence, let alone now that they were inside Mingyan City.

The veil of reality in Korolya hadn't become so fragile yet, so there was no need to worry about that great filth coming here to cause him trouble.

Once Gu Hang felt at ease, he let Matins and the team go down to rest, while he himself ascended to the highest point of Mingyan City.

The view was not bad, but Fino City, hundreds of kilometers away, was still out of sight. Yet he stood there, gazing in that direction.

Meanwhile, he connected with the frontline combat forces' communications.

After a few words, Gu Hang had a rough understanding of the current frontline situation.

Although he and his elite forces had withdrawn, there were still millions of regular troops inside Fino City.

Having suffered heavy casualties, piercing into the city had significantly contributed to disrupting the cohesion between subspace and the real world. Without them, Gu Hang's earlier operation leading troops into the heart of Fino City would have been much more difficult.

Now that their mission in Fino City was accomplished, there was no need for these regular troops to continue to hold out.

An hour ago, a gradual withdrawal of forces from the frontline had already begun.

They would have a whole day to evacuate from Fino City.

After one day, the Orbital Bombardment from the Tianma Fleet would be launched with full force, aiming at the destruction of an entire Nest Capital.

Though the time was short and the task heavy, it wasn't without good news.

The difficulty of withdrawal, compared to a frontal assault and occupying a part of the city, was simply not on the same level.

It wasn't just the difference between attack and defense, or retreat, but primarily due to the inexplicable reactions that emerged from the enemy forces two to three hours ago.

Their command system seemed to have malfunctions, and many of their units became disoriented. The assaults on the human-occupied positions slowed, significantly reducing their pressure and allowing them at least to catch a breath.

The troops whose defensive pressure had drastically decreased began to withdraw step by step, abandoning the forward positions one by one. The rear positions had to be held for a while, waiting for those in front to retreat before they could start moving back.

The entire evacuation operation and plan were relatively orderly.

Retreat is not collapse. The greatest difference between the two lies in the organization of the troops.

Though the Plague Demon Army had suddenly become chaotic, they were still aggressive. Blindly running and losing organization would certainly lead to significant casualties in the pursuing process, and the speed of withdrawal might not even be that fast.

Given the current circumstances, the majority of the elite forces should be able to withdraw safely. And after 24 hours, most of the forces should be able to evacuate.

And if there really are forces that haven't withdrawn by then…

There would be no other choice.

Objectively speaking, given a scale of about a million people and the enemy entanglement, one day might not be enough to withdraw all the troops in good order.

But there was no alternative.

By then, any forces that hadn't withdrawn would likely go down with Fino City.

Gu Hang really didn't want to witness that scene, feeling somewhat like he had betrayed his frontline soldiers. But he had to be cold-hearted and make the necessary decisions when needed.

After the Demon Engine in the core beneath Fino City was destroyed, Gu Hang ensured that it would be impossible to build another Demon Engine capable of raising a Void Shield within a day's time in the inner parts of Fino City.

And if given two days, that probably still wouldn't happen.

But with three days, he wasn't sure.

Gu Hang wouldn’t dare to set the time of the orbital bombardment to a particularly critical point.

What if, in order to evacuate a few more regular troops and the time was extended to two days, a Void Shield actually came up?

Then the deaths of so many before would have been in vain.

The related bombardment orders had been transmitted to the Tianma Fleet; the final deadline for evacuation had also been communicated to Li Kexi, the front-line command.

The rest was to wait and watch the grand fireworks show of Fino City.

All in all, Gu Hang was in pretty good spirits, as everything was largely within his plan.

But just as he was smiling and had time to ask someone to make a cup of hot tea, just as he took the first sip, he suddenly felt a great shock in his heart:

He felt a powerful presence had struck a severe blow to his Storm God Kingdom!