Governor 361

Chapter 361, Invading the Divine Realm

The Storm God Kingdom shook violently, and even Gu Hang in the real world could sense it.

In the past, such disturbances had occurred before. In the subspace, waves surged, with terrifying forces churning at every moment. Occasionally, undercurrents and waves would impact the Storm God Kingdom, which was quite normal.

But the current turmoil wasn't just a simple matter of subspace waves.

Gu Hang already had a very bad hunch in his heart, and he desperately hoped it wasn't true.

However, when he closed his eyes and sank his spirit into his Divine Realm, he saw that worst hunch materialize—monsters with antlers on their heads, enormous and bloated bodies, covered in countless pustules, with three eyes and long tongues stretching out from their gaping mouths, holding a great demonic sword, were hacking fiercely at the borders of his Divine Realm.

Although concepts like 'space' and 'distance' exist in the subspace, they are very weak. Gu Hang could travel through the subspace with a hundred spiritual energy users, and so could Ge Wajia.

…

But Gu Hang didn't expect that this guy could actually track their movements!

Whether he was infiltrating or leaving, he had been careful enough to erase his own traces. How could Ge Wajia still follow? Did he have a dog's nose?

Gu Hang found that although he had tried to imagine this giant filth's power as formidable as possible in advance, he still somewhat underestimated the opponent in the end.

Now the problem was troublesome.

There was a clear boundary between the Storm God Kingdom and the regular subspace regions. The Storm God Kingdom was like an inverted mountain with a thick base, floating in the subspace. The solid gray-blue rock surface came abruptly to an end at the edge of the mountain body. An invisible force encompassed the entire area; this was the Storm God Kingdom.

Just one step beyond the edge lay a soul sea, colorful, bright, yet twisted.

Ge Wajia was there. His greatsword struck the border of the Divine Realm once again.

Source: Webnovel.com, updated on

This was only the second strike, but the boundary could no longer hold.

With the third strike, Ge Wajia broke through the border of the Storm God Kingdom. A huge hole shattered open, and the great filthy being, carrying the plague divine power, along with the surging subspace waves, burst through the gap.

This great filthy being was evidently quite enraged.

How could he not be angry? The affairs he caused on Korolya, he had been planning for many, many years. Despite the now overwhelming momentum that seemed about to destroy Korolya, the initial investments were not small. The Cult had been cautious and suppressed many times in its early development. Not only was Thomlison beguiled by Ge Wajia, but there were also certainly more than just one Thomlison.

Behind one immortal faith that managed to emerge, there were countless similar cult organizations that were annihilated before they could make any waves.

Such a long preparation, now finally coming to fruition, and just when everything seemed to be succeeding, such an interruption occurred—how could Ge Wajia not be furious?

After much effort and no small sacrifice, he implored the truly great being he worshipped and tracked down the marauder who had destroyed many years of his hard work.

And then, he discovered that this fellow was actually the Governor of Rage Owl Star.

Although the arrangement on Rage Owl Star was a hit-or-miss affair, losing an incarnation there was still a very irritating matter. Not to mention, the power of that incarnation was somehow used by this little marauder, turning it into a tool to deceive Ge Wajia himself.

If not for that, how could this fellow possibly have breezed through the domain he guarded?

New hatreds compounded with old, Ge Wajia was incensed.

He rampaged within the Storm God Kingdom. With every step he took, his heavy footsteps left behind a footprint filled with pus. The pus boiled at those locations, corroding the rocky surface.

He also swung his Plague Greatsword from time to time, hacking wildly at whatever was around him.

These seemingly arbitrary actions were actually infusing the plague divine power into this rarely stable region of the subspace.

Ge Wajia could feel that this was a territory belonging to a certain Subspace Inferior God.

But what of it?

The so-called Subspace Inferior God, that is a very broad category. The powerful ones, of course, he wouldn't dare provoke, and even some of the more unclean supreme deities above him would feel apprehensive.

But the one before him, did not fit into this category.

At least he was not afraid.

He was determined to catch that little pest here, otherwise he wouldn't be able to quell the hatred in his heart.

As he advanced, he saw a tower.

He headed straight for it.

He felt that the core of this area, was right there.

Even closer, he could feel that the little pest he was searching for, was also there.

With a wave of his hand, a vicious spell chanted from his lips, and a green wind formed around him, sweeping towards the tower.

But at the same time, a storm mixed with thunder and lightning also swept in, confronting his plague wind head on.

Meanwhile, artillery fire rained down from the sky, striking him.

He saw many small blue creatures appear before his eyes.

Those little things, organized like real-world human armies that he loathed, were attacking him with annoying, tickling assaults.

The irritated Ge Wajia let out a thunderous roar, scattering many of the small creatures.

Seeing the pitiful way those little guys died, his mood improved somewhat, and he began to laugh loudly. With his laughter, many more small creatures, under the blow of the green wind, disappeared as if melting away like snow.

But his laughter was soon cut off by a bolt of lightning that struck down.

It was that pest!

He angrily quickened his pace, charging towards the Central Spire.

However, the lightning became more and more dense, and more of the little blue creatures obstructed him.

Moments later, from within the storm, emerged a giant war bear whose size matched his own, imbued with the power of lightning, roaring and pouncing towards him.

He dealt the foolish bear a sword blow.

But it didn't burst as he expected, instead the creature scratched three bloody marks on him.

The furious Ge Wajia tried to strike again, but his movements were hindered by the relentless storm.

He was entangled.

And Gu Hang at the top of the tower, had a grave expression.

He waved his arms continuously, mixing his own spiritual energy with the divine power of the Storm God Kingdom, controlling the divine bear that the core of the Divine Realm had transformed into, summoning the storm, and engaging in a fight to the death with this filthy creature.

Chapter 362, Unforgettable Forever

"Report, General! The scheduled strike time has arrived, please give your instructions!"

According to the prearranged plan, it has been one day since the Void Shield of Fino City was breached. The Tianma Fleet should now carry out an annihilation-level orbital bombardment of Fino City.

In fact, all the warships were ready for the bombardment, just waiting for Du Shiliang, the Acting Fleet Commander, to give the order.

However, the order had not come.

Du Shiliang was somewhat hesitant. He paced back and forth, and after his adjutant urged him again, he asked, “Is there still no message from Commander Gu?”

“No,” the adjutant responded. “We’ve made contact with the ground. General Hans says they are ready for the strike, and 90% of the frontline troops in Fino City have been evacuated. We can reach the command in Mingyan City, but ever since Commander Gu went up to the watchtower at the top of Mingyan City, he hasn’t moved an inch. According to Dress from the Storm Mage Corps, it seems Commander Gu is engaged in a confrontation with a powerful demon…”

…

As the adjutant spoke the latter half of the sentence, his face showed some bewilderment. In truth, he did not understand what Dress had told him; he was merely repeating to Du Shiliang what he’d been told.

But Du Shiliang, relatively more experienced and knowledgeable, had a rough idea of Gu Hang’s predicament—though he certainly didn’t understand anything about a ‘Divine Realm,’ ‘Subspace,’ or ‘Grand Impurities’ or such; he could probably grasp that entering Fino City, destroying the Void Shield, and then attracting the attention of some powerful demon on the way out, seemed quite normal.

Du Shiliang sighed. Commander Gu was truly bearing too much.

His attitude toward Gu Hang had done a complete one-eighty.

Why should he oppose the man who could bring victory?

He was fixated on making contact with Commander Gu in the hopes of having the commander issue the order, so the fleet could execute it, adding a sense of ceremony to the whole process as a way to show the Tianma Fleet's reverence for the brave souls who had previously assaulted Fino City.

Now it seemed impossible.

Source: Webnovel.com, updated on

It was a pity, but they couldn't let one mishap hold them back.

"Fire!"

"Yes, sir!"

The order was relayed from the bridge of the Concerto to the entire fleet.

Currently, among the Tianma Fleet, there were two cruisers, six destroyers, and over twenty escort ships capable of engaging in combat.

In total, almost thirty warships gathered in the orbit of Korolya. From the surface, yellow-green Sinister Energy Cannons continued to bombard them. The Anti-Orbit Sinister Energy Cannons in Fino City had not been completely cleared out.

These Sinister Energy Cannons, hitting against the ships' Void Shields and energy shields, stirred up waves of disruption.

But Du Shiliang no longer cared.

In this short span of time, those Sinister Energy Cannons couldn't do much to the fleet.

On the other hand, Fino City on the planetary surface, now unprotected by a Void Shield, was like a naked little lamb, just waiting to be manhandled at their leisure.

Thirty ships fired all at once!

Of course, those escort ships were basically there to make up the numbers; their most powerful weapons were Grade S cannons, not particularly powerful.

But starting with the destroyers, Grade M cannons appeared, including the ‘Heat Hammer’ Macro Cannon and the ‘Meltdown’ Lightspear, which were formidable.

With such heavy artillery at this grade, they were already capable of dealing a significant blow to the Nest Capital.

Not to mention, on the two cruisers, there were a total of three Grade L heavy cannons. Two ‘Wrath of Loyalty’ Macro Cannons and one ‘Doomsday’ Lightspear Array—these were absolute heavy hitters, devastating in their destructive effects on the Nest Capital.

These two cruisers armed with Grade L giant cannons were the main striking force; the rest were just a bonus.

After a volley of fire, half of the Anti-Orbit Sinister Energy Cannons launching from Fino City fell silent.

Needless to say, they were destroyed in the bombardment.

The navy personnel on dozens of ships were exhilarated!

Over the past few years, they had executed countless orbital strikes against Fino City. Ammunition was lavishly spent, they even suffered the cost of multiple ships being damaged or destroyed, and yet the results had been meager.

But today's bombardment was refreshingly straightforward, truly letting them vent their pent-up frustration.

So satisfying!

…

Standing on a highland outside Fino City, Major General Li Kexi, General Hans, and a group of commanders from the Star Realm Army and the Native Defense Forces gathered here.

Below, the war continued. Those forces that were able to retreat had already moved to the rear. The support troops were engaging the enemy forces in pursuit right here.

However, the generals' gaze was not fixed on the battles on the ground.

Down there, although the scale of participation was on the order of millions, countless demons, cultists, and plague-ridden corpses were assaulting the defensive positions of the support troops like mad. Numerous human warriors held their ground, fighting desperately. The battle was fierce, with massive casualties, the scene grand and bloodstirring.

But…

The commanders simply couldn't muster any interest in it.

Because they all knew that no matter how grand the blocking battle below was, it had no significance for the overall campaign.

What mattered was the outcome of Fino City.

And that outcome was already predetermined.

They watched as fire from the sky enveloped Fino City. Whether it was the smaller fires, or the colossal ones; whether it was the tail-flamed orbital missiles, or the meteor-like solid kinetic cannon shots, or even the extraordinarily thick beams of energy weapons… Each burst of light inflicted a severe blow on the nest capital, which writhed like a living being.

The city was collapsing, and with it, the countless filthy and pitiful creatures that dwelled within were being extinguished.

One flesh tower after another toppled, one robust building after another crumbled, the wails of the demons, the cultists, the infected, even at a distance of dozens of kilometers away, could be heard so clearly that they shook one's soul.

The Land Forces' generals silently witnessed the apocalyptic scene before them.

'Doom' was not an adjective but a bona fide statement.

Wasn't this the doom of Fino City?

"It's over." Suddenly, someone spoke, uttering such a sentiment.

Li Kexi looked in that direction and noticed it was a native general from Korolya.

His eyes brimmed with hot tears.

Li Kexi couldn't fully empathize, but at least he could understand. These locals from Korolya were facing the pressure of their world being destroyed and were fighting this war.

They had sacrificed far too many lives in this war.

And now, finally seeing the dawn of victory, how could they not be moved?

Even Li Kexi and Hans, who were not natives of Korolya, had been fighting here for many years, and countless direct soldiers under their command had spilled their blood on this alien world.

No one wants to fight a war they cannot win.

After such immense sacrifices, seeing victory on the horizon, the emotional release and the uplift of their spirits were indescribable.

These emotions, combined with the spectacle of the collapse of an entire living nest capital in front of them, deeply touched their hearts.

No matter where these people would go in the future, whatever experiences they would have, this scene before their eyes and their current state of mind would never be forgotten.

This would be the deepest memory etched in their hearts.

However, amidst the tears, Li Kexi also had a persistent worry.

The governor had been sitting motionless in the observation tower of Mingyan City, unresponsive, for an entire day.

How was he doing?

Chapter 363, Something is Wrong

At this moment, Gu Hang was on the verge of losing consciousness.

Within the Storm God Kingdom, he had been locked in a fierce battle with Ge Wajia, the unclean one, for two full days.

Fighting until now, he was nearly burnt out.

At LV8, which equated to A+ grade in Spiritual Energy strength, amplified by the Subspace, he consistently reached S grade. The thunder he summoned wielded earth-shattering power;

Being in the Storm God Kingdom, Gu Hang could freely harness the power of this entire piece of Subspace. In the essence of a Subspace Inferior God, he condensed into a Storm Giant Bear, recreating the entire power of the 'Primal Fury Owl', and it was even mightier than before. After all, how much faith did the Primal Fury Owl have back then, and how many people trusted Mr. Gu now?

Meanwhile, there were tens of thousands of valorous spirits safeguarding his side. These spirits, coming from warriors who had fallen on various battlefields of the Alliance. Some of their souls returned to the Golden Throne, but most came to the Storm God Kingdom.

…

The strength of each individual was as insignificant as dust when confronting the unclean one, but tens of thousands of dust particles were still quite annoying when smeared across one's face.

This was the entirety of the power Gu Hang could muster, and within the Storm God Kingdom, it was indeed his home turf.

With advantages on all sides, Gu Hang, at the beginning, did manage to suppress the Plague Great Demon.

However, suppression was merely suppression; defeating and even annihilating the Great Demon was not so easy.

Over the span of these two days, the unclean one seemed to be passively taking a beating, only able to pound the ground, blow chaotic winds, and howl out its anger, while its body was incessantly riddled with all manners of strikes.

But in reality, all the injuries it sustained were very limited. Even those injuries that appeared horrifying were quickly repaired.

Conversely, every attack from Ge Wajia, even those seemingly meaningless ground pounds, was essentially inflicting damage on the Storm God Kingdom and caused Gu Hang's heart to lurch.

Continuing this way, it wasn't an issue for Ge Wajia to hold out for two days, or even ten more days and a half-month.

But for Gu Hang, to endure beyond two days was almost at his limit.

By tomorrow, he would definitely be unable to sustain such a mode of battle.

Of course, he did have the option to fight more economically.

In these two days, he had been desperately calling upon all his strength, recklessly consuming spirits, and bearing huge losses just to maintain suppression on Ge Wajia. But if he had chosen a defensive combat method, he wouldn't be nearly as exhausted as he was now.

The reason he didn't do so was quite simple—he couldn't win that way.

In Subspace, where could he expect reinforcements?

The only power he could employ was his own.

If he only defended, there would inevitably come a day when he couldn't hold out any longer, and Ge Wajia would tear down the entire Divine Realm.

Although he himself could escape, the Storm God Kingdom, standing tall in Subspace, often provided Gu Hang with immense help. He didn't want to relinquish this stronghold in Subspace.

Ge Wajia was an opponent he couldn't defeat by any means, but even under such adverse conditions, Gu Hang still thought of a way to win.

Although the risk was somewhat high, he went through with his plan.

If he failed to sustain the day-long task of suppressing Ge Wajia, it would all be in vain.

But he achieved it.

Now it was his turn to win.

Gu Hang summoned his remaining energy, fixed his gaze on the formidable monster, and flashed a faint smile.

Then, with a wave of his hand, a rift suddenly tore between the Subspace and the real world.

Ge Wajia paused for a moment, not understanding what this annoying pest was trying to do.

But the next moment, it felt an immense repulsion.

It was squeezed out of the Storm God Kingdom!

And consequently, the body of the unclean one appeared amidst the already devastated Fino City.

…

The emergence of the unclean one brought significant changes to the battlefield.

The human army, on the cusp of victory, suddenly began to face immense pressure again.

The orbital bombardment of Fino City had persisted for a full day.

Fire rained ceaselessly from the orbit.

The cost of orbital bombardment was very high, particularly with heavy artillery like M grade or L grade, where a single shot cost thousands, even tens of thousands, of Tax Currency.

In these two days, the ammunition expended on firepower and light spears by the Tianma Fleet, when added up, might well have reached the tens of millions, even breaking a billion.

According to Du Shiliang's estimates, this was almost 80% of their ammunition reserves depleted.

Only such a level of assault could ensure that a Nest Capital of Fino City's scale was utterly obliterated.

Meanwhile, the human ground forces, engaged with the Demons that had ventured out of the city in pursuit, experienced a rapid decline in strength shortly after the destruction of Fino City.

Fino City was the core of overlap between Subspace and the real world. Once it was destroyed, particularly as the souls of hundreds of millions, maybe even over a billion, were liberated, the overlapped state of Subspace and the real world could no longer be sustained and came to a decisive end.

Although the signs of erosion would remain for a long time, at least there would be no more evil forces from the realm of the plague continuing to invade Korolya.

Chapter 363, Something's Not Right_2

These demons, existing by relying on subspace power, naturally began to lose strength and became utterly weak once that foundation was lost.

However, when the Ge Wajia Demon Lord appeared, these demons suddenly seemed to have been injected with a shot of adrenaline, howling as they regained their full strength!

That was a Great Demon!

The Land Forces generals, who thought they had the victory in hand and were already discussing post-victory arrangements, were caught off guard by this sudden turn of events.

Wasn't it supposed to be over once Fino City was destroyed?

Why then, did such an overwhelmingly powerful being appear, causing almost madness with just a glance from dozens of kilometers away, descending into reality?

…

Yet, the Ge Wajia Demon Lord, the cause of such excitement among the lesser demons and utter dismay among the human commanders, was feeling extremely uncomfortable at this moment.

His arrival in the real world had left him bewildered.

"My long-awaited descent," he thought, "came this easily?"

Was that little thief actually a good person?

But after his "descent," he immediately felt that it was completely different from the kind he had wanted!

Fino City had been completely destroyed, a whole day of unimpeded orbital bombardment had turned the activated Nest Capital to ashes, the power of subspace had faded away, and the curtain of reality once again shrouded this place.

The Ge Wajia Plague Great Demon had no foundation to exist in the real world; the curtain of reality was forcefully pushing him out.

Under normal circumstances, he should have been quickly squeezed back into subspace by this curtain of reality.

But stubbornly, he couldn't return now.

His route back was through the Storm God Kingdom.

And Gu Hang was blocking the rift between the Storm God Kingdom and the real world, exerting all his power to push the entity outwards.

Now, Ge Wajia was like a meat patty squeezed between two continuously contracting walls.

And, on top of that, the millions of demons outside were draining a vast amount of power from him. Originally, the demons should have been powered indefinitely by subspace, but now he alone was their source. Even as mighty as he was, he could not ignore this level of depletion.

But worse still, when he was forced to personally power those demons, every time a demon was destroyed in battle, the corresponding damage would be reflected on his own body.

Ge Wajia already realized something was awry, feeling as though he had fallen into a big pit.

However, by then, even if he realized it, there was nothing he could do.

Under the compression of the curtain of reality and the Storm God Kingdom, he could hardly mobilize his power and could only rely on his own strength to maintain the integrity of his body, or else he would be crushed.

…

Gu Hang also felt tremendous pressure, even greater than when he had fought against Ge Wajia.

To ensure that Ge Wajia remained trapped between the cracks of the real world and the Storm God Kingdom, he had to "help" Ge Wajia resist the expulsion from the curtain of reality.

It was difficult, but he was still trying.

Fortunately, he didn't need to persist for too long.

In those extremely difficult moments, he still managed to send a message.

Soon, Du Shiliang, who had finished the fight in the sky and was ready to head home, received the message.

After hesitating for one second, Du Shiliang decided to listen to the Fleet Commander.

Although depleting all the reserve ammunition in the Fleet was quite dangerous, in the Tianma Star Sector, there should be no other interstellar forces capable of threatening them.

Doing it once shouldn't be too much of a problem.

Thus, as Fleet Commander, his order was conveyed to each starship.

Soon, the starships that were still striking, launched another round of attack on Fino City, which had been bombed into ruins.

This time, Ge Wajia bore the brunt of the bombardment.

Just how strong was the unclean one?

Even a shot from a "thermal hammer" starship cannon, striking his body, had its power diminished due to the distortion of laws, and then only blew a large hole in him. This hole, within a few breaths' time, rapidly healed itself.

However, what Ge Wajia had to face was not just a simple 'heat hammer.'

Even though, compared to the massive Nest Capital, Ge Wajia's body, no matter how large, was quite insignificant. The skyfalling starship cannons, coming so abruptly and lacking ground guidance, couldn't aim accurately at such a small target for bombing. But all that was needed was to bomb the area, let alone a direct hit, even a miss, the residual effects of the heavy artillery would still cause damage.

Not to mention, there was also a grade L catastrophic weapon.

In the third round of strikes, a "Doom" Light Spear Array hit Ge Wajia solidly.

The Plague Great Demon, already riddled with holes, couldn't hold on any longer. Even the power that had been twisted by laws and weakened, delivered the final fatal blow to it.

The powerless and furious Great Demon was eliminated.

In his last moment, he was full of anger.

He really couldn't accept being tricked by such an insignificant thief!

Even facing death, he still had not a trace of fear or dread.

As a Great Demon, how could he be afraid?

He was not going to truly die.

Neither the body nor the soul was the key to his existence.

It was the Subspace essence.

And Subspace essence is eternal and indestructible.

Even if his body was killed and his soul annihilated, he would just be expelled back into Subspace. Although, after suffering such a severe blow, he would need a long time to recover, one day he was sure to return.

Just like the time he was expelled by a Starfighter Battle Group Leader with his own life.

Wait for it, you insignificant thief, wait for me…

Huh?

Something's not right.

Ge Wajia, returning to his Subspace essence, found that the environment he was in seemed to have some problems.

Shouldn't he be in the warm garden of the loving father, regaining consciousness in one of his many steaming cauldrons? He might be utterly ashamed under the disappointed gaze of the loving father, but he would surely express his loyalty to the loving father and swear that next time he would definitely spread the glory of the loving father to more souls in the real universe.

But why, upon regaining consciousness, did he see thunderstorms everywhere?

Turning his head, he saw a giant.

This giant, was exactly like the insignificant thief that had tricked him.

…

Within the Storm God Kingdom, Gu Hang, with a splitting headache and although pale-faced, still revealed a satisfied smile.

He looked at Ge Wajia, the size of a palm, wrapped in a bubble, wriggling its limbs inside, which looked quite comical, and couldn't help but stretch out his hand to poke the little guy.

The raging furious Ge Wajia lunged at his finger with bared fangs and claws, but Gu Hang was quick and didn't let the little fellow bite him.

This was the Subspace essence stripped of all power, and also what Gu Hang was willing to risk such great danger to obtain.

With a wave of his hand, the bubble carrying Ge Wajia's essence flew into the Central Spire of the Storm God Kingdom.

Thunder rained down from the sky, relentlessly pounding.

He was attempting to assimilate and devour this piece of Subspace essence, with the portion left behind by the Primal Fury Owl.

In Subspace, power means nothing. The power here is limitless and inexhaustible. But the key is, who is qualified and capable of wielding enough of it?

Gu Hang himself could only muster the power level of an A-grade Spiritual Energy user; boosted by the Divine Realm, it could reach S-grade.

The Divine Realm itself could only muster the power of an Inferior Deity at best, which was even less than a Great Demon.

Now, having devoured the Subspace essence of this Great Demon, the Storm God Kingdom was set to receive a massive enhancement.

Both the Divine Realm itself and Gu Hang, as master of the Divine Realm, would reap countless benefits from this.

Chapter 364, Golden Light Enters the Dream

The power of subspace is infinite, and subspace is “generous”. If someone needs the power of subspace, it will give generously without stinginess.

But the premise of everything is that this “person” must be their own “person”, that is, they must possess the essence of subspace.

And the essence of subspace can be understood as a kind of “authority”. The amount of subspace power one is qualified to mobilize depends on the size of their authority.

As for the source of this “authority”, it varies a great deal.

Spiritual Energy practitioners do not inherently possess the essence of subspace; fundamentally, they are uncontrollable channels—breaches through which subspace power leaks into the real world, a disaster for the real world. It wasn’t until The Emperor established the Spirit Network that such power could be controlled.

However, native products of subspace are entirely different. They possess the essence of subspace and can mobilize powers belonging to themselves, but it is due to this essence of subspace that they suffer from the rejection of the physical universe and under normal circumstances, they cannot pass through the veil of reality.

…

Demons, of course, are also native products of subspace, but generally speaking, subspace creatures referred to as demons are specifically known for being born from the will of some grand beings. Even the likes of the Great Demon are essentially so.

The Storm God Kingdom that Gu Hang possesses is a bit different. It does not rely on any grand being, having grown from subspace itself. Its essence comes from the soul-sea in subspace, with similar and unified disturbances which later, due to various reasons, became distorted and changed into the form it is now, giving birth to beings like the Primal Fury Owl, an Inferior Deity. Now, this piece of subspace essence has been grasped by Gu Hang.

In this process, the trust of the alliance citizens in Gu Hang has also caused some ripples in the soul-sea of subspace, which ultimately reflected within the Storm God Kingdom, allowing it some growth over these years.

But the overall growth has not been substantial.

The faith of the five hundred million people under the alliance can only generate limited waves; moreover, while the population under the alliance trusts their governor, in religious matters, they largely maintain their faith in The Emperor, and these two things are not inherently contradictory. It just means the growth brought to the Storm God Kingdom is not as exaggerated.

Gu Hang has no intention of changing this situation.

Why change it?

It's nice and cool under a big tree; I am a loyal subject of the empire!

Things are pretty good as they are now.

However, since enjoying the benefits within the imperial system, one must also bear the corresponding costs.

But Ge Wajia, this Great Demon, isn't it delivered right to my doorstep?

Devouring it would be the equivalent of devouring the part of the subspace essence that Ge Wajia possesses, also obtaining more "authority". The size of the Storm God Kingdom could perhaps expand to two to three times its original size on this occasion.

That would be the source of the harvest.

But soon, an event directly shattered Gu Hang's illusions.

It was as if a bucket of cold water had been poured directly over his head.

Out of the blue, he felt a gaze full of “benevolence” looking toward his divine realm from a distant place.

That gaze was impossibly far, as if at the other end of the boundless subspace; but the feeling of being watched was so clear that it was impossible to ignore.

Gu Hang shivered involuntarily.

It was not that he was scared, but as soon as the gazing eye arrived, his soul perceived a threat, and his divine realm trembled.

It felt as if he were witnessing a mountain crumble before his eyes, pressing down on him straight and hard, with no roads to flee, no place to hide.

Gu Hang knew what this was.

It was the gaze of the compassionate father.

One of the four beings in the endless expanse of subspace that absolutely could not be ignored.

Only at this moment did Gu Hang realize he had caused trouble.

What grade is a Great Demon?

Even in the eyes of the compassionate father, a Great Demon must definitely count for something.

Just “vanished” out of the blue, even imprisoned within the Storm God Kingdom—it seems somewhat understandable that he would take a look here with some concern.

But this glance was somewhat lethal for Gu Hang.

Merely being looked at was one thing—frightening but not the end. However, being glared at could not be ignored.

Who could ignore the message behind it?

I, Gu Hang, have been targeted by one of the four mighty gods in subspace, the compassionate father.

Even if he himself doesn't come—I'm but a tiny speck, surely not worthy of the compassionate father's personal intervention… right?

But even if he doesn't personally intervene, this problem is quite difficult to overcome.

Wouldn't it be normal to send two or three Great Demons?

Gu Hang was already exhausted, having exhausted all his strength against a single Ge Wajia, and it took some clever tactics to accomplish that. If several of them suddenly arrived, how could he resist?

It simply wouldn't be possible to hold off.

Thinking of this, Gu Hang's expression became severely grim.

But if you ask if he regretted it, there was no regret.

How could he possibly let go of Ge Wajia? Compared to the somewhat curious gaze of the compassionate father, Ge Wajia was an even more immediate challenge. If he let the Great Demon's subspace essence slip away, in a few years, it would reassemble its soul and body, returning to its peak.

Perhaps that so-called peak wasn't enough to cause a stir in the real world, but it would definitely display the power of a Great Demon in subspace.

Chapter 364: Golden Light Enters the Dream_2

By then, filled with towering hatred and having already memorized the unclean members of his Storm God Kingdom, they would surely seek revenge. Moreover, having prepared for it, their next visit would definitely not be a lone arrival,

What could Gu Hang use to block them?

There was no way to block it.

To strike while the enemy is sick and take their life was surely to do so at the moment when Ge Wajia was trapped in the crevice between the reality curtain and the Storm God Kingdom, when his body and soul were buried by the artillery fire, having lost all power and only his subspace essence remained, to thoroughly crush him into dust—that was the most reliable choice.

Unfortunately, he had a father backing him up.

There was nothing to be done then.

…

It wasn't that Gu Hang hadn't considered this possibility beforehand.

It was just that on the one hand, he was clinging to a stroke of luck, and on the other hand, he had no other choice.

It was nothing more than releasing him and then waiting for Ge Wajia to recover and annihilate his Storm God Kingdom;

Or, be noticed by the fatherly figure now and wait for the fatherly figure to come knocking and annihilate the Storm God Kingdom.

Regardless, as soon as such a situation was triggered, the Storm God Kingdom was doomed to be undefendable.

With a cold face, Gu Hang had already spun many thoughts in his mind.

One after another, contingency plans formed in his head.

There were thoughts of resistance and thoughts of cutting losses and seeking survival when the momentum was against him.

If the Storm God Kingdom really couldn't be saved, then it would be let go.

The subspace essence of the Storm God Kingdom was controlled by Gu Hang, indeed, but it wasn't Gu Hang himself. Destroying it here meant losing a very useful method and trump card, which was quite a pity, but it wouldn't affect his endeavors in the real world.

Could the fatherly figure run to the real world and slaughter him?

It wouldn't be that easy.

It just meant that he would be one method short in the future, unable to use the Storm God Kingdom.

It was very unfortunate, crippling even, but it wasn't completely unacceptable.

As Gu Hang thought this, suddenly, there was an unexpected change.

His vision blurred as if he saw a violent flash of gold.

A cold sun seemed to rise in subspace, and bone-chilling winds blew.

Following this, Gu Hang seemed to hear an angry roar that shook the entire subspace.

It appeared to come from the fatherly figure.

But he wasn't curious, he didn't hesitate, and he decisively retracted all his senses.

It seemed that something formidable was happening, so it was best to hide far away to avoid getting splashed with blood.

But this so-called big event didn't last too long.

Soon, when Gu Hang mustered the courage and cautiously extended his senses via the Storm God Kingdom, he discovered that everything was calm outside.

Even, eerily calm.

The malicious gaze?

Gone.

The raging subspace tide?

Subsided.

The fatherly figure?

Uh… The fatherly figure was still there, still occupying an important position in the vast, unobservable subspace, but there was no longer any tendency to look in his direction.

Gu Hang felt as if a layer of fog had formed around his Storm God Kingdom, cutting off many gazes.

What was going on?

Gu Hang had a rough guess in his mind.

In subspace, the only one who could be mentioned in the same breath as the four most formidable beings was one other.

To humanity, there are four Evil Gods in subspace; to other races, there are five.

But… what have I done to deserve this?

…

Researching those things within the Storm God Kingdom was meaningless; anyway, he couldn't understand them, so he didn't think much about it.

After securing the origin of Ge Wajia at the top of the Central Spire of the Divine Realm, constantly subjected to the purifying thunder and unable to escape, Gu Hang's consciousness had left subspace.

His spirit had long been on the brink of its limit, but he still persevered and walked out of the observation tower in Mingyan City.

The secretarial team waiting outside, along with many high-ranking officials, couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief when they finally saw the governor emerge.

Fear!

After winning a battle, it was the happiest of times, yet the person who led everyone to victory had been silent here for more than two days. How could this not cause uneasiness in everyone's hearts?

Gu Hang, enduring the feeling of weakness, calmly greeted the people, and then appeared again in the governor's residence of Mingyan City, meeting with many officials from the Nest Capital government and the Planetary Government. Then, inside the governor's residence, he communicated with Major General Du Shiliang of the Tianma Fleet, General Hans of the Star Realm Army, and Nell Lavis, a special envoy from the Star Domain Government, separately.

This communication didn't cover anything important; it was a simple briefing on his current situation and an exchange of news, which marked its end.

The purpose of the call was not anything else; Gu Hang needed to make his presence felt, to tell his many partners that he had safely returned.

And this message was indeed more uplifting than anything else.

…

The news of victory had thrilled many people.

Including Nell Lavis.

This Star Domain Government special envoy and Head of Taxation, who had undergone multiple life extension surgeries and was over three hundred years old, looked at the surface of Korolya Planet with a smile.

Her chest rose and fell with excitement.

Ever since she took on the role of special envoy and came to Korolya, she had been under great pressure.

At present, the situation facing the Star Domain Government was somewhat shaky. The most significant disaster within the Star Domain—the Iron-teeth Greenskins—had been going mad for four years now. Assault after assault originated from the four Star Sectors they had already conquered, constantly expanding outward. The Golden Pass Star Sector, which had been a bulwark against the Greenskins, was now all in disarray.

Many fortress worlds were caught in the crossfire. Countless soldiers from hundreds of worlds within the Star Domain fought against the Greenskins. Within the Dragonhawk Legion, eleven Army Groups with many subordinate legions fought fiercely with Greenskins on those key battlefronts.

Several naval fleets were playing cat and mouse with the raiding fleets of the Greenskins, engaging in naval battles in the Golden Pass Star Sector, Huanghe Star Sector, and Bloodberry Star Sector.

Everyone knew that it's best to strike a decisive blow against the Greenskins rather than engage in a war of attrition.

But how could the Dragonhawk Star Domain not wish for that? It just wasn't achievable!

The high cost of war was starting to overwhelm the Star Domain Government.

Now was the time when solidarity and contribution of strength were most needed throughout the entire Star Domain.

But just at this moment, trouble flared up in the backyard.

Korolya III, this Nest Capital World, was a vital source of manpower. With an output of 700-800 million people every two years, it provided a large number of soldiers, slaves, and colonial residents.

The entire Tianma Star Sector might only have nine worlds, which is considered few among the major Star Sectors generally having 15-16 worlds, but it is the core Star Sector of the Eastern Star Domain. The annual predetermined tax quota reached one hundred billion Tax Currency; the total population of over six hundred billion people in the six Star Sectors bordering Tianma, whether in terms of population or tax revenue, were not as much as Tianma's.

This place was pivotal.

As for Lois personally, she was already tired of her position as Head of Taxation.

And the next step she wanted to take was to become the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Star Domain, which was a position second only to the Star Domain Head.

Her qualifications were more than enough; her achievements were likewise sufficient.

What she lacked was merely an opportunity.

Temporarily handing over the work of Head of Taxation to her deputy and traveling across the Star Domain to collect taxes, Lois taking on the responsibility of the Star Domain special envoy in charge of the plague disaster in the Tianma Star Sector was that opportunity.

If she managed well, she would rise with the wind, and the position of Minister of Internal Affairs would soon be within reach. The current incumbent had already caused dissatisfaction, she had also received hints from the Star Domain Head and had connections in the Space Domain Government.

But if she did not manage well, Head of Taxation might be the highest point of her political career.

At a loss, choosing to push Gu Hang forward indeed seemed like a desperate move.

But now it seemed…

“My judgment is really good,” she couldn’t help but smile proudly.

Moreover, she had a hunch that Gu Hang would bring her even more surprises in the future.

…

Gu Hang, who was on Lois' mind, was dreaming at the moment.

A tall man with long hair wearing a simple robe and a laurel wreath smiled at him.

The gold that filled his sight was not glaring, but rather very gentle.

Chapter 365

Gu Hang woke up feeling clear-headed and refreshed. A good night's sleep, coupled with what seemed like an added boost from a special power, had eased the previous sense of fatigue.

But subjectively, his mental state was a bit… muddled.

The robust man shrouded in gentle golden light, wearing a laurel crown in the dream, was obvious without saying.

But the key question was… why?

I'm just a minor governor from a remote cosmos domain, what virtue or ability do I have?

I haven't done anything extraordinary!

…

Just saved a few billion people, defeated a Great Demon, and even attracted the attention of one of the Four Gods, the Benevolent Father…

You want to send dreams, to enter dreams?

Isn’t that a bit much, big shot?

Gu Hang really couldn’t determine if this was a good or bad thing.

He even couldn’t be sure if this was real or fake.

Among those four great gods in the subspace, the blue one known as the ‘Cunning Minister,’ who loves to use various schemes and illusions, may well be pretending to be someone else.

No one can say for sure.

But he quickly stopped pondering this matter.

No matter if it’s good or bad, real or fake, anyway, he received a big help from this.

The Benevolent Father’s scrutiny was blocked, and his Divine Realm was also moved or hidden by some mighty power.

Otherwise, a disaster would have been imminent.

Even if the Benevolent Father didn’t cause him trouble personally, just sending a few Great Demons his way would be more than he could bear.

Just this help alone was like saving his life.

Not to mention, after hiding it, he could peacefully assimilate the subspace essence of the Great Unclean One, Ge Wajia, that he had captured.

What else was there to say?

No matter if the dream visitor was the true Emperor or some malevolent being in disguise, Gu Hang couldn't refuse the other's gifts.

As for what the future holds, that's a worry for another day.

After all, in the dream, the other did not say anything.

Recalling the dream, Gu Hang remembered that the Emperor only smiled at him and left three sentences.

"You've done well."

"I hope you can bear greater responsibilities in the future."

"The toy you have reminds me of something."

In Gu Hang's feeling, the dream was very long, and it was precisely because of resting so well in that dream that on reflection, he could only remember these three sentences.

But the amount of information in these three sentences couldn't be overlooked.

The first sentence sounded like a compliment, but Gu Hang could more clearly understand that it meant he had caught the attention of this deity.

The second sentence sounded like encouragement, but could it also imply that he might soon be arranged by this deity in the future?

It is precisely because of these two sentences that Gu Hang was filled with apprehension, unsure whether this attention and future arrangements were good or bad.

But since he had already decided not to think about this issue, he didn't delve deeper into these two sentences.

What he was interested in was the third sentence.

'The toy on you'—what does it refer to?

Gu Hang didn't think he had anything on him that could be considered 'quite interesting' by such an entity.

Except for the system that came with him through the crossing.

That the so-called system was visible wasn't too unbelievable.

The Emperor—assuming for now it indeed was the real Emperor—why would he find that thing 'somewhat nostalgic'?

Could it be that he has seen it before?

Or even knows exactly what it is?

Gu Hang sat blankly on the bed for a long while before he snapped back to reality.

Too few clues, no point in wild guesses.

Gu Hang touched his face, feeling invigorated.

It was time to focus on his own affairs.

Gu Hang opened his 'little toy.'

The monthly grant points income had come to over seven thousand. This was the fixed income that Rage Owl Star and Heijian Star in the alliance could provide him for now.

Korolya hadn't been included in it yet.

Just like when Gu Hang first landed on Rage Owl Star, although in name he was the ruler of Korolya now, he clearly hadn't achieved real governance. The municipal government of Mingyan City was just starting to listen to him, and due to the war, Gu Hang could barely recognize all the senior officials. He was relying on his identity as the commander of the war zone and Planetary Governor to mobilize manpower and resources.

However, Gu Hang was quite confident about establishing his rule over Korolya.

After the victory of this war, Gu Hang has gained vast prestige in Korolya, in the Tianma Star Sector, and even throughout the entire Star Domain.

Plus, he was far from being the newcomer who had just arrived at Rage Owl Star, penniless apart from his system.

Leveraging existing strength and immense prestige, the process of establishing rule afterward won't be too difficult.

It shouldn't be too long before Korolya is recognized by the system and starts providing a fixed grant points income to Gu Hang.

And how many grant points can a few billion people provide each month?

That's something to look forward to.

Since we're talking about grant points, we can't overlook how many grant points Gu Hang currently has in hand.

He glanced at the number, which was one million and thirty thousand.

And before he woke up, the number was only a hundred thousand.

The extra one million two hundred thousand, without a doubt, were the spoils of this victorious war.

In fact, the gains from conventional warfare weren't much. The main battlefield was fought by the native troops, the Dragonhawk Legion Star Realm Army, currently not counted as part of his forces. Only the Rage Bear Legion, although not an army of the alliance, was considered Gu Hang's troop.

Chapter 365, A Million Kindness_2

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Though their combat strength was fierce, and they played a significant role in key moments of some battles, their numbers were still scant after all.

The Dragonhawk Legion, which constituted a large portion in terms of numbers, naturally goes without saying, they numbered twenty million and were all classified as 'allies'. Due to their strong comprehensive abilities, they often bore the brunt of many major battles, and the victories they achieved could naturally not be counted towards reward points.

The situation with the local forces was somewhat more complicated.

In total, they had fifty million people. Of these, thirty million were counted as part of the allied forces.

This was because Gu Hang had not established his rule.

…

However, among them, twenty million were counted as part of Gu Hang's own troops.

Because these twenty million people had all been trained under his ‘Soldier Badge’ system.

Out of these, ten million were the ‘Salvation Army’ that Tadeusz had established after arriving at Mingyan City—newly recruited, issued equipment, and trained by the ‘Soldier Badge’ functionality.

They certainly counted.

The other ten million were trained on the front lines during the war after Gu Hang directly spent reward points in the trenches to specify a batch of troops to train.

They counted as well.

Training these twenty million troops cost Gu Hang two hundred thousand reward points.

Gu Hang had always felt that the cost of training ordinary soldiers to T5 grade was trifling, but when the number rose to tens of millions, it became a heavy burden.

It was also good foresight on Gu Hang’s part that in the past four years, he had anticipated a major outbreak in the Korolya campaign and prudently saved some ammunition in advance.

In the past four years, Gu Hang had obtained a total of about three hundred and fifty thousand reward points, most of which came from his monthly reward income.

Four years ago, his monthly income had already reached over four thousand, and after four years of development, it had now reached seven thousand.

Add to that the ongoing Korolya conflict and the slowly accumulated earnings, that amounted to three hundred and fifty thousand.

Gu Hang had not made any major expenditures with these reward points.

Regular retirements, replenishment of troop strength due to casualties and wounds, the exchange of some buildings, personnel training at Loyal Heir Academy, the enlightenment of talents on the ‘Hero’ interface…

All in all, around fifty thousand points of reward had been spent.

The bulk of it had been saved up.

And it was good that it had been saved, otherwise if it hadn’t been for these two hundred thousand reward points, the battle on Korolya wouldn’t have held up.

The local forces of Korolya were still not very effective. Without these twenty million troops trained to T5 grade, the frontline battlefield might well have collapsed.

If the Plague Demon Army, emerging from Fino City, had managed to break the human army’s formation on the frontline, then there would be no need to discuss anything that followed.

In summary, relying solely on these people and the earnings from the settlement of the regular ground warfare results, it would definitely not amount to more than one million reward points.

After all, the Imperial Navy, which eliminated the most enemies and played the most crucial role, was also part of the ‘allied’ forces.

Just the ground warfare part didn’t merit so many reward points.

But it couldn’t withstand the fact that he personally led the team, infiltrated the core area of Fino City, destroyed the Void Shield, demolished a third of the Orbital Cannons, and subsequently trapped and killed a Great Demon!

Although only seven hundred people participated in the operation, of which a hundred nuns were part of the ‘allied’ forces, and ultimately it was an Imperial Navy fleet that bombed the Great Demon to death… these actions would ‘share’ some of the reward points income.

Even so, everyone had to admit that the main force of this raid was still the elite core force of Gu Hang's command, the Alliance, that had created the opportunity.

The system certainly recognized it.

As a result, a considerable portion of the victories achieved by the Navy would be credited to the Alliance, eventually resulting in this million reward points income.

Looking at the one million three hundred thousand reward points lying in his account, Gu Hang smiled sincerely.

He had never received so many reward points before.

Such a substantial amount would greatly help Gu Hang's many plans going forward!

Looking ahead, Gu Hang had at least three major tasks to accomplish in his plans:

The first was war.

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Although the climax of the war has passed, it isn't completely over.

Fino City may have been destroyed, but the Plague Demon Army that poured out from within Fino City, as well as its remnants, still exist. A great number of demons have become weak and will continue to weaken over time. However, their weakness does not mean they can be ignored.

Moreover, apart from the demons, there are still a significant number of undead and Plague Wizards within the demon army.

Their total number is estimated to be several million.

In addition, the Plague Cult is still active in the Bottom Nest Districts of the various Nest Capitals.

Furthermore, what Gu Hang has to do is not merely to clear out the Cult.

He completely disdains the way the Korolya Planetary Government used to rule the world. He will certainly not allow the Lower Nest District and Bottom Nest District, which actually have the largest population, to remain in such chaos.

Raising people like pigs and allowing chaos to breed is by no means Gu Hang's style.

He intends to clean up the Lower Nest Districts and Bottom Nest Districts of dozens of Nest Capitals on Korolya.

Cults, gangs, independent Rebel Armies, and even some interest groups from the upper districts,

All these must be eradicated with military force.

Of course, this means that the battles on Korolya are not yet over.

Although what's left is just the mopping-up work, it's more complicated, more meticulous, and requires more manpower.

Gu Hang has included all these within the scope of the war.

The second matter is politics.

Military clearing is the first step, to completely take control of Korolya and to fully unleash the immense power contained within its population of hundreds of billions; this is why Gu Hang delves into politics.

He wants to establish an efficient, reliable administrative system.

Military cleaning alone won't suffice. Even if everything is cleaned up, if the politics are not well managed, the house will get dirty again sooner or later.

Of course, he understands that managing hundreds of billions of people is not the same as managing the previous population of five hundred million within the alliance. But he is not greedy; the so-called 'efficiency' is only relative.

At the very least, it has to be more efficient than the original government of Korolya.

In relative terms, Gu Hang cares even more about 'reliability'.

The training of loyal administrative personnel is of utmost importance.

Relying solely on the Loyal Heir Academy on Rage Owl Star might not be enough. Gu Hang might need to establish several Loyal Heir Academies on Korolya, investing a great deal of effort and gift points to accomplish this.

The third matter is development.

This is Gu Hang's ultimate goal. Removing obstacles with military force and constructing a high-efficiency, reliable political system are all in service of this purpose.

In these matters, an ample supply of gift points will provide Gu Hang with sufficient support.

Training more, more reliable, armies; training more, more reliable, administrative personnel; extracting more technology and finding industrial development paths suitable for Korolya…

Gu Hang still has plenty to keep him busy.

But just thinking of the hundreds of billions in the manpower pool makes him giddy with joy.

He doesn't ask for much; if he could just develop Korolya to the per capita production levels of Heijian Star, that in itself would be a tremendous wealth.

However, before he truly starts tackling the major problems, Gu Hang must ascend to the heavens once more to meet Nell Lavis.

This Star Domain Envoy, who pushed him up to the position of Korolya Governor, was about to leave.

Before she departs, Gu Hang must see her one last time.

The many conditions that had been previously agreed upon must be confirmed.

The most crucial issue is regarding Korolya's militarization for six years, involving more than twenty billion in Tax Currency.

And there are also some minor matters attached, such as the subsequent stationing and assignment of the Third Group Army of the Dragonhawk Legion.

Chapter 366, you may clap now

Upon boarding Lois's ship, what awaited Gu Hang was a banquet.

Dressed in a neat white uniform skirt, Nell Lavis, with her graying hair curled, appeared quite stately yet efficient. Upon seeing Gu Hang enter from the doorway, she smiled and raised her glass to him, and called out to everyone else at the banquet,

"Ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen! Look! Our protagonist for today has arrived!"

"The hero who saved Korolya, who saved the Tianma Star Sector, is here!"

“I propose that we all, together, raise a toast to our hero!”

Having said that, she was the first to lead by example, downing her drink in one go.

…

As Lois was the highest-ranking individual present, with her taking the lead, the rest, no matter what they were thinking, had to put on a smile and join in the toast at that moment.

After putting down their glasses, people began to applaud as they saw Gu Hang walk into the banquet, being pulled on stage by Lois.

Gu Hang made his way through the applause from the assembly of Tianma Star Sector’s VIPs and proceeded to the front of the stage.

Standing on the stage, surveying the clapping crowd below, and sensing the hidden motives behind their applause and smiles, Gu Hang quickly organized his thoughts about what he was going to say.

He raised his hand and gestured downward.

Only when the applause subsided did he begin to speak,

“The last time I met with everyone here was over four months ago. I still remember the atmosphere of that meeting, it was heavy and desperate, and I believe no one could have imagined that four months later, we would gather in the same place to raise our glasses in celebration of our victory.”

“It’s all because of you!” someone shouted from below.

Whistles and applause rose in turn, and Gu Hang waited with a smile on his face.

When the applause quieted down, he continued,

“Indeed, I will not be modest, it is indeed because of me. Four months ago, I spoke some unpleasant truths here, attacking the policies of the previous two governors in Korolya as well as the ongoing struggle between the Fatches Family and the Star Sector Government.”

“I assertively became the new Governor of Korolya and assumed the position of Commander of Korolya Battle Zone immediately after its declaration of complete militarization. I promised that I would spare no effort to fight the battle to defend Mingyan City and that I would certainly emerge victorious.”

“Four months have passed, and the victory I promised is now before all of you.”

As his words reached this point, the crowd was ready to cheer again.

It was not that the VIPs present were particularly fond of making noise, but… the incredible feat Gu Hang had accomplished, that turning of the tide, already had formed an overwhelming momentum.

If you didn’t clap or cheer, did that mean you had objections?

Let alone the neutrals, even those who had previously aligned with the Gu Clan and the Fufana Family, forming the third neutral force within the Tianma Star Sector, and representatives from the Parliamentary Faction of the Star Sector Government as well as those from the Fatches Family who had lost the governorship of Korolya, had to clap and cheer regardless of their actual feelings.

They had no choice.

However, this time, Gu Hang didn’t let the cheers arise.

He gestured downward with his arms and quickly moved on, speaking rapidly to the latter part of his speech, “But this does not mean the war is over.”

He set the tone first.

“The Plague Cult still festers within Korolya, and if not properly addressed, the disaster brought on by Fino City could recur.”

“External enemies have never been the most terrifying; the most dreadful enemy always arises from within.”

“As to how Korolya’s issues have evolved to this point, I think everyone has their own answer. But for me, the task I need to tackle is to completely eliminate all cult influences during the six years of continued militarization in Korolya; to thoroughly clean out every Lower Nest District and Bottom Nest District in every Nest Capital World.”

“I have said that I will establish a complete and efficient administrative system, eradicate the persistent inefficiency and corruption of the Korolya government over the countless past years, and better harness the entire planet’s potential. This statement, four months later to this day, I still put forth here for all of you to witness. Six years from now, the Star Sector Government, the Star Domain Government will see a whole, full of potential, brand-new Korolya.”

“That’s all I have to say, and now, ladies and gentlemen, you may clap.”

Gu Hang stepped back with a smile, moving away from the microphone.

The audience below still clapped collectively, out of courtesy.

But this time, it was much more reserved, and the applause was more polite.

Actually, those so-called ‘eradication of Cults,’ ‘elimination of corruption,’ ‘Korolya full of development potential’ were very abstract concepts. Which governor wouldn’t boast as such upon taking office?

Everyone’s ears were almost calloused from hearing such things.

Just stating goals and talking big, who can’t do that?

But the key lay in the fact that Gu Hang's words contained a concrete strategy.

It was called 'thoroughly cleaning out the Bottom Nest District.'

This was not something one could casually claim.

In a Nest Capital World like Korolya, who didn't know that various terrible chronic diseases lay in the uncontrolled Bottom Nest Districts?

And yet, how difficult would it be to clean them out thoroughly?

Out of Korolya's forty billion people, almost thirty billion lived in the Bottom Nest Districts and Lower Nest Districts. With the previous state of the Planetary Government, it was simply impossible to establish effective administrative management.

Chapter 366, Everyone Can Applaud Now_2

All sorts of complicated gangs, interest groups, and rebel armies… various organizations occupy those places, effectively replacing the authority of the Planetary Government.

Their relationship with the Planetary Government varies; some are in opposition, others have a superior-subordinate dynamic, or are either managers or the managed… but whatever the role, there is a certain understanding between them and the government: "I respect you, and in consideration of your face, I'll find a way to pay the taxes. Don't meddle in anything else."

Of course, the Planetary Government is ultimately the strongest, uppermost, and most legitimate force on the planet. As for that so-called 'understanding,' it solely depends on whether the Planetary Government wishes to maintain it.

But the reason this understanding exists in the first place is because the Planetary Government cannot fully manage the lower echelons. Thus, there is space for these interest groups to appear and grow. The Planetary Government needs them to administer the areas of power vacuum. Without these interest groups, would the Planetary Government itself go down to collect taxes?

In the Bottom Nest District, where things are a complete mess, collecting taxes is a joke; it's feared that the tax collection convoy would disappear without a trace as soon as it goes down there.

Of course, there are some interest groups that mess around or are unreliable in paying taxes, such as the 'Rebel Army' (often self-styled as the Rebel Army), the most disobedient group. The radical rebel armies directly oppose taxes altogether, and even the more established ones hold their own territory and population ransom to negotiate with the Planetary Government, seeking to pay fewer taxes or none at all.

…

Sometimes, the Planetary Government turns a blind eye, but if things go too far, or if the Planetary Government is pushed to desperation, the Planetary Defense Army will be mobilized to launch a 'pacification' campaign to deal with the respective interest groups.

But pacification requires an army and time. What if, after a long battle, no taxes could be collected? After the interest groups are defeated, who will collect the taxes? Who are those who should pay taxes, where are they, how much can they pay… All this information is unknown, making tax collection extremely difficult.

Alternatively, the government could be ruthless, arresting everyone in a pacified area, killing all the resistors, and taking the survivors as a form of human taxation, but this approach is not sustainable. If you handle it this way now, what about next time?

You can't afford to cut the grass and remove the roots.

Such actions can only be punitive, a warning. Normally, negotiations are held mid-battle, or after the group is defeated, a new interest group is supported to take over, which is a lower-cost and easier solution to implement.

In Korolya, the ecosystems of each Nest Capital have been operating like this for hundreds to thousands of years.

Korolya had a population of around forty billion many, many years ago, and has always maintained a relatively high birth rate. However, due to Imperial Tax and high mortality rates, the population of Korolya has hardly grown despite the high birth rate, always remaining at its current size.

Even this so-called ‘forty billion’ people is but a fictitious number.

The Korolya Planetary Government has carried out several world population censuses over the long years, and the data is quite unreliable, with many figures estimated in the end.

Anyway, as long as the Imperial Tax is levied for a population of forty billion, let’s assume there are forty billion people on Korolya.

That’s the general situation of this planet.

Now, Mr. Gu declares that he wants to thoroughly clean up the entire Bottom Nest District?

Everyone seriously doubts it.

If a system is still running, then don’t touch it. Otherwise, you won’t know how deep the mire is beneath it; one move could cause everything to collapse.

They simply can’t imagine what kind of changes should be made to the system that has been proven to maintain the operation of Korolya over such a lengthy period, to make it better?

Establish a complete government extending to the grassroots level?

Do you realize how many administrative personnel that requires? And how to manage these officials? How can the government afford the astronomical costs of so many employees? How many troops are needed to maintain stability during upheaval?

Can you afford them?

There are ten thousand problems here.

If someone had suggested doing this before, they would likely have immediately faced a storm of questions. Even though the Planetary Governor nominally has complete authority over their own planet, it's just lip service.

In places like Rage Owl Star or Heijian Star, where things are a mess, you can do whatever you wish, and no one will care; it's not crucial.

But with Korolya, such a crucial location for finance, taxation, and labor export, any disorder would doom everyone.

The Star Sector Government would want to interfere, the Star Domain Government would want to get involved, and all stakeholders tied to the population business in Korolya would come out to offer their unsolicited advice.

It's only because Gu Hang comes here with a great victory in a world-saving campaign, speaking from here, that he can barely keep these words pressed in people's hearts, preventing them from voicing them openly to him.

But in reality, the absence of open dissent does not mean it does not exist.

His foes, with mocking smiles on their faces, are clapping hands, but deep down, some may be waiting to see your blunder, and others may even be contemplating what to do next to sabotage your efforts.

And some of the intimates were evidently worried.

…

After the reception had ended, Mr. Gu's elderly mother sought him out.

“You said you’re going to clean up every Lower Nest District and Bottom Nest District on Korolya Planet? You were just speaking metaphorically, right? You’re not seriously considering it, are you?”

“Of course, I’m serious,” Gu Hang replied, “When have I ever been all talk?”

She furrowed her brows fiercely, “How are you going to do it?”

“It’s too complicated to explain to you all at once.”

“Just tell me where the money is coming from.”

Miss Wang Qi asked a critical question, one that, from her perspective as a businesswoman, struck at the heart of the issue.

“From Korolya,” Gu Hang said, “With such a vast population resource, why should we worry about not being able to afford it?”

“Are you going to sell people? After selling them all, in the future…”

“No.” Gu Hang interrupted his mother, “Of course not selling people. In fact, I plan to possibly reduce the proportion of the head tax when Korolya pays its taxes in the future. The ideal situation would be to not pay any head tax at all.”

“Then what do you mean by population resources…”

Gu Hang rolled his eyes, “Mother, have you been brainwashed by Korolya’s past situation, that when you hear ‘human resources’, all you can think of is the price of ‘people’ themselves? People are the most valuable means of production, the core and the foundation of the labor force.”

“Oh my God!” Miss Wang Qi almost screamed, “Four billion people! Do you realize what you are saying? You want to provide four billion jobs to make them valuable as a labor force?! It’s utterly preposterous!”

“Why not? Isn’t that the best outcome for Korolya?”

“And the best outcome for the Gu Commercial Firm would be to become the President of the Empire Commerce Guild!” Miss Wang Qi rolled her eyes dramatically, “The key is how to achieve it?! It’s impossible!”

“Then just watch my ability,”

Miss Wang Qi wanted to ask in more detail, but at that moment, a servant came up to them.

“Please forgive the intrusion, but… Envoy Lois wishes to have a private chat with Mr. Gu alone.”

“That’s perfectly fine,” said Miss Wang Qi.

She tugged at her son and then whispered in his ear, “Don’t mention your crazy plan in front of Lois, you…”

“Alright, Mother, I know what I’m doing, don’t worry,”

With that, he turned and followed the servant to a small room at the side of the banquet hall.

Lois, dressed in white, was already waiting there.

However, her expression didn’t look too good, not at all like someone who had just won a great victory.

As Gu Hang approached, she blurted out:

“You’re planning to militarize Korolya for six years to clean up all Nest Capitals?”

Chapter 367, remember, remember

“Do you want to transform Korolya Battle Zone into a six-year regimen to clean up all of Nest Capital?”

Lois’s expression was not very good.

Gu Hang, smiling, sat across from Lois and said, “It’s to create a more dynamic, more prosperous Korolya for the Empire.”

“Don’t mess things up,” Lois’s expression did not improve, and she warned, “I agreed to give you six years to transform the battle zone so that you could clean up the Cult and ensure that Korolya could continue to provide labor to the Star Domain as it has done in the past.”

“These six years are not for you to fool around!”

“Don’t turn Korolya into a mess and then find yourself unable to pay the taxes after six years!”

…

Gu Hang knew he needed to put Lois at ease.

Lois couldn’t remove his position as Governor, just as she couldn’t dismiss Fatches, but could only pressure the latter to resign on his own and then, through a fast-track process, transfer the governorship to Gu Hang.

But that didn’t mean Lois, the Star Domain envoy who might soon become the Minister of the Interior for the Star Domain, had no way to deal with him.

Besides, Lois was the ‘benefactor’ who had pushed Gu Hang to the position of Korolya Governor; she was one of his own, and he could not afford to push her to the opposing side.

After organizing his thoughts, Gu Hang said, “Your Excellency Minister, do you still remember the encounter we had four years ago, when you came to Tianma Star Sector to collect taxes? At that time, you invited me to become the Korolya Governor.”

“I’m aware that at that time you valued the influence of the Interstellar Warrior and the fact that Galaraldo acknowledged my relationship. But besides those, do you remember why you wanted me to take this position as Governor?”

Lois was quite old but still had a sharp mind.

She only had to think for a moment, and she accessed that memory from the archives of her mind.

She remembered her thoughts at the time, and in addition to what Gu Hang had mentioned, there was another reason: she truly considered Gu Hang to be a promising candidate. Through him, forming alliances and integrating Rage Owl Star and Heijian Star, especially his accomplishment of turning a Wasteland World into a thriving place within just a few years, Lois believed he had a rare capability. Having him rule Korolya gave the chance to lift this rotten place out of the mud.

With this in mind, Lois’s emotions calmed down slightly, and her expression was not as stern as when Gu Hang had first entered the room.

She sighed and said, “I believe in you, and I support you. But you should also consider the difficulties I face.”

Gu Hang made a show of all ears.

Lois continued, “For transforming Korolya into a battle zone for six years, I have paid a great price. Forty billion Tax Currency a year, two hundred and forty billion over six years—it’s a huge number. For Korolya, I had to persuade many people and offend many others to get this done.”

Gu Hang nodded, indicating he understood.

“In the next six years, if everything in Korolya is calm and peaceful, do you know how much pressure I would endure? How many people would attack my decision, saying that transforming Korolya into a battle zone for such a long time is a colossal waste of the Empire’s finances. You won’t be comfortable either, not just within your Star Sector, but throughout the Star Realm, countless people are eyeing

Korolya as a piece of meat. By that time, whether or not the transformation can last for six years is unknown, and it's not something I can promise you now and let you truly rest easy."

Gu Hang laughed and said, "Then shouldn't you be more supportive of my cleaning up all the Bottom Nest District and Lower Nest District? Korolya can't stay calm."

"But I'm more worried about you screwing things up!" Lois said, slapping the armrest of her chair, "If it were only smooth sailing, the worst we'd face is pressure, and the worst outcome would be Korolya starting to pay taxes a bit sooner. But if during this period, the Star Domain Government finds that the situation in Korolya is losing control and might jeopardize future tax payments, then my political career is over, and your life is too! Do you understand?"

As she spoke, her tone was earnest and concerned, "Just sit tight in your position as the Korolya Governor, you've already solved the biggest difficulty, eliminating the cult shouldn't be hard, six years is enough time, you could even save up a large fortune. After six years, when you can smoothly pay the taxes, you will be one of the most powerful figures in the Tianma Star Sector."

"By then, your alliance controls three worlds, with your mother managing the Gu Commercial Firm and being able to mobilize resources from the Empire Commerce Guild; your fiancée is a naval major-general, bound to be the commander of the Tianma Fleet in the future. I will help you, Galaraldo will help you… your future is limitless, so why bother stirring up trouble?"

Lois believed she was completely considering things from Gu Hang's perspective.

Even Gu Hang could not deny her standpoint.

But…

Gu Hang sighed in his heart.

How could my ambition be satisfied with just this?

However, it was difficult to express this aspect to Lois.

She would neither understand nor agree.

After a moment of thought, Gu Hang sincerely thanked Lois, and then spoke earnestly, “I fully appreciate your keen expectations for me and understand the importance of Korolya to the Empire, with its billions of people making extremely significant contributions to the Star Domain’s endeavors. But… but, General Lois, please consider, what is it that the Star Domain Government, the Empire, lacks and really needs to get from Korolya? Is it truly the population?”

“Where did these billions of people ultimately go? They were either sent to countless places within the vast Star Realm of the Empire, becoming slave labor, cannon fodder, or the lower-class residents of newly colonized planets. They are simply moving from Nest Capital on Korolya to another place to live or die, the value they create has not changed at all.”

“I hope to make some changes.”

“The same four billion Tax Currency a year, what if it is two destroyers a year? Or one cruiser every four years; or countless industrial goods, armaments; or what if Korolya could independently support a Star Realm Army ten times larger than the Dragonhawk Third Legion?”

“Aren’t these all more valuable than Korolya’s simple contribution of several hundred million people a year?”

Lois sighed.

She certainly understood that Gu Hang was right.

If you could actually create a new cruiser, then what would you need those billions of dry bodies for?

But the key is whether it’s achievable!

However, if it’s Gu Hang’s words… there might indeed be a possibility.

“I can’t convince you, who would’ve thought you are now the Korolya Governor?” Lois sighed, “But don’t act too recklessly. The Star Domain Government will be watching, and if things in Korolya get out of control, I won’t be able to protect you, remember that well.”

Chapter 368, Not Enough Troops

After meeting with Lois, Gu Hang still managed to get what he wanted.

Although the Star Domain envoy didn’t want Gu Hang to “mess around” in a general sense, under Gu Hang’s insistence, she didn’t directly oppose him.

And in terms of the actual measures taken, they essentially satisfied all of Gu Hang’s requests.

The six-year tax exemption for the militarized zone was reconfirmed unless Gu Hang failed to manage well during these six years, causing continuous turmoil in Korolya and showing signs that taxes could not be paid even after six years; otherwise, there shouldn’t be any problems.

And since it was militarization, Gu Hang’s position as the commander of the military zone was also retained.

However, Tianma Fleet was stripped away from the military zone. Gu Hang never had any unrealistic expectations about keeping it, so it was not surprising that it was gone.

…

But the Third Group Army of the Dragonhawk Legion would stay in Korolya under the command of Gu Hang, who would still be the military zone commander for six more years.

This turned the Fatches Family upside down.

They were, of course, furious.

In the last round of struggle, they had secured the position of Korolya Governor, hoping they could finally take charge of the Tianma interests and become the master. They did indeed manage to stand on an equal footing with the Star Sector Government over the past few years, basking in glory.

To secure their position in Korolya, they had invested heavily.

And now, it was all for naught.

That would have been fine, but now, they had even lost the 3rd Army Group!

The Dragonhawk 3rd Corps had always been Fatches's forbidden fruit. For many years, they had borne all costs for the Legion, from personnel to equipment to logistics.

Problems in Korolya were nothing new. Though there had been repeated requests to deploy the Star Realm Army—namely the Dragonhawk 3rd Corps—from the Korolya Governor to the Star Sector Government, and the Star Domain Government had approved it time and again, Fatches had created numerous obstacles, and the deployment of troops had been stingy, initially only on the scale of one million.

This was far less generous than when they had sent people to Rage Owl Star to clean up for Blackbird Heavy Industries.

Only after they took over the position of Korolya Governor did they spare no effort to commit the Star Realm Army to secure their status.

And now, they had lost the position again.

All the previous investments in resources and political assets had gone down the drain, but they were willing to take their losses and would find another way. However, they had never intended to give up control over the Dragonhawk Legion.

It wasn't easy to speak up before the defense of Mingyan City concluded, but now, with Fino City destroyed, the Fatches family was openly trying to maneuver to get the Dragonhawk Legion recalled.

They found a basketful of reasons—Fatches Tri-Star defenses were weak, the Legion's longing for home, claiming that supply would be more convenient after returning to Fatches Tri-Star…

But Gu Hang blocked all these reasons.

His counterquestion was simple: Is this the Star Realm Army, or is it your Fatches's private militia?

Although Fatches had always treated this force as their private militia, that was obviously not something they could publicize openly.

Furthermore, Gu Hang had received support from various parties.

The Star Sector Government was certainly willing to suppress Fatches, and the Star Domain Government, represented by Lois, also intended to punish Fatches—the performance of the Fatches family during their tenure as Korolya Governor was nothing short of disastrous.

Of course, the Fatches Family wouldn't just let things go so easily.

In explaining the situation, they mentioned some realities—the vast majority of officers and soldiers in the Dragonhawk 3rd Corps came from the Fatches Tri-Star. They were homesick and their morale had lowered due to not being able to return home for a long time, and the Fatches Family had sufficient ability to influence the internal situation of the Corps. Over time, this would undoubtedly lead to issues within the Corps.

The most direct manifestation of this was that although they were currently following Gu Hang's orders, and General Hans, the Corps commander, had also shown compliance with the orders from the Star Realm Army headquarters and the Military Affairs Department by suppressing the emotions within the troops and continuing to execute Mr. Gu's commands, they still had not appeared in the system's [Soldier Tag].

This also meant that the system did not recognize them as Gu Hang's troops.

However, this did not affect Gu Hang's decision to make use of them for the time being.

After the destruction of Fino City, there was no need to keep so many forces on the battlefield outside Mingyan City.

The local forces that had undergone training with Gu Hang's [Soldier Tag] System numbered twenty million. After the battle, deducting the casualties, missing personnel, and the injured soldiers who were discharged, there were still seventeen million left.

Tadeusz had recruited another three million people from within Mingyan City to supplement this force and completely integrated them as the 'Salvation Army,' which was then reassigned back to Mingyan City.

General Tadeusz temporarily assumed the position of commander-in-chief of the Salvation Army, and his first task was to execute the Governor's order to completely clear the Lower Nest District and Bottom Nest District of Mingyan City and establish military governance.

The more than thirty million local Defense Forces generally returned to their respective Nest Capitals. The numerous Nest Capitals on Korolya were in constant turmoil and urgently needed the military to maintain order.

The remaining more than eighteen million from the Dragonhawk 3rd Corps stayed near the ruins of Fino City. There were still several million weakened demons, leaderless cultists, and pestilent walking corpses in the area.

Gu Hang's task for General Hans was to have them swiftly eliminate all remaining enemies in the area.

Hans spent three months to fulfill this mission.

Once it was confirmed that most of the enemies had been eliminated, he left several hundred thousand troops to monitor and continue clearing the region. The majority of the remaining troops then entered Mingyan City and joined the campaign to purge the Bottom Nest District.

The military operation itself did not present many difficulties.

Gangs, Rebel Army, cults, interest groups… Could any of these possibly muster an effective resistance against the military's iron fist?

But to say it was smooth sailing would not be quite accurate.

The military pressure was still quite substantial.

This pressure did not stem from the strength of the enemy or the intensity of their resistance, but rather from the fact that maintaining public order was extremely troublesome.

According to ancient statistics, Mingyan City had a population of four billion.

Most of them lived in the Lower Nest District and Bottom Nest District.

The Lower Nest District was still manageable as it had a certain administrative management system. However, the Bottom Nest District, though not entirely in chaos and disorder, was at the very least not under government control.

Gangs and the Rebel Army would scatter as soon as they were attacked, but after the battle ended and military governance was established, that's when the real trouble started.

An endless stream of violent crimes, attacks on patrol teams, night raids, secret preaching and assemblies…

Even with the forty million troops of the Star Realm Army and Salvation Army in Mingyan City, they still felt it was not enough.

Chapter 369, Fundamental Solutions

Gu Hang was handling the documents at hand while listening to the incessant complaints of General Hans from the speakerphone.

“Commander Gu, are you even listening to what I’m saying?”

“Of course I am listening,” Gu Hang replied, indicating he was still there.

“But I feel like you’re not taking my concerns seriously. I need troops, more troops! We need to at least double the size of the Salvation Army, or we cannot continue to guarantee control over the Bottom Nest District! My troops are too dispersed, I cannot keep an eye on so many people, and we suffer losses when we are attacked…”

Hans had started again.

Ever since a month ago when he entered Mingyan City with his troops and fell into an endless battle for public security, he had made many calls to Gu Hang, requesting reinforcements.

…

Gu Hang completely understood.

The Star Realm Army combined with the Salvation Army amounted to forty million people, which seemed plentiful. But in comparison, Mingyan City had a population of four billion. The chaotic conditions of the Bottom Nest District practically required a large number of troops in nearly every block to maintain martial law.

A strict martial law strategy had caused the troops to be severely dispersed. Often a battalion stationed in a district with over a hundred thousand people would have no major problems if facing a direct enemy assault, as the enemy couldn’t amass enough firepower to resist the military.

The problem was the soldiers on guard, patrolling, or on duty, who could easily fall victim to an ambush around the corner. Military vehicles could encounter roadside bombs within a few steps out.

Those gangs as well as the Rebel Army didn’t want to give up control over their own territories.

No surprise Hans was complaining non-stop.

In the past month, they had lost thousands of men.

This number was certainly not on the same level as during the decisive battle when an entire division was wiped out in a few hours, but the loss of personnel was significant nonetheless.

The Salvation Army fared slightly better, but there were already many grievances among Hans's elite troops.

After the big battle, they had wanted to go home, but instead, they were sent to fight in a security war. The casualties weren't so much the issue, but the key was the constant anxiety whenever they went out, which took a huge toll on their spirits.

Quite a few were saying that they would rather launch a proper fight than continue this way.

Hans hoped for reinforcements not because he couldn't control the situation, but because he wanted to give his troops a chance to properly rotate and rest.

Gu Hang was well aware of all of these issues.

Yet, he continued to reject Hans's request over and over again.

Martial law was just a temporary measure.

If the solution to the security war was to rely on the military in the long term, then there was no point in proceeding. No amount of troops would be sufficient and the root cause of the problems would remain unsolved. Could martial law be maintained for a few months, a few years, even a lifetime?

Gu Hang had long thought of the real means to resolve the issue.

It was time to send General Hans, full of complaints, on his way and for Gu Hang to meet with the person who could truly address the issue.

There was a large group of people.

Among them were Alliance officials from Rage Owl Star and Heijian Star, as well as those who had performed well in Mingyan City in recent months and had appeared on Lambert's list—the blue list.

Among them were people from the Alliance Foreign Affairs Department, responsible for external communication, exchanges, peace offers, and negotiations, led by Nicola Salihoovich.

He was to travel through the Lower Nest District and Bottom Nest District to negotiate with powers worth saving, in hopes of peacefully dissolving them or incorporating them into Korolya's new government.

Among those worth saving, the Rebel Army were in greater numbers.

The Rebel Forces in Nest Capital typically referred to themselves as the "Rebel Army." Some were radical, not recognizing the rule of The Emperor or the Korolya government; the more rebellious ones even denied their faith in The Emperor. Others were more conservative, merely fighting to negotiate better real benefits for the people and territories under their power.

The reasons for the Rebel Armies' appearance, regardless of whether these were dirty or noble, essentially boiled down to one point: life had become unbearable, and they had rebelled!

But Gu Hang saw this as an opportunity for reconciliation.

Now, after being beaten, many of them couldn't even act openly anymore. It was time for Salihoovich to act—if he could negotiate and incorporate them into the Planetary Government system, then they would be directly absorbed, and martial law could gradually be lifted to see how things went.

Problems like gangs, regional monopoly alliances, Cults… these might be more complex than the Rebel Army. Their demands were more complicated, their appetites bigger. Especially the Cults, which virtually lacked any foundation for negotiation.

But no matter the target, the many hands drawn from the Foreign Affairs Department and the Commerce Department, led by Salihoovich, had the task of creating different plans according to the characteristics and demands of different forces. Those who could be integrated would be integrated; those who couldn't would be decisively destroyed.

Salihoovich's work was important, but not the most crucial.

Whether incorporating after successful negotiations or rebuilding after destructive strikes following failed negotiations, both required a second wave of people.

The Alliance Premier, Lady Ossina, had already arrived in Korolya.

A month prior, with Gu Hang as the Governor, Korolya had officially joined the 'Alliance,' the planetary organization. Naturally, the Alliance Premier had to visit this suddenly emerged territory with a population eighty times larger than the original Alliance.

Chapter 369, Fundamental Solution_2

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But what could she possibly do alone?

Even though she had transferred quite a few people from the government system of the Twin Stars within the Alliance, that was hardly enough even for Korolya, let alone Mingyan City with a population of four billion—it was like trying to extinguish a car fire with a cup of water.

No matter how reliable and developed the Alliance's civil servant system might be, it couldn't handle a sudden expansion in management scale by dozens of times.

In the end, managing Korolya would still depend on the local Korolya people.

For this reason, after the war ended, Gu Hang established five Loyal Heir Academies and five Comprehensive Academies in Mingyan City.

…

The expense of the academies was not significant; just find a local building, and instructors could be summoned from Rage Owl Star. The grant expenditure was only about a thousand points each, which was insignificant for Gu Hang, who controlled millions of grant points.

However, training the personnel was a big issue.

Mingyan City's original administrative bureaucrats and public servants numbered about two million. It seemed like a huge number, but it was actually far from sufficient.

In Gu Hang's plan, the number of public servants needed to expand to at least 0.3% of the total population—that meant 12 million public servants.

Even in a habitat like Nest Capital, where the population density is extremely high, and the corresponding number of public servants required could be greatly reduced, it would still need to reach at least seven to eight million people to ensure control of the entire Nest Capital as Gu Hang wished.

No matter what, the current two million administrative personnel were definitely not enough, not to mention that among these two million there was a lot of dross.

That was where Osenia's work came in; she needed to recruit numerous administrative personnel and implement the Alliance's administrative system.

Of course, it certainly couldn't be done in a few months. Recruiting and training millions of reliable administrative personnel could not be accomplished overnight. Even the current ranking system executed by the Alliance on the Twin Stars couldn't be copied over all at once—it was too expensive.

However, some emergency measures could be put into place first.

The primary issue was not the capability of the administrative personnel but their loyalty.

For this, Gu Hang spent a total of four hundred thousand grant points.

Forty thousand administrative personnel were trained in the five Loyal Heir Academies, costing ten points per person, in a span of one week, over the course of several months.

This was considered an emergency measure.

In the future, the millions of public servants needed by Mingyan City couldn't possibly all undergo "soldier token" training and be endowed with the level of loyalty akin to a political commissar.

Moreover, even training someone to be a political commissar could ensure loyalty but not job competency.

But for emergencies, it was sufficient.

Osenia's current task was this: to form forty thousand task forces centered around these forty thousand administrative personnel. These trained individuals would play a central role in the task forces, which would also include over twenty people each to assist them, under their supervision.

These people would then be dispatched to all areas that had been negotiated over, incorporated, or cleansed to begin their work.

Their main duties included registering the population of each district, promoting the Alliance's policies, distributing basic supplies, organizing labor production, and organizing trade and commerce… These were their primary responsibilities.

Of course, the most important of these was organizing labor production.

No matter how well Gu Hang's Alliance had developed over the years, it definitely couldn't support Korolya. There were simply too many people on this planet, and in the end, they would have to rely on themselves for subsistence.

This so-called labor production and trade and commerce mainly depended on what these districts were originally doing. But to be honest, in areas like Bottom Nest District and Lower Nest District, there were few decent industries to begin with.

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But it doesn't matter, if it exists, it will be nationalized and continue operating. Workers' treatment and enterprise benefits are guaranteed, with the generated profits distributed to the workers according to the alliance's rank policies, and the remaining portion remitted.

As for the places that lack such facilities, that's where Osenia's leadership comes into play, namely, industrial transfer.

In recent months, fleets of starships from Rage Owl Star have arrived. Many sectors identified in preliminary research as suitable for development on Korolya, and which were experiencing production capacity overflow on Rage Owl Star, have thus had large segments of their industrial lines dismantled and relocated here.

As a result, Rage Owl Star has been bustling with activity lately. Many production lines, previously sealed in Wu Jiarong's research institutes and pulled out from mother-machine Black Boxes, but unable to be launched due to raw material issues, workforce shortages, or structural industrial problems, were shipped en masse on the Gu Commercial Firm's transport ships to Korolya.

The most typical among these were the low-end military industries: rifles, bullets, towed field guns, artillery shells, bullet-resistant inserts… These technically less sophisticated industries were perfect for the managed blocks within Mingyan City.

Another particularly important industry was the synthetic starch production line, along with the corresponding organic waste recycling facilities.

What exactly is organic fertilizer? Let's not delve into that, as it's somewhat unpleasant.

Despite industrial farming reforms in Green Valley Region on Rage Owl Star and the great harvests on Heijian Star in recent years leading to ample food reserves, one must economize the transported foodstuffs as relying solely on external supplies is unrealistic; on the other hand, the alliance can't simply inject all of the food into Korolya either, as strategic reserves are necessary.

Under the conditions present in Mingyan City's Bottom Nest District, to feed so many people, reliance on mass-produced synthetic starch is inescapable.

But coming back to the topic, regardless of the raw materials used, the synthetic starch produced in the end is indistinguishable.

If there really are several blocks without any industrial development, the alliance would also send over some industries that could be considered mid-end.

Iron Bulls, Hunter vehicles; engineering machinery manufacturing; Strider Armored Vehicle production lines; collection, processing, and smelting of metal scrap…

These industries required a considerable number of workers, often attracting enough to establish a large heavy industry factory capable of employing workers from several blocks.

Such actions are not solely to support the construction of Mingyan City. For heavy industry, relocating to a location with denser population and lower costs also has its advantages, enabling significant cost reduction and a faster pace of production expansion.

In cases where local research groups, having performed their on-site audits, found a region unsuitable for development with no support for industrial lines from the alliance, there was still another way.

Finding work across blocks is one option; relying on a large factory with one employed person per household, secured with a job rank, was just enough to prevent starvation.

Moreover, not everyone had to work in the factories. The remaining people could take up various service-oriented ancillary trades such as working in canteens, clothing, catering, transport teams, construction workers, and so on.

If all else fails, the entire block's surplus population would be relocated.

Of course, this also required screening.

Those without issues could be directly sent to Rage Owl Star or Heijian Star, where there is still a significant demand for workers.

In Gu Hang's view, although Nest Capital was specially built to accommodate high-density populations, the density had become excessively high. Korolya's environment was long incapable of supporting it. The large-scale migration of Korolya's population to other planets of the alliance would be a long-term policy for the future.

However, not just anyone can migrate to the twin stars.

For instance, some blocks suffer from severe cult activities. After a thorough cleanup, the remaining populace, genuinely less tarnished by the cult but who have indeed followed it in the past, would be concentrated and sent to immigration bases—Mingyan City already has such a massive facility designed for temporary accommodation of human taxes for the Imperial Tax.

These people would then be used to pay the tax on the next visit of the Imperial Tax Fleet—although Korolya doesn't currently pay taxes, it can choose to do so, after which it can exchange the taxes paid for Tax Currency.

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These are the fundamental solutions Gu Hang has put forward to end the security war: economic development.

With full stomachs and a future to look forward to, will the people, well-fed and sturdy, take up arms against the Star Realm Army or the Salvation Army's guns and cannons with their own flesh and blood?

Chapter 370, Infighting

Malca caressed the brand on the back of his left hand, as if he could still recall the searing pain from when the hot iron was pressed against his skin years ago.

He was a member of the Branding Hand Gang, and as the name implies, this gang's main characteristic was branding its members' hands with a scorching iron to signify their affiliation.

The gang wasn't large, with influence spanning only two or three blocks; but it wasn't small either, as more than three hundred thousand people within their territory depended on them.

Only, their recent days hadn't been easy.

Or rather, since military governance began, no one's days had been easy.

At the start of military control, the Branding Hand Gang initially thought it wouldn't be much different from the strict management incidents that occasionally happened in the past. However, their expectations were quickly shattered.

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The duration of military governance had exceeded their imagination by far; moreover, the intensity of the crackdown was unbearable for them.

After a period of lying low, the Branding Hand Gang could no longer hold back.

They started to fire from the shadows, causing riots.

These tactics greatly troubled an infantry division of the Star Realm Army stationed within their turf. In about a month, the gang's attacks and riots resulted in hundreds of casualties among the Star Realm Army; and although their own losses were much greater, to them it was still worth it, it still felt like victory.

Then, they got intoxicated by this 'victory' and attempted to ambush a patrolling infantry squad.

This operation seemed foolproof in their eyes.

Less than thirty Star Realm Army warriors, on street patrol. They had already scoped out the squad as the best target: once the fight started, it would take at least fifteen minutes for backup from other areas to arrive.

So, next to the patrol vehicles, roadside bombs exploded in succession, stopping the military vehicles, and then from all directions of the street, from hiding places in houses, three to four hundred shooters from the Branding Hand Gang surged out, completely surrounding the Star Realm Army squad. Bullets flew in from every direction, and the situation quickly deteriorated.

Originally, they intended to finish the fight within ten minutes, allowing a bit of time to retreat. But in reality, the battle was practically over by the sixth minute.

Only, the outcome was the complete opposite.

They inflicted casualties on seven Star Realm Army soldiers, while the gang's shooters left behind more than a hundred and seventy bodies. The heavy casualties caused the shooters to break within minutes, leading to an uncontrolled, complete rout.

No backup was needed; after being ambushed and hit by roadside bombs, less than thirty Star Realm Army warriors with light weapons versus three to four hundred gunmen resulted in seven casualties on their side and a hundred and seventy dead on the enemy's.

Such a military outcome left the entire Branding Hand Gang in utter shock.

Am I fighting Superman?

How could the disparity be so great!

Before they could even catch their breath from the shock, they were hit with a severe sweep, and even their lair was wiped out.

From then on, they thoroughly extinguished any thoughts of confronting the military forces, hiding like rats, taking their shots in the dark, and retreating immediately if they missed, unwavering in their decision not to engage any squad of the Star Realm Army that consisted of more than five soldiers.

Though they claimed such a thing, being pushed to the edge, their options had become ridiculously limited, and the suppression left them extremely frustrated.

Things got even worse after a so-called ‘Alliance’ new government work group moved into the district.

A massive amount of food was distributed, and the new government’s policies were disseminated. Abandoned factories were reopened, and these people also organized transportation and construction teams; as long as you joined, you got a job, and the whole family had a fixed job grade. Those with formal jobs could reach the so-called E4 rank, secure in their sustenance and able to support a family; family members could reach E2 rank, ensured at least a subsidy. Additionally, once your rank was set, you could compete for work and climb the ranks.

Even those without jobs could declare what they wanted to do; groups of girls, women, children willing to take orders on the streets, fixing clothes, that was considered having a job, allowing them to move up a rank; organizing everyone to do this was also regarded as having a job.

And if all else failed, enlisting as a soldier was also an option. The Alliance’s recruitment center was always seeking soldiers, offering better conditions than before.

In short, everyone now had food to eat.

Initially, due to a long-standing distrust of the government, the public was particularly skeptical about the policy promotion.

But once tangible food was in hand and one could choose weekly wage payments, the doubts couldn't be said to have been entirely eliminated, but they had certainly become much lighter.

While they weren't living in luxury, at least they could fill their stomachs, and they could avoid the cold.

Now, the Branding Hand Gang couldn't even think about coaxing the public into risky endeavors; instead, many peripheral members within their own ranks chose to leave the gang.

Even, traitors had extended into the core members who had been branded.

If the previous military governance was merely tightening their necks, causing them pain and discomfort, unable to act, then now, it was like being stabbed directly in the heart.

They had truly reached a point of desperation, but what could they do if they couldn't fight back?

Malca, as a core member of the gang, was sent out by the boss.

Chapter 370, Internal Strife_2

After untold hardships, having passed through numerous military control zones, he went to see a highly influential person. This person had always supported the development of their gang and reaped benefits from their activities, who could be regarded as the power behind them.

However, the mansion he had visited only once before now presented a scene of decay, with even the smell of blood lingering.

It was said that the Integrity Commission of the new government had conducted a sweep there.

Then Malca could only slink back, defeated.

On the road there and back, Malca saw many things that happened within the military control zones. He had once visited most of these places, but now, seeing them again, they were completely different from his memories.

These changes, reflected in his heart, quietly shifted his own thoughts.

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Back with the gang, he was summoned by the boss for questioning.

“What did Mr. Olon say?” the boss asked impatiently.

“Mr. Olon is finished,” Malca said.

He clearly recounted to the boss everything he had seen and heard.

After listening, the boss’s face showed panic and resentment.

“Damn it! He was useless! Bragging all day about how awesome he was, how influential, what a formidable figure he was, but in the end, when the Alliance came, wasn’t he slaughtered like a dead dog?”

After a tirade and venting his emotions, the boss turned to another person and asked, “What about the contacts you were supposed to make with our ‘good neighbors’? How did that go?”

Source: Webnovel.com, updated on ɴ0vɢ0.co

The so-called good neighbors referred to several forces around the neighborhood where they operated. There were rebel groups and other gangs. Their relationships with each other had been a mix of good and bad in the past, but the boss believed that in these times of life and death, they should unite to weather the crisis.

Thus, he had sent people to make contact with these ‘good neighbors’ to align and leverage their connections.

However, he received bad news once again.

“No one is willing to partner with us… Pingkang Army said they are negotiating with the government, Haifeng Gang seems to have disappeared completely, as if they’ve been wiped out, and the Ping’an Army has fully capitulated, accepting the Alliance Government’s terms – I barely made it back alive from there…”

“Fuck!”

The boss stood up and paced back and forth anxiously.

He muttered a lot to himself.

“We can’t just let this go…”

“I need to think if there’s any other way…”

“We can’t let those bastards just go work for the government…”

“Attack, intimidate!”

“Any transport convoy that passes, blow it up!”

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From the boss’s mouth spewed a stream of vile plans.

Malca sighed.

He spoke up: “Boss, let’s surrender.”

“What?” The boss’s gaze suddenly swung toward Malca, staring at him intently.

He had always ruled his gang with brutality, never allowing a voice other than his own within the gang.

Usually, under such a gaze, Malca wouldn’t dare to speak.

But today, he dared to say, “Let’s surrender, there’s no chance of winning. On the way here, I saw too many military control zones, not just here in Mingyan City; everywhere is undergoing reform. I think, the new government is really determined to completely transform Nest Capital. Honestly, I don’t think that’s a bad thing, if everyone could live a peaceful life…”

“Do you want to die!”

The boss pulled out his signature weapon.

It was a specially modified hand cannon, with a split barrel that could fire three large caliber shotgun shells at once. Malca had seen its power firsthand; one shot could shatter a person’s entire upper body.

But Malca’s face showed little fear.

He just sighed.

‘Bang’

The gunshot rang out.

Malca wasn't hurt, but a hole had been blasted into the back of the head of the Branding Hand Gang boss.

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Behind him was someone holding a gun, with wisps of blue smoke still rising from the barrel.

The boss was killed in a brutal manner, which gave the other brothers in the room a jolt. Some were lost, some at a loss, and some instinctively pulled out their guns.

Malca shouted, "Put your guns down!"

"You killed the boss!" someone yelled.

"He was leading us all to a dead end!" Malca's eyes glared over, "Do you want to be buried with him?"

The person was at a loss for words.

Who would want to die?

"You've all seen what the streets are like. Ask yourselves, why would anyone follow us if they could live peacefully? Other gangs, the Rebel Army, it's either death or surrender. The dead are forgotten, the living join the civilians in better days."

"They say being in a gang is carefree, but how many of us have truly lived carefree? What drove us to join gangs in the first place? Was it not because life was unbearable? Now that we can live, don't you want to?"

"He, as the boss, could enjoy the best food and drink and was insatiably greedy. He refused to accept the government's terms. What about us? Why should we follow him to our deaths?"

“If he was only greedy, if he was just not thinking straight, that would be one thing, but did you not hear what he just said? Aren’t the people in the streets our own families and friends?”

“Stop harboring pipe dreams. The era of gangs is over. Continuing like this, there is no way out.”

“I plan to go to the government’s work team now, to talk about the future of the Branding Hand Gang. At best, we use the connections and favors we’ve built over the years in the streets to help people, and maybe even end up as officials; if not, we find other work. All of us are able-bodied; life won’t be too hard.”

“What if they insist on wiping us out?”

“Then we are done for.” Malca said emotionlessly, “Do you still not see the situation? If they want us dead, we are as good as dead already. It’s just a matter of a few days sooner or later!”

The questioner fell silent.

“Do you have anything else to say? If not, I’m off.”

In the silence, someone threw out one more line, “Killed the boss just to take his place, huh? You’re talking like you’re the boss already, but no one’s acknowledged you yet.”

Malca retorted, “In a few days, the gang will be gone. Whoever wants to be the boss can have it.”

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The events within the Branding Hand Gang were just a microcosm.

In General Hans’ eyes, all the changes were even clearer.

Lately, he hadn't made any more complaint calls to Gu Hang.

What was there left to complain about?

Now that the mighty Governor had brought in a bunch of reliable administrative personnel from who knows where, and they began working at the grassroots level by districts, the intensity of the peacekeeping battles that his troops faced had plummeted.

The riots and attacks hadn't completely stopped, but at least they were mostly reduced.

In some well-managed areas, the stationed troops were practically on vacation.

And he, at last, could free up forces from some of the higher-security areas to be redeployed to lower-security ones.

Some 'abandoned' districts still required a stronger military response. Eradicating Cults or obstinate gangs, forcibly breaking up crowds with military force, and transporting everyone to temporary resettlement areas.

Although the present Mingyan City was still far from being a pleasant place, Hans, as an outsider, could see clearly that everything here was rapidly improving.

Could it be, after centuries of chaos, Korolya might genuinely undergo a revolutionary change under the hands of that young Governor?

Emotionally, he was reluctant to believe it. Those past impressions were too deeply ingrained in his mind.

But rationally, he had to admit that everything could change.

While he was contemplating this, he suddenly received another call from Gu Hang.

“General Hans, I am very pleased with your troops’ work in Mingyan City. You have two more months to deal with the situation inside Mingyan City. After two months, you will be moved to a new Nest Capital.”

General Hans immediately put his contemplations aside.

Damn it, they really don’t treat people like humans, do they?

Hadn’t even rested a bit, and now off to a new place?