Chapter 41 - Chapter 41: Chapter 41, Encircle the Point to Reinforce?

Chapter 41: Chapter 41, Encircle the Point to Reinforce?

The appearance of the Pus Spewer posed a rather tricky problem for Yan Fangxu.

The pus that spewed from these monsters would land on the defensive position and create a pool of pus, corroding the ground with a hissing noise.

No one could stand on that ground anymore.

If one was unlucky enough to get sprayed, the spattered pus that hit individual armor was okay, since it wouldn't eat through; however, if it landed on an arm or leg, it would quickly penetrate the clothing and cause extensive corrosive burns, rapidly incapacitating the soldier.

The unluckiest were those who got a full-body spray and died screaming.

What kind of biochemical artillery was this?

If they let these monsters spray at will, chances were they might be wiped out altogether.

Fortunately, there were not many Pus Spewers to begin with, and secondly, their spraying distance was very short at only fifty meters, not nearly as far-reaching as real artillery.

Within a fifty-meter range, even if there were lots of other pus monsters covering them, they were still easily hit.

After witnessing the threat brought by the Pus Spewers, the soldiers would prioritize their fire on these monsters.

The 3rd Battalion, though a newly formed unit, was the first to be equipped with G9 Gun Family weapons produced by the camp. The firearms, powerful and stable, were the soldiers' best companions. Especially the G9 machine gun version, with greater power, faster rate of fire, larger magazine capacity, and more sustained firepower. Against these monsters, they were like lawnmowers.

Bullets were poured out like water, and the monsters standing in front of the Pus Spewers were mowed down in swathes, their bodies even shot to pieces. Then the bullets would shred the Pus Spewers as well.

At a certain cost, they repelled the monster attack once more.

The surroundings of the forest became eerily quiet.

After two rounds of assaults, the monsters had left behind at least a thousand corpses.

Before this, Yan Fangxu had never discovered such a large-scale congregation of monsters in this dense forest.

The event was unusual in itself, but what happened next gave him a strong sense of a sinister plot.

It seemed that the monsters also realized that maintaining their previous fierce offensive was pointless and merely led to needless casualties. They stopped their large-scale attacks, but didn't leave altogether.

The soldiers, including Yan Fangxu, could see shadows moving about deep within the forest from their current position. The monsters hadn't departed; instead, they were hiding behind the trees in the forest, and even from a distance, one could feel their malicious intent.

The soldiers, Yan Fangxu among them, tried firing into the depths of the dense forest.

The effect was poor.

The area they occupied was originally a monster's hatching nest; to clear the nest, they cut down and burned many trees that were parasitized by the hatching eggs, resulting in a small clearing. When the monsters attacked, they had to approach within a hundred meters of the soldiers' defensive positions, a distance with no cover.

However, beyond a hundred meters out in the forest, the power of the bullets diminished significantly.

These soldiers, indeed, had become qualified warriors after brief training. But even qualified warriors aren't always sharpshooters. At a hundred-meter distance, with the enemy hidden in the dimly lit forest and largely obscured by trees, hitting them was indeed very tricky.

Yan Fangxu, with his superb military skills and the powerful performance of his electromagnetic rifle, could ensure a hit with every shot, immediately taking out any target he saw. But after firing two shots and killing two suspected Pus Spewers, he stopped shooting.

He didn’t just stop firing himself, he also ordered his men to cease fire.

He had now realized a problem: the enemy numbers were too large, and they might run out of bullets without being able to kill all of the monsters.

Ammunition was limited.

Originally thinking that they were just entering the forest to carry out the task of destroying the hatching nest, not going to war, they hadn’t brought too much ammo reserve.

Plus, even if they were actually going to war, the ammunition reserves would still need to be delivered by the logistics team. In field combat, how much could they carry on them?

Despite being cautious, when Yan Fangxu led his team out on a mission, he had commandeered a buffalo flatbed wagon, pulling a cart full of food and ammunition supplies.

But even that is not unlimited.

Holding out would only result in exhaustion of ammunition and supplies.

He led an attempt to break through, but it ended in failure.

Once the troops entered the dense forest, their firepower advantage was significantly reduced, and the threats they faced increased.

Not only were the “bioweapon soldiers” harder to eliminate and more likely to cause casualties among the warriors, but even the ordinary Pus Spewers became more threatening. After all, there was no telling which tree would suddenly produce such a monster.

And a bigger problem was that no one knew how many monsters were hiding in the dense woods around them. If they insisted on breaking through, the casualties would be significant.

After an initial attempt and realizing the difficulty, Yan Fangxu ordered the troops to retreat before actual casualties occurred. They continued to hold their ground and sought reinforcements from headquarters.

Soon, he received a reassuring reply.

“Hold your position, hang in there, the governor will lead the 2nd Infantry Battalion and the Land Assault Team to rescue you.”

Receiving such a response indeed brought relief.

The governor would not abandon them.

But as more time passed, Yan Fangxu's sense of unease gradually magnified.

He sensed intelligence in the behavior of these monsters.

The first two attacks were quite mindless, akin to the style of these monsters. They would blindly charge upon encountering other species, displaying a complete disregard for death.

But now, utilizing the terrain of the dense forest to encircle them without attacking was by no means a decision a mindless creature would make.

Either intelligence had emerged among these monsters, or someone was manipulating their actions.

Yan Fangxu was more inclined to believe the latter.

So why would these monsters choose to surround without attacking?

To starve them out?

Clearly implausible.

Then their goal...

Did they anticipate reinforcements?

Was this an ambush—a conspiracy to attack the rescue forces?

Were they after the governor?

A series of thoughts flooded his mind, throwing Yan Fangxu's thoughts into chaos.

The path of the rescue would mostly pass through dense forest terrain. If the governor's forces were attacked by a large group of monsters while marching, the outcome would be unthinkable!

He immediately activated the communication device again.

This time, he successfully contacted Gu Hang and reported his suspicions to the governor.

But after hearing his report, Gu Hang simply said,

"Don't worry, I have a plan. Take your time."

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Chapter 42: Chapter 42, Fishing, Just Bold Fishing

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Gu Hang indeed had his own plans.

Having suspected that the situation was unusual and that the route to rescue Yan Fangxu would likely not be a calm one, he certainly wasn’t about to walk into the enemy’s trap unprepared.

At present, he was fairly certain that the people targeting him were from the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect. This cult had been pressured by his actions in Revival City and now, unable to solve the problem, they had begun to try and deal with the person presenting the problem.

That is, himself, the Governor.

They also possessed the initial ability to manipulate mutant monsters, which was somewhat unexpected.

However, he judged that the cult members’ ability to mobilize forces should not be too strong. If they had that capability and wanted his life, then there would be no need for the current complications; they would have simply amassed their forces and launched a direct assault on his camp.

The fact that they didn’t do so was obviously because they couldn’t. They had to choose a dense forest environment for the battlefield in order to leverage the advantages of the monsters they could control, thus having a better chance at victory.

With this understanding, Gu Hang was not about to rashly lead the 2nd Infantry Battalion into the woods.

Four armored vehicles led the way, with a large group of foot soldiers following behind, the whole team advancing on the edge of the woodland.

Gu Hang led his troops, searching for a route that was closer to the besieged Yan Fangxu and had sparser trees.

Even if they had to walk a bit slower, it didn’t matter.

After all, Yan Fangxu had said that there wasn't any immediate danger where he was.

So Gu Hang was content to take it slow.

Actually, rescuing Yan Fangxu wasn't really Gu Hang's main objective for coming out this time.

His actions were not urgent. Despite appearing to be on a rescue mission, he was actually just trying to lure the enemy out.

At the edge of the woods, before even entering, his troops suffered a small-scale attack.

A bunch of pustule monsters rushed out, but were cleanly wiped out by a round of firepower from the soldiers.

That seemed more like a probe, or a display of insufficient control over a large number of monsters.

Unfortunately, it did not lure out the enemy's main force.

So after some thought, Gu Hang waved his arm grandly and led the troops into the dense forest.

To continue the lure.

After officially entering the woodland, Gu Hang's team moved even slower. They always maintained a tight formation, relying on the four Walkers and refusing to let their guard down. If the trees became too dense, they preferred to temporarily stop, burn, or cut down the trees to ensure clear visibility.

When fishing, using oneself as bait, one mustn't actually get bitten.

The Governor's army with its unruffled, unhurried demeanor was truly exasperating.

Perbov was getting a bit anxious.

His 2nd Battalion had not outdone Yan Fangxu recently and had missed out on the opportunity to clear the woodland of mutant monsters, which was somewhat frustrating. Stuck in the camp, they could only vent their energy by drilling the soldiers.

Upon suddenly receiving orders from the Governor to gather his troops, he and his subordinates instantly perked up. Especially when they heard that their mission was to rescue the 3rd Battalion led by Yan Fangxu, who was surrounded by a large number of mutant monsters in the woods, he was even more eager to jump into action.

An old-timer, huh? A bona fide Imperial Navy officer, huh? Still, isn't it me, this country bumpkin, who has to come save you?

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He truly wished he could lead his team through the entire woodland right away, confront Yan Fangxu and, in front of that guy's face, loudly mock him.

However, he was still able to contain his yearning for battle.

Upon departure, the Governor had roughly outlined the objectives of the operation. Rescue was secondary; the primary goal was to anticipate and draw out any ambushers they might encounter en route.

When he heard the news, he was utterly enraged.

Someone dared to target the Governor?

That truly made them irreconcilable enemies!

In Perbov's heart, plotting against the Governor was even more detestable than plotting against himself.

Some time ago he had returned to the Abandoned Cave Society. Even though he hadn't been gone long, there had already been earth-shattering changes. Eating well and having warm clothes were the basics; everyone had moved into houses on the surface and no longer needed to crowd in dank, sunless burrows.

The residential houses were only temporary prefab structures for the time being, but plans were already in motion to build new brick and cement factories. A plot of land had also been allocated for the construction of a row of detached small buildings. Perbov had seen the architectural designs; they were beautiful. Back when he was working in the caves, he could only dream of living in such a home.

Eventually, housing would be allocated based on work points. Given the work points Perbov earned as a soldier and those earned by his wife in the factory, they would definitely be among the first to move in once the planned houses were built.

Life was getting better and better, and Perbov deeply understood that at this moment, he was not just fighting for the Governor, but also for the defense of his hard-earned, ever-improving life.

All of this was brought about by the Governor. Whoever dared threaten the Governor, whoever dared to disrupt their pursuit of a better life, would be his sworn enemy!

It was for this reason that he could fully restrain his desire to fight. He executed the Governor's cautious orders without compromise, keeping all his rage inside, waiting for the moment to release it.

This rage, when it burst forth, would surely burn fiercely.

And this moment to unleash didn't make Perbov wait too long.

The enemy was here.

They could hear the distinctive roar of pus monsters growing clearer from all around the dense forest.

These roars were unique. These brainless, mouthless creatures would emit an intimidating sound to prey, a shrill and unpleasant noise produced by high-frequency vibrations of swellings all over their bodies.

Upon hearing the noise, there was no need for the Governor to say anything; Perbov immediately relayed orders to each platoon. They stopped their trailblazing work on the spot and swiftly shifted to defensive positions.

A short while later, the grotesque figures of those monsters could be faintly seen through the woodland.

Yet the soldiers, upholding strict combat discipline, did not open fire immediately. Only the designated sharpshooters within each platoon, armed with precision rifles and superior shooting skills, attempted long-range kills.

For the moment, gunfire was sparse, but with almost every shot, a creature in the forest fell.

After another short while, the monsters came even closer to the edge of the woodland, even closer to the small clearing that the soldiers had made.

It was at this time that the officers at all levels gave the order to fire.

In an instant, bullets, artillery fire, and the machine guns of the combat vehicles blanketed the entire surrounding area.

Under the storm of metal, many of the creatures were felled before they could break out of the dense woods; those that did were met with a closer embrace of death, gunned down by bullets.

The prepared human soldiers held their ground, impregnable as a fortress!

Chapter 43 - Chapter 43: Chapter 43, come out quickly

Chapter 43: Chapter 43, come out quickly

The battle intensified in an instant.

Mortars began to flex their muscles, with a few shells being blocked by trees, but the shrapnel from the explosions still posed a threat. More unobstructed shells plunged into the midst of the monsters charging through the woods at a distance of about a hundred meters, clearing out an entire swath of enemies with a single hit.

Overall, due to the forest environment, the range and power of the mortars were greatly reduced. But after all, these were mortars, and their lethality couldn't be ignored.

The machine guns were even more fearsome killers. If the enemy hid in the dense forest, it would be different; they would have cover, poor visibility, and it wouldn't be easy to hit them from afar; but as soon as those monsters charged out, or even just to the edge of the forest where the trees' obstruction lessened, the machine guns' power would rapidly increase. And once they really broke out of the forest's cover, the bullets fired from the machine guns would whip through like a steel lash, leaving no survivors in their wake.

Beyond that, regular rifles were only needed to spot check and fill the gaps.

A multi-layered and three-dimensional firepower network ensured that those monsters couldn't pose a real threat to the troops led by Gu Hang.

Bioweapon gunners, swift-action zombie dogs, none of them were effective.

What's there to fear from the Pus Spewers' range of fifty meters? The sharpshooters in the platoon focused on such high-value targets.

Even leaving aside these shooters from the T5-level forces, the soldiers from the Land Assault Team were truly elite. The electromagnetic rifles in their hands performed better and packed a bigger punch.

With their attention, it was extremely difficult for the Pus Spewers to get within fifty meters and spew their corrosive pus into the formation of human soldiers.

As for the zombie dogs, it's even less worth mentioning.

Sure, their targets were relatively small, fast, and agile. However, under the dense firepower network, these little creatures were often taken out incidentally. Often a round of undirected heavy machine gun fire would riddle a few bullets into a zombie dog, exploding the pus-filled canine-like creature.

If they actually broke through to close range, it really wasn't a big deal.

Vicious as the little things were, their estimated weight of about thirty kilograms limited the threat they could pose. Soldiers' firearms were all equipped with alloy bayonets without exception. Thrust at a lunging dog and it would be pierced cleanly. Thrown to the ground, stepped on its head, pull out the bayonet, then fire a couple of shots, and it would go completely quiet.

And in the midst of battle, the most terrifying presence was the four Strider Vs.

This kind of combat vehicle, which could also play a role in interstellar warfare, was simply beyond what these monsters could handle.

A very few Pus Spewers managed to launch their biocannon projectiles, with two hitting the Strider Vs, yet causing no effect whatsoever.

The corrosive effect of this pus seemed terrifying to organic matter. Soldiers' uniforms provided poor resistance to the pus; and on contact with flesh, it was excruciating.

But the armored vests alone worn by the soldiers could block the corrosion.

Not to mention the Strider V—its outer armor was solidly made of alloy and plastic steel, and additionally covered with a layer of cermet, a more advanced material than alloy and plastic steel.

Conversely, the twin-barreled forty-millimeter autocannons mounted on the Strider's weapons platform were lethal upon contact. The terrifying rate of fire and overwhelming power meant that hiding in the forest was futile. A few more shots, and it would destroy not just the trees but also the monsters hiding behind them.

In some ways, it truly resembled a long-range lumberjack machine.

Facing such intense firepower, the attacking monster swarm suffered far more damage than when it attacked Yan Fangxu's team from a distance.

In comparison, Gu Hang's team was at a somewhat greater terrain disadvantage than Yan Fangxu's side. After all, the clearing they were in had just been carved out as a result of their march. They were the ones being attacked, not the initiators of the battle, and did not have the choice of the battleground.

However, aside from that one point, Gu Hang's team held advantages over Yan Fangxu's in every aspect.

Their firepower was more abundant, their soldiers more exceptional—although both were T5-level teams, Gu Hang was accompanied by more than twenty warriors of the Land Assault Team. On this battlefield, they could all serve as sharpshooters, with utterly reliable shooting accuracy within dozens of meters.

This also meant that the alien monsters died even faster.

But they did not retreat; they kept surging out of the woodlands as if they were infinite.

These mindless creatures of course didn't know fear. Their lives were worthless, merely cannon fodder.

However, even cannon fodder had value.

If the puppet masters behind these monsters were hoping to exchange their deaths for the ammunition in Gu Hang's hands, they were sorely mistaken.

Having known beforehand what kind of enemy he would face, he had prepared accordingly before setting off.

The G9 production line hadn't had time to expand yet, just meeting the equipment needs of the 3rd Infantry Battalion with the stocked Black Box Manufacturing Machine, and ammunition production wasn't on the schedule yet. But at least the ammunition stocked from the starship was still considered sufficient.

And now, Gu Hang had brought out a large part of the reserve in one breath. Multiple bullish flatcars carrying ammunition reserves were right in the center of the position.

With such ample quantities, not to mention fighting one battle, even if the intensity increased further, it would be enough to sustain them through several more.

Gu Hang observed the entire battlefield with a cold gaze.

He was currently in the middle of the position, with a Strider V serving as his command vehicle. The range of his sight was very narrow, but this did not affect his control over the entire situation. Psychic Vision was activated, and he had a clear understanding of the overall situation on the battlefield.

Initially, he was prepared to step in if particularly threatening monsters appeared, such as a group of Pus Spewers entering within firing range and lobbing biocanisters into their formation—he would act first to solve the problem. But now, it seemed there was no need for him to intervene. The soldiers were doing a stellar job, making his contingency plans unnecessary.

Gu Hang was quite satisfied with this.

Since there were no significant issues with the overall battlefield, Gu Hang could now focus his efforts on the possibility of cultists making an appearance.

He didn't believe that the cultists' tactics were limited to merely driving these mindless monsters; such acts had no chance of posing a threat to him.

They surely had other means at their disposal.

"The mindless monsters have drawn the vast majority of my soldiers' firepower. Now it's your turn—come out quickly."

Chapter 44 - Chapter 44: Chapter 44, Howling Wind Divine Envoy

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"The monsters have already drawn the majority of the governor's soldiers' firepower, what are we waiting for?"

In the dense forest not far away, three people dressed in gray-white robes stood on the branches, looking towards the distant battlefield.

Around them, a light breeze swirled, obscuring their view and making it hard to spot them from afar, even Gu Hang's Spiritual Vision failed to detect their presence.

These three were none other than the apostles of the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect.

The leader was exceptionally tall, his presence on the branch seemed somewhat out of place. But upon closer inspection, one would realize that he was not merely standing; he was only touching the branches with the tips of one foot. A pale white vortex of wind beneath his feet cradled his body.

It was more like floating.

His real name was known to very few. But his code name within the sect was infamous.

He was one of the twelve executive Divine Envoys, the Howling Wind Divine Envoy.

Although they were not involved in specific affairs, they had powerful combat capabilities.

Within the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, each of the twelve executive Divine Envoys had received the true blessing of the Primal Fury Owl, granting them the ability to use the formidable Storm God Skill. Their exalted status within the sect was second only to the four High Priests.

However, at this moment, the Howling Wind Divine Envoy was hesitating.

Upon hearing the query from the subordinate clergy behind him, he responded, “Now is not a good opportunity, the impact caused by that pus-filled monster is far smaller than we estimated. The guard soldiers around that governor have not been thrown into disorder at all.”

The clergy who spoke earlier spoke up again, “But... Your Excellency, Divine Envoy, are we really going to give up this opportunity?”

This question plunged the Howling Wind Divine Envoy into silence.

The man waited for a moment before speaking again, unable to restrain himself, “This mission was personally given by High Priest Cikao, it is crucial for our god’s great endeavor in Revival City.”

The Howling Wind Divine Envoy still didn’t speak.

The third person beside them spoke up, “Do not disturb the Divine Envoy’s contemplation.”

The former’s face stiffened as he added, “I apologize, I did not mean to question anything; I am just a bit anxious. The controller we obtained from the Life School is already in an overloaded state. To maintain control over this scale of numbers, we can hold on for less than ten minutes...”

“Quiet,” the third clergy from earlier interrupted once more, “No need to elaborate, we are all aware, let the Divine Envoy make the decision.”

Finally, the man closed his mouth.

A few minutes later, the tallest Howling Wind Divine Envoy standing at the forefront heaved a sigh.

“Let’s take action, today is the day we sacrifice ourselves to the storm.”

The other two felt a chill in their hearts upon hearing this.

By the Divine Envoy’s implications... sacrifice? Could it be a one-way journey?

Has it come to this extent?

But now there was no time for them to ponder further.

The Howling Wind Divine Envoy leapt from the branch first. The wind that initially suspended him above the branch turned tumultuous in an instant, taking on the shape of a Storm Giant Eagle, emitting a clear cry, carrying the Divine Envoy as it soared forward.

The other two clergy hurried to follow. They too called forth their Storm Eagles and, riding them, quickly caught up.

The three of them formed a triangular formation and swiftly flew toward the human soldiers' position not far away.

Not long after they started their move, the governor's soldiers had already spotted them.

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It was hard not to notice, three Storm Giant Eagles in total, one large and two small, each carrying a person. They were too conspicuous.

Bullets immediately covered the three of them.

However, they were of little effect.

Moving targets, especially those flying at high speeds, are not easy to hit. The training package provided by the system made all the soldiers qualified within a few days, but that didn't mean every qualified soldier was a marksman who never missed. Most people couldn't guarantee accuracy when shooting at distant and fast-moving objects.

Even with machine-gun fire, chasing after the targets, the results were very poor.

Of course, with bullets flying everywhere and the number of shots increasing, there would eventually be hits.

But with the fierce attacks of those pustule monsters on the ground, most of the firepower was needed to suppress these enemies. There were only a few who could redirect their guns to shoot at the three unidentified flying objects above.

Originally in short supply, and with questionable accuracy, the number of bullets that actually hit was even fewer.

It was only the specially trained sharpshooters and the Marines who could guarantee a certain hit rate. But soldiers with such abilities were far too few.

Moreover, even if stray bullets or those from sharpshooters did hit, they were not very useful.

Even Wohan, who had only gained Storm Sorcery because he had paid enough money, could use a wind shield to block a few seconds of concentrated fire from electromagnetic rifles. Not to mention a Divine Envoy and two official priests.

Underneath the wings of the Storm Giant Eagles, the power of the wind swirled around the three, and the few bullets that did hit had no effect at all; they were simply deflected.

Howling Wind Divine Envoy led the two priests, riding the Storm Giant Eagles, to the airspace above the governor's troop position.

They began to circle.

Then, the winds picked up.

A white storm enveloped the area below.

Wind, by all accounts, is colorless, just the movement of air. But the gusts called forth by their hands carried a white mist.

The mist that came with the wind was not cold nor damp, but rather had a cutting sensation.

Putting aside the slight pain of the wind against the skin, many soldiers were even blown about haphazardly.

Afterward, as the mist thickened with the wind within minutes, it started to affect visibility.

Direct casualties were limited for the moment. Many people had minor cuts from the wind imbued with supernatural energy, but these cuts were certainly far from fatal.

If these three Cult Divine Envoys and Divine Envoy had concentrated the storm in a much smaller area, those minor cuts could actually be lethal, like death by a thousand cuts.

But not now.

Compared to just killing a small portion of the main troops, the Storm Sorcery they released was more about disrupting the human soldiers' ability to continue fighting below, allowing the pustule monsters on the outskirts to breach their defense line.

That was more efficient.

The Storm Sorcery they circled and cast above the position indeed affected the soldiers' firepower output.

Blown about, struggling to even stand steady, feeling sharp pain when the wind struck exposed skin such as the face... these factors prevented the soldiers from shooting accurately.

And the white fog that came with the wind, continually swirling, impacted visibility as well.

As the soldiers' firepower weakened, a large number of monsters closed in!

Chapter 45 - Chapter 45: Chapter 45, The Governor Will Make a Move

Chapter 45: Chapter 45, The Governor Will Make a Move

Perbov felt a chill in his heart.

He understood all too well what would happen if these monsters actually broke through the fire blockade and reached their faces.

The Pus Spewers, previously thought to be very dangerous among the enemy, were actually nothing at all. The most terrifying were those ordinary Pus monsters.

It was mainly their numbers; there were simply too many of them.

Once engaged in close combat, the soldiers, even though they were equipped with bayonets, naturally couldn't fire their weapons at close quarters. And when more and more, almost endless, monsters rushed in, how could his men possibly outfight the enemy with just their bayonets?

Even if a soldier could kill three or five Pus monsters in close combat, it would be useless. The enemy would use their overwhelming numbers to completely drown them.

In fact, signs of this were already showing.

Twice as many zombie dogs as before had already taken the lead and rushed into the soldiers' formation after the fire support weakened.

This was the first step in shaking the entire defensive line.

The zombie dogs that rushed in had to be dealt with up close by the soldiers, and if they took even a little more time to handle these zombie dogs, it would further weaken the firepower, and more zombie dogs might rush in subsequently. The situation would quickly enter into a vicious cycle and collapse rapidly.

Perbov could see this trend.

But he felt somewhat powerless.

He had already shouted himself hoarse, demanding his soldiers hold on and maintain fire.

But it was difficult.

His warriors were not cowards, but pain, strong winds, and white fog were objective difficulties that could not simply be overcome.

Especially the white fog, which severely compromised the soldiers' visibility. Even those who could stay at their combat posts could only fire blindly into the surrounding fog. Only at a much closer range could they see some vague silhouettes.

The decline in shooting accuracy greatly reduced the effectiveness of the firepower grid.

What he could truly do effectively at the moment was to ensure the more critical fire support units maintained their assault.

The mortars, unified under the command of the battalion headquarters, could not stop, and Perbov also demanded the mortar operators drop their shells closer to their positions.

Previously, the shells were mostly targeted at the edge of the woods, as the first wave of killing and interception. Not placing them too close was due to fear of friendly fire, as well as because the enemy's formation would become sparse due to casualties on the charge, which would reduce the lethality of the shells.

But now he couldn't care about that.

Additionally, the machine gunners positioned at various points were also trying their best to hold their positions. Their situation was slightly better, with the temporary fortifications made of wood and sandbags at the fire points providing some protection from the wind. The machine gunners endured the pain, lying on the ground with their fingers wrapped around the trigger, not caring if the barrel would overheat and fail, wildly pouring bullets into the mist.

At the same time, the fire from the four Striders never ceased.

It was because the mortars, machine guns, and autocannons, these three major fire points, had not been silenced, that the entire defensive line still had a certain level of fire support.

If this were not the case, the defensive line would have already collapsed.

However, Perbov knew that with just his command, this was all he could do.

The fragile balance could only slow down the process of the defensive line collapsing and could not return to the previous level of keeping all the monsters completely outside the range of fire.

In frustration, he looked up through the fog and saw the vague figures of three Storm Eagles—one large and two smaller ones—flitting through the sky.

He knew that there lay the root of the problem.

But for those three creatures in the sky... Perbov truly had no solution.

He had already ordered all the sharpshooters in the company to shoot at the sky, but to little effect; he himself had also drawn his sidearm, firing shots up into the sky, but that seemed more like a venting of frustration, utterly useless.

He had tried his hardest, but what followed seemed to signify that his efforts were about to be destroyed.

The current stability of the defensive position was due to the mortar positions and the machine gun fire points still being active, a factor clearly seen by the Storm Apostles flying above.

They didn’t trouble the Strider V; their Storm Sorcery lacked the means to penetrate the armor and injure the drivers inside.

And to damage the armored vehicles themselves...

Forget it.

By comparison, the machine gunners and mortar men were easier to deal with.

The sky unleashed wind bullets.

A wheel-sized wind bullet, tearing through the white fog from mid-air, descended rapidly and exploded upon a machine gun position with a thunderous blast.

It was as if the sudden explosive pressure of the bullet sent people flying; the high-pressure dispersed wind blades cut bodies to ribbons, truly like shrapnel.

The machine gunner and the two soldiers beside him, when they hit the ground, were already lifeless.

The removal of a machine gun fire point had a significant impact. The area it covered was immediately breached by several zombie dogs, followed by Pus Spewers.

The pressure suddenly increased.

Seeing two more wind bullets descending from the sky, Perbov was panic-stricken.

Instinctively, he moved towards the landing point of the wind bullets, trying to block them with his body.

But just then, a rather familiar voice rang in his mind: “Don’t worry, lead your team with your heart.”

“Governor?!”

Perbov recognized the voice, but when he looked around, he saw nothing.

It was only then that he came to the belated realization that the voice had sounded directly in his mind.

A light bulb went off in his head, and he recalled that battle beside the valley, those people with peculiar deaths.

The Governor possessed some mystical power known as Spiritual Energy, not powerless at all.

If it was the Governor, there would be no problem at all!

Perbov had such deep trust in the Governor in his heart.

And indeed, Gu Hang did not let him down.

The two wind bullets that he was desperate to block with his body dissipated into nothingness before they even touched the ground.

Immediately after, the three Storm Giant Eagles flying in the sky also vanished.

Three figures fell from the sky.

In an instant, the situation had greatly changed.

All of this was, of course, due to the intervention of Gu Hang.

At this moment, he had already disembarked from the Strider V.

The transmission of Spiritual Energy through the armor of the Strider V to cast spells outside would attenuate to a certain extent. To ensure success, he left the Strider V and went outside.

‘Spiritual Energy Cutting’ is indeed a handy spell.

Gu Hang did not use this spell directly on those three Cultists. The soul strength of those three was quite high, distinctly visible in his spiritual vision. Even if he had exerted his full strength, it was not certain that he could sever their heads or kill their souls.

The target Gu Hang chose to strike was the Spiritual Energy link they used to control the Storm Eagles.

Destroying the flight sorcery and causing the three to fall, then annihilating them physically, was a more convenient method.

And beside him, 11 soldiers of the Land Assault Team darted out, each targeting one of the falling figures.

These assault team members, while sprinting at high speed and firing their guns, were uncannily accurate, their metal spikes precisely targeting the free-falling figures in mid-air.

This was a standard far beyond their comrades.

The reason why these 11 special forces soldiers were able to perform at such a high level was that they had transcended the T4 level of warriors and reached the T3 tier.

Chapter 46 - Chapter 46: Chapter 46, T3 Troops

Chapter 46: Chapter 46, T3 Troops

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Before heading out on the mission, dubbed a rescue but in reality a fishing expedition, Gu Hang had emptied his savings.

Originally, the grace he received from the battle at Mantan River Valley Manor was spent on extracting technology and during the training of the 3rd Regiment. However, a few

days ago, when Yan Fangxu led a team to burn the alien breeding nests in the wilderness, Gu Hang would receive 1-2 points of grace for every nest they destroyed, depending on the scale of the breeding nest.

After seven breeding nests were burnt down, Gu Hang had gained 11 points of grace.

And he invested this grace into 11 soldiers of the Land Assault Team.

The Elite Assault Team soldiers, descending from the starship, were starkly different from regular soldiers. They wore dark brown, one-piece combat suits with masks, skillfully equipped, with no inch of skin exposed during combat. The seemingly lightweight combat suits, once fitted with ceramic steel plates, were even more useful than armored vests.

These were the elites of the Imperial Naval Marine Corps, considered special forces. The training level of these forces was already ranked at T4 by the system. To elevate their training to T3 level would cost 1 point of grace per soldier.

1 point of grace was enough to train a hundred ordinary people into a whole company of warriors, equivalent to the level of the Imperial Regular Army.

But when it came to training T3 level soldiers, it was only enough for one individual's advancement.

To further train them to T2 level would require 10 points of grace per person, which was enough for Gu Hang himself to level up on the 'Hero' panel.

Nevertheless, despite the high cost, the value was extraordinary.

At that time, he took the 11 Marine soldiers aside and conducted some secretive, special training maneuvers.

The maneuvers were made up by him, but when declared, he claimed they were blessings from The Emperor, derived from a special training method he possessed.

Ordinary people would find it hard to believe in such things, but not when it came to Governor Gu Hang.

These Marine soldiers had seen with their own eyes how those country bumpkins transformed into competent soldiers in an incredibly short period of time.

How could they not believe?

The Land Assault Team soldiers were ecstatic!

All 11 individuals, meticulous and devout, completed the motions as instructed by the governor.

Then, in an incredibly short period of time, they truly felt revolutionizing changes within their bodies.

They became stronger, even to a somewhat superhuman extent.

They could run faster, had greater strength, more resilient to impacts, and even small-caliber bullets might not penetrate their foreheads; their strength had nearly tripled, and rocks they couldn't lift before now seemed somewhat light.

Their neural responses also became quicker, with birds in flight appearing to them as slow-moving paper planes; their military skills improved massively in a short period of time, with each transitioning from a tolerable marksman into a sharpshooter; they also felt they had mastered highly efficient close-combat techniques, paired with their combat knives, they were capable of taking down five or six past selves in close combat...

Profoundly feeling the changes within themselves, they felt as if they were in a dream.

Why was this happening? It was too unscientific!

But it was indeed reality.

They could only attribute it to The Emperor's grace, the governor's magic.

And they were one of the trump cards Gu Hang had prepared for this operation.

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At this moment, these soldiers, enhanced to T3 level, were also making good on the role Gu Hang had expected of them.

11 'Eagle' Electromagnetic Rifles were firing at the falling Evil God Priest. They didn't need verbal communication, with every three soldiers taking on one target. The metal spikes followed like lock-on tracking, rarely missing their mark even though they themselves were running, and their target was still in freefall.

Meanwhile, Gu Hang was up to no good.

The opponent was strong, so Gu Hang wouldn't frivolously expend his limited spiritual energy. Just like he cut off three Evil God Priests' control over the Storm Eagle moments ago, he could do something with minimal effort at some critical junctures.

And this time, the mischief he was causing was disrupting and severing the three priests' control over the Storm Shield.

Although the Navy Marine Corps soldiers had been enhanced to T3 level, it was the soldiers who had been upgraded, not their rifles. The 'Eagle' Electromagnetic Rifles in

their hands remained unchanged. The metallic spikes hit those three individuals, all blocked by the Storm Shield.

To break through the Storm Shield with just the force of bullets was difficult; one would need to stand still and be shot for quite a while. But it still had some effect, reducing the intensity of the Storm Shield and forcing the Evil God Priests to mobilize spiritual energy to maintain the shield's intensity.

This gave Gu Hang an opportunity.

All he needed was a light touch, not even needing to put in much effort to completely dismantle the Storm Shield, just destabilizing it was enough.

A Storm Shield that suddenly weakened and even showed gaps and flaws was quite fatal to the falling Divine Envoys.

The least skilled among them suffered particularly dreadful. In mid-air, at least five or six metal spikes penetrated his body.

With the overwhelming power of the electromagnetic rifle, the human body couldn't withstand it.

That guy was destroyed mid-air and by the time he hit the ground, there was no discernible human shape left, just shattered remains.

But the other two were in better shape.

In Gu Hang's view, he could see that the strongest of the pair was barely affected. After his Storm Shield encountered problems, he quickly compensated, preventing himself from being hit. The other reacted similarly, but there was a clear gap between his level and the strongest one; he ended up getting hit twice, breaking an arm and a leg.

The two Divine Envoys who were still alive after hitting the ground each had their actions.

The strongest one, almost unharmed, suddenly sprouted a pair of white storm wings from his back. The wings resembled turbines, and as he suddenly jetted backward, he reached extreme speeds in the blink of an eye.

He ignored the Land Assault Team soldiers rushing over and instead directly targeted Gu Hang, who was in the back.

The Howling Wind Divine Envoy hadn't forgotten his mission, his most important target on this trip was to kill the planetary governor.

He had planned to use the storm, use the white fog, to disorient the soldiers' position, letting those pustule beasts charge in, and eliminate all of the soldiers, leaving only the governor hiding in the armored vehicle to be dealt with later.

But to his surprise, the governor had left the protection of the armored vehicle on his own.

However, that Governor Gu Hang surprisingly possessed psychic powers and was even using very advanced techniques, which greatly shocked him.

This caused a significant flaw in his plan; the governor's actions not only halted their destruction of the human soldiers' position but even put him and his two subordinates into dangerous territory.

But he still had a chance.

As long as he could kill the governor on the spot.

Chapter 47 - Chapter 47: Chapter 47, luckily I'm one step ahead

Chapter 47: Chapter 47, luckily I'm one step ahead

The whirlwind carried the vortex-formed wings, providing Howling Wind Divine Envoy with explosive speed!

He charged straight for Gu Hang!

As long as he killed Gu Hang, his mission would still be considered complete.

The soldiers, who appeared to be very elite, seemed to have sensed his intentions. Half of them set out to suppress the other living Divine Envoy, while the remaining soldiers attempted to block him.

Bullets flew towards him, but the Storm Shield remained faithful to its duty and could not be easily breached. Two soldiers who were relatively close stood in his way, pulling out daggers in an attempt to engage him in combat.

The reaction speed and agility of those soldiers surprised the Howling Wind Divine Envoy.

He was moving at ultra-high speeds, with the Storm Turbine Wings bursting so quickly that ordinary people could not possibly react in time, much less intercept him.

But those soldiers could do so.

And their willpower was beyond imagination.

Getting near to him meant bearing the force of the storm. High-pressure wind blades cut through their combat suits, and even slashed dense wounds on their bodies. Yet, they remained resolute and unshaken.

More crucially, the daggers in their hands, when they slashed down, could indeed pierce through his surrounding wind.

This was definitely non-human strength!

If he hadn't reacted extremely fast and detonated a wind bomb between himself and that soldier, sending him flying, he would have been stabbed.

But he could only repel one.

The other soldier fiercely thrust the knife into his body.

If it weren't for the power of the wind helping him to deflect the blade at the critical moment, it wouldn't be his abdomen, but his heart that got pierced.

But the current situation was still critical.

The soldier very quickly released the knife-holding hand, ignoring the blood, picked up an electromagnetic rifle, and prepared to give the Divine Envoy a close-range volley.

If hit by that, Howling Wind Divine Envoy feared he would fall on the spot.

His Storm Shield had been punctured by that recent stab, and he didn't have full confidence to completely block the "Eagle's" shooting.

In the nick of time, Howling Wind Divine Envoy became fierce.

He spread his arms, didn't retreat but advanced, embracing the soldier to prevent the special forces elite from firing his bullets directly.

His physical strength was no match for his opponent's, and he would be released eventually, but the Storm Sorcery was spectacular at that moment!

Wind blades instantly spun around him, showing no mercy as they poured into the soldier's body.

The ceramic plate armor wouldn't be easily destroyed, but it wasn't full-body coverage. The combat suit was cut open under the high-pressure wind blades, followed by the flesh.

Blood spurted wildly, blown about by the wind.

In an instant, a fully-grown person was chopped down to nothing, leaving behind a gun, bulletproof plates, helmet, fragments of personal items, bones...

The blood-soaked Howling Wind Divine Envoy dared not linger for a moment.

In his moment of desperation, he had unleashed all his might, achieving such a terrifying effect. However, he had firsthand experience of the strength of these elite soldiers, unlike ordinary soldiers, and the knife stuck in his belly was proof of this.

If he hesitated for a moment longer, soldiers would immediately rush at him.

If he could create some distance, relying on the bullet-deflecting Storm Shield, he might be confident in killing all the soldiers. But firstly, there was Gu Hang, who could manipulate delicate Psychic Spells to interfere; secondly, he could not create distance now, and the Storm Shield's defenses against close-combat blades were not as effective as against bullets; moreover, his bodily strength and combat skills, which were not much stronger than those of an average person, put him at too much of a disadvantage against those elite soldiers.

He clenched his teeth and forced himself to muster strength again.

The Storm Turbine Wings formed by sorcery on his back let out an intense roar, as he once again burst from his position with a limit speed!

And this time, finally no one stood in his way!

With an extremely fast speed, he rushed toward Gu Hang. Flying close to the ground, the already thin mist was completely dispersed!

He was like an arrow in flight!

The next moment, he slammed into Gu Hang with great force, sending him flying through the air.

The wild wind completely enveloped Gu Hang.

Howling Wind Divine Envoy was even more brutal to Gu Hang than to the soldier he had just slashed to pieces. He once again overloaded the power of Storm Sorcery, heedless of the severe backlash that might ensue, determined to ensure Gu Hang's death.

Gu Hang slammed hard into the ground.

Then, he stood up.

Howling Wind Divine Envoy's eyes widened in disbelief, utterly unable to understand why this was happening.

The force he had exerted should have been enough to completely shred Gu Hang's body, so why did the Governor appear to be completely unharmed?

Clenching his teeth, he tried to unleash his power once more, but this time the winds did not heed his call. Instead, he felt an intense pain in his lungs, as if the wind was cutting through his chest cavity.

Unable to bear it, his body convulsed, and opening his mouth, he vomited blood profusely, mixed with pieces of his lungs.

As the pain subsided slightly, he raised his head and saw the assault vehicle beside him, its cannon already aimed at him.

Fire.

In an instant, several large-caliber cannon shells shattered his already fragile Storm Shield, and then destroyed his body as well.

...

Gu Hang still felt a bit scared afterward.

After the enemy appeared, he had sensed that one among the three was particularly strong. While dealing with these three, he proportionately allocated his strength.

The other two presented no surprises; one was dead before he hit the ground, and the other was nearly dead, with severed hands and feet still trying to resist. Now, he was held down by a group of special forces and stabbed to death in a frenzied assault.

But the strongest one was still beyond expectation.

He had already made his move. When that man flew towards him and was intercepted by the elite marines, had it not been for Gu Hang taking the opportunity to strike him from the shadows, he would not have been so easily stabbed in the stomach.

But unexpectedly, even though the guy had clearly pushed his sorcery to the limit and had a knife embedded in his abdomen, he was still able to unleash a tremendous amount of power. He not only used the storm to dismember a marine elite in a horrific manner but also continued to burst forth towards him, blowing him away and a violent storm swept around him.

Under normal circumstances, he should have been dead, like the dismembered marine elite.

At the crucial moment, it was his talent “Spiritual Energy Shield,”which he had gained when he last upgraded his personal level to LV2, that made the difference.

This thing didn’t need activation; it triggered passively and came into effect as soon as he took a hit.

It indeed saved Gu Hang’s life.

As he was sent flying, Gu Hang could feel the violent winds surrounding him, constantly clashing and grinding against his spiritual energy.

The power of the storm was so fierce that in almost an instant, Gu Hang’s spiritual energy was almost depleted.

Fortunately, the force of the storm came fast and left just as quickly, representing the total power of the opponent’s burst. Once withstood, it was gone.

However, after surviving that wave of attack, Gu Hang’s spiritual energy was almost completely drained.

But he was not alone; the assault vehicle helped him take the final step.

Looking at the enemy that had been blown to smithereens, certain never to rise again, Gu Hang sighed in relief.

Luckily, I had a bit more skill.

————

Tsk tsk, the female captain’s fan hearts have surpassed the protagonist?

LSP... I mean, there really are many discerning readers and lords.

PS, there was a data bug earlier; there are 11 members of the T3 marine team, not 9, corrected! Thanks for pointing out the issue!

Chapter 48 - Chapter 48: 48 chapters, shall we practice together?

Chapter 48: 48 chapters, shall we practice together?

The Howling Wind Divine Envoy was dead, left without any human shape to speak of.

The priest that had been blown up by the metal spikes also had no recognizable shape left, just a pile of broken remains. The last one looked slightly better in death but only slightly. He was struck in mid-air, breaking an arm and a leg, and even as he fell to the ground trying to resist, he was faced with the onslaught of elite ground warriors, who broke through his Storm Shield and then stabbed him to death with a flurry of knives.

After the death of the three priests wielding Storm Divine Power, the winds quickly subsided, and the fog dissipated just as fast.

In that short period, the soldiers indeed fell into chaos, their firepower network was affected, and many monsters breached their defenses, with over a dozen Pus Spewers entering range and causing casualties among the soldiers with their spray of pus.

However, overall, the chaos caused serious damage but was not fatal.

Once the winds and fog cleared, the soldiers regained control of the battlefield. Despite the casualties, they killed all the monsters that had breached their position, and the Pus Spewers, which had only fired one or two volleys of bio-shell, were eliminated by machine guns and the cannons of armored infantry vehicles.

Even though the three Storm Priests had perished, the battle did not end immediately.

The monsters, to some extent, did follow the Storm Priests' command, but after the priests' deaths, the uncontrolled creatures were still tremendously dangerous, maintaining their ferocious state as they constantly surged out of the woods, attempting to attack any living being they could see.

But despite their ongoing frenzy and reduced firepower within the position due to earlier casualties, they still couldn't break through.

The gap in firepower was something these primitive monsters couldn't contend with.

It's said that during a large-scale, mature 'Other Tide', even more advanced monsters would appear, not just limited to the inferior Pus Monsters and Spewers.

But at least Gu Hang and his men didn't encounter any this time.

The nests within the woods were still in the phase of accumulating power. Perhaps given a few months to slowly hatch and consume one another, they could grow into a batch of higher-level monsters, and the situation would become troublesome.

But now, the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, in an attempt to kill Gu Hang, prematurely accelerated the maturation of most of the nests in the woods, resulting in what seemed like a large-scale attack but was in reality not fraught with many high-level monsters, therefore the threat level was relatively average.

In fact, to some extent, the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect's actions even helped Gu Hang.

A large number of nests were matured ahead of time, and a vast number of monsters were gathered here, which could be dealt with all at once. This reduced a significant workload for the troops under Gu Hang's command in their subsequent task of clearing the entire Other-species woods.

As the battle continued, it was evident that the number and density of monsters charging from the thick forest were significantly decreasing.

Clearly, they were not truly endless. After being massively culled, there were not many left.

Eventually, with Yan Fangxu's forces arriving on the scene, the battle essentially entered its final stage.

When he learned that the governor might be ambushed, he couldn't stay put waiting for rescue. He took the initiative to lead his troops out, breaking through slowly and methodically.

According to his plan, it was not necessary to break through successfully. Even if they could draw some attention to help the governor, that would be good enough.

As it turned out, as they moved on, he soon noticed a sudden decrease in the number of monsters he encountered, as if they had all run off elsewhere.

He speculated that this was because the battle on the governor's side had already begun, and he could even hear the roar of gunfire.

So, they sped up and reached the battlefield, meeting up with the governor. But by that time, the battle was already drawing to a close.

He could only lead the 3rd Battalion to join the fight and help clear the remaining monsters.

Soon, there was not a single active monster left in front of the soldiers.

...

Perbov stepped on a Pus Monster that had lost its lower half, relying on its hands to crawl on the ground, and he watched as it vainly stretched out its arms to grab him.

After pondering for a moment, he lifted his pistol and fired at the monster's head, silencing it for good.

Hearing the footsteps behind him, he turned to see a weary-looking Yan Fangxu approaching.

His gaze naturally fell on the other's shoulder, where the corrosive-ridden fabric revealed reddening, wounded skin underneath.

He grinned and said, "Yo, captain, you look quite a mess."

Yan Fangxu rolled his eyes irritably, walked up and punched him in the chest, "You're not looking any better, limping as you walk."

"Isn't that to come and save you?"

Having reached this point, Yan Fangxu couldn't deny it anymore, and his complexion turned a bit dark.

Perbov, on the other hand, comforted him, "It's not your fault, this bunch of trash, rubbish, conscience-fed-to-dogs traitors, they just wanted to use you to ambush the Governor. It's not on you. Our mission is to be the sword and shield of the Governor. Today, both of us didn't do a very good job at that, but from now on, I'll put in even more effort. What about you?"

Yan Fangxu looked at the officer who had risen through the ranks of the Abandoned Cave Society with some surprise. Why had this guy suddenly voiced such sentiments?

He wasn't aware that the Storm Priest had just charged at Gu Hang, directly threatening the Governor's life, nor could he imagine how deeply this scene had impacted Perbov, the captain.

Unaware of these things, Mr. Captain could only scratch his head and nod, agreeing to it.

After saying goodbye to Perbov, Yan Fangxu went to find Gu Hang.

The Governor was inside an armored personnel carrier.

One of his old subordinates stopped him, "The Governor is resting."

"I have something I need to report."

The marine seemed torn but still barred his way, "But... Captain, the Governor is resting. It's better not to disturb him."

Yan Fangxu was again surprised.

This was not one of the soldiers recruited by Gu Hang on Rage Owl Star, but one of the marines he had brought down from the starship, a direct subordinate.

Historically, they had been closer. Even to speak a bit disrespectfully, in private, they had not refrained from complaining about various matters regarding the Governor. The soldiers were loyal to the Governor, but it seemed more out of duty and role.

But now, he truly saw respect for the Governor in his old subordinate's eyes.

A question mark slowly rose in his mind: What had just happened?

It wasn't that he found the deep respect and loyalty his subordinates had for the Governor problematic.

On the contrary, it was as it should be.

But that didn't stop him from being curious about what had caused these changes.

He decided not to wake Gu Hang, but instead pulled his old subordinate aside to ask in detail what had exactly happened in the recent battle.

After learning about the situation, Yan Fangxu also fell silent.

The Governor had been approached and attacked by the Heretic Cultists but escaped unharmed, only a bit tired; the Governor's psychic spells had once again proved powerful; his own old subordinates had undergone earth-shattering changes after the Governor's rapid "special training"...

All this information was like a fantasy to Yan Fangxu's ears.

Why was there no harm done? Why did those cultists fall from the sky while flying so properly?

All this could only be attributed to the marvel of Spiritual Energy.

The news that the Governor was a spiritual master, Yan Fangxu could more or less accept. After all, it was not his first day knowing the Governor was a psychic; it was just that his feats seemed more miraculous now.

Yan Fangxu tried to convince himself it was no big deal.

But could his old marine elites become even stronger? And in such a short period of time? Just like how the Governor trained those ordinary people?

Yan Fangxu found it hard to accept and believe.

He joked, "So, you lad, are you even more skilled than me now? Want to have a go?"

In the past, no marine would dare to accept the challenge. Captain Yan Fangxu was famously tough, and sparring with him meant seeking discomfort.

But now, things had changed.

The soldier, brimming with eagerness, said, “Sure, let’s do it!”

————

Hey, don’t just look at the girl! Why did we exceed that much in one night? The Governor is pretty handsome too, right?

Chapter 49 - Chapter 49: Chapter 49, Battle Settlement

Chapter 49: Chapter 49, Battle Settlement

Gu Hang sat in an armored infantry vehicle, his face pale as he closed his eyes to recuperate.

He was aware of the noise outside, but he was too lazy to bother with it.

The battle had just ended, and it had drained him significantly.

The main issue was that he had been directly charged. “Spiritual Protection” had blocked nearly all the damage, but it had also depleted all of his spiritual energy.

In fact, this was a very dangerous situation.

According to the education on psychic spells he had received from his memories, completely depleting one’s spirituality could lead to uncontrollable consequences: death, madness, mental abnormalities, personality disintegration... All of these were possibilities.

After the battle ended, Gu Hang rested while checking the state of his spirituality, which fortunately, allowed him to breathe a sigh of relief.

The severe conditions hadn’t appeared; his current symptoms were just some fatigue and a slight headache. Generally speaking, they would improve after some rest.

But he still took away some lessons from this experience.

This time, it was slightly risky, to the point that he had put himself in danger.

But upon careful reflection, Gu Hang didn't think there was anything particularly wrong with his actions. It was true that he was a governor, but it wasn't to the extent that he would avoid risk altogether. His enterprise was still in its early stages, and there were times when he had to fight.

This time, there was no second psychic in his entire domain. If he hadn't taken action himself, today's situation wouldn't have been resolved.

He couldn't just stand by and let Yan Fangxu and his 3rd Infantry Battalion be trapped and perish in the woods.

But the outcome was definitely good.

The methods of the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect in nurturing and controlling so many monsters certainly weren't easy; otherwise, they wouldn't still be rats in the sewers. Having used such tactics and lost three formidable priests here, the sect must have suffered significant losses.

Even before that, they must have been in a lot of pain already.

If it weren't for him urging Revival City to intensify the crackdown on the cult, forcing them into desperate action and attempting to assassinate him at a great cost, they would not have done so.

Well, that's good. If you didn't finish me off this time, wait until I get to Revival City and uncover everything you're hiding.

...

After resting for a good while, he felt his condition had recovered a lot.

It was only then that he truly had the energy to properly tally his gains.

This time, the victory was substantial, though the losses were also the greatest compared to previous battles. But the results were equally significant.

[Having a slight upper hand, 86 points of grace obtained]

[Losses 103, exterminated 6597, captured 0]

[2nd Infantry Battalion: Losses 77, exterminated 4447]

[3rd Infantry Battalion: Losses 24, exterminated 1613]

[Navy Marine Corps: Losses 2, exterminated 537]

Just looking at the casualty ratio, it was impressive, but Gu Hang wasn't the least bit happy about it.

All that had been exterminated were brainless monsters.

If they acted according to Yan Fangxu's strategy, they could almost no loss cleanse each of these monsters' lairs one by one over the next few months, rather than facing them all at once after they had been rallied.

Not to mention facing three Storm Priests at the same time.

In total, 103 soldiers were lost, with the 2nd Battalion already exceeding a 25% casualty rate.

Most of these casualties happened amidst the raging winds and dense fog.

Among them, two recently promoted tier 3 members of the Marine Corps had been killed by the most formidable priest, meaning the invested 2 points of grace were gone.

The two regular infantry battalions, especially the 2nd, needed a substantial number of replacement troops.

Gu Hang's total population under his control amounted to just under six thousand. Excluding the Mech Servant Battalion, he had already supported two infantry battalions totaling six hundred men, with a mobilization rate exceeding ten percent. In fact, given the composition of the population, this was already a significant pressure, not to mention Gu Hang needed manpower for various rapidly expanding production lines outside the military.

The excessively high mobilization rate was already affecting production efficiency.

Especially for the young and able-bodied workers, the shortfall at the Abandoned Cave Society was significant, becoming a limiting factor in development.

The army's casualties would require a further hundred men to be drawn from the labor pool... which was going to be a strain. Gu Hang could already foresee Patel, who was in charge of heavy industry at the Abandoned Cave Society, tearing his hair out.

The guy wouldn't put any obstacles in the way of the young men joining the military for the Governor; in his heart, that was an honor, a defense of their labor achievements. But after the decrease in manpower, how to maintain or even expand production was certainly going to be a headache for him.

As for other costs... the textile factory had been set up, and uniforms could be produced in-house, with the relevant design plans already passed on; alloy and plastic steel production lines could turn out armored vests; firearms could either be salvaged from battlefield remnants or newly produced. Even if it was just for soldier training, a hundred soldiers would only cost 1 point in grace. All of these were not an issue.

The problem was still the population.

They still needed to bleed others dry.

The Quintet in the sky was no longer easy to exploit, and going after the lower-end population was also not very meaningful. Gu Hang had other plans for the female captain; on the Quintet, there were plenty of talents he coveted. To annihilate the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, or at least give them a severe blow, he would need to borrow the female captain's power and also consider it as a form of repayment to Yelisia, but that could be discussed later.

What remained were Revival City and Rubbish Town.

Most of those in Rubbish Town were adventurers dreaming of striking it rich, and it wasn't ruled out that some who had been through trials and tribulations now wanted to live the life of an honest person... no, to settle down as an honest person, but it couldn't be forced.

Revival City was a huge source; Gu Hang did not disdain the refugees who could no longer survive outside the city walls.

Tens of thousands of people were unrealistic to take in all at once, but he now had ample job positions and abundant food to support many.

...

Having thought through the losses, it was now time to consider the gains.

86 points of grace, the largest sum Gu Hang had accrued thus far.

It was even more than all the previous ones added together.

This gave Gu Hang a sense of having struck it rich.

The heavy shadow of the soldiers' massive casualties and losses was much dispelled by this joy.

Of the 86 points of grace, it was estimated that over thirty were 'contributed' by those three priests, with the strongest one alone providing over twenty points.

That high priest, just in terms of Spiritual Energy strength, was even greater than Gu Hang.

However, when it came to the application of Spiritual Energy, Gu Hang had the nuanced ‘Soul Severing’ inherited from an ancient family and ‘Spiritual Protection’ provided by the system, which were much stronger than the high priest who could only use the native Evil God’s power to perform Storm Sorcery.

In other words, Gu Hang’s victory was due in part to his powerful spells and numerical advantage. In terms of sheer strength of spirituality, Gu Hang at LV2 still couldn’t match the opponent.

Eliminating such a formidable enemy and receiving extra grace seemed only fair.

As for the remaining fifty points, they were the spoils of war from the soldiers wiping out over six thousand different monstrous creatures.

Clearly, the lives of these creatures were cheap.

But the sheer number was impressive, and after more than six thousand fell, they had brought a fair amount of grace to Gu Hang.

It was just a pity that the victory rating only reached a slight advantage, so the grace coefficient gained post-battle was not high enough; otherwise, there might have been room for more.

Next came the issue of how to spend this windfall of grace.

Feeling elated, he summoned the panel and then saw one old item flashing and a new item appeared.

The flashing one was the [Hero] panel.

The new appearance was a function named [Event].

Chapter 50 - Chapter 50: Chapter 50, Battle Group?

Chapter 50: Chapter 50, Battle Group?

The movement within the [Hero] interface was something Gu Hang had anticipated beforehand.

After such a brutal battle had ended, he should be able to level up, right?

Indeed, upon checking, he was the only one in the Hero panel who met the criteria to level up.

But the cost of upgrading made him furrow his brows.

50 points.

The price to advance to level 2 was simply too expensive.

However, after this ordeal, his desire for personal strength had grown considerably.

Leveling up would not only provide him with greater safety but also, a powerful wielder of Spiritual Energy could have a tremendous influence on battles below a certain scale.

Even though it was pricey, he was ready to grit his teeth and upgrade himself.

But there was no rush.

There were some other changes inside the [Hero] panel.

He saw that there were two more characters eligible to be activated as Heroes.

One was Perbov.

This mine foreman from the Abandoned Cave Society, following this battle, seemed to have been recognized by the system as a person of talent, capable of being activated as a hero.

And the other one was named Osenia Qinko.

Who is this person?

Gu Hang was completely baffled.

Did he have such a person under his command?

Oh, it seemed that he did.

Gu Hang remembered skim reading the list of literates among the refugees who had recently moved from Revival City, and it seemed that this name had appeared there.

What had this person done to make the system believe she had the capability?

Gu Hang’s curiosity was piqued.

It wasn’t that he wanted to promote her to a hero right away, but if the system had identified her potential, then even if she wasn’t upgraded, she could be pulled out and entrusted with an important task.

Gu Hang felt like he had discovered another way to use the [Hero] function.

He could find capable people without upgrading them.

Satisfied, Gu Hang closed the [Hero] panel and opened the newly-appeared [Event] panel.

[An unknown event is occurring, and you can steer the event in a direction related to you.]

[Initiating this event will cost 50 grace points.]

[Event countdown to the end: 1 day and 06 hours]

Is that it?

They want to swindle 50 grace points from me without any information?

Without a second thought, Gu Hang closed the [Event] function.

Then, after pondering for a bit, he reopened it.

He just couldn’t contain his curiosity!

The allure of the unknown was just too strong.

“Generally, the quality of the system’s products strongly correlates with the number of grace points spent. The more you pay, the better the stuff you get. Except for those two draws of the technology card, where I had a 40% chance but missed twice in a row, it seems it hasn’t duped me yet... Hiss? But wouldn’t drawing an unknown event card also likely be a scam? What if there’s some hidden probability?”

In just this short while, Gu Hang’s mind wavered, and many thoughts surfaced.

He wasn’t usually one to agonize over decisions, but what could he do?

Too poor!

All problems are problems of poverty.

If Gu Hang had enough favor, wouldn’t he have immediately activated this event to see what it was all about?

But if he activated the unknown event, the remaining 36 favor would not be enough to upgrade.

After thoughtful deliberation, Gu Hang decided to trust the system once more.

Although it was a gamble, he still upheld the belief that “system products are worth their value” and made his choice.

Of course, another important reason was that he had a fallback plan.

In a couple of days, a month would go by. By then, the fixed monthly income would come in. With the development trend of the forces under Gu Hang’s command, it should be possible to earn thirty or forty points by then. Adding them up, it should be enough for him to upgrade to LV3.

By comparison, the unknown event might be a bit more precious. After all, it had a countdown, and once time expired, the event would disappear.

Limited-time lottery, got to win something, right?

With that mindset, Gu Hang made his final decision.

The 50 points of favor were gone in a snap, and what replaced them was the new information that appeared before his eyes:

[Event Activated: Phoenix on the Brink of Death]

[A Starfighter Battle Group that is on the verge of annihilation ended its century-long penance expedition and is approaching Rage Owl Star, which seems to have what they’re seeking: redemption and hope.]

[Please make your decisions cautiously. Your actions will determine the next phase of this event.]

[Event Branch: Unknown.]

...

Seeing new event prompts that mentioned a Starfighter Battle Group nearing Rage Owl Star, Gu Hang nearly couldn’t control his facial expression.

If a Starfighter Battle Group was offering help, what was there to worry about? Any difficulties on Rage Owl Star would not be able to halt an entire Battle Group’s progress.

The term “Starfighter” symbolized glory, greatness... and death within the Empire.

They are the Death Angels of The Emperor.

It is said that thousands of years ago, the Divine Emperor used himself as the template to create many different genetic seeds. He selected the finest people, implanted them with these genetic seeds, and formed the initial Starfighters.

Each of them was extraordinary, possessing bodies that were countless times stronger than ordinary people, wearing specially made power armor connected to their nerves. Their solo combat power was extremely formidable; fighting against a hundred was just standard procedure for them.

Often, just a few Starfighters in a squad could slice through tens of thousands of soldiers, behead generals, and that was just their routine duty.

They were true killing machines, and the Death Angels lived up to their name.

During the founding era, the various Starfighter legions were the sharpest swords in the hands of The Emperor, and they made indispensable contributions to creating the Empire's boundless territories.

Latter, about ten thousand years ago, after The Emperor ascended to divinity, all Starfighter legions were divided into smaller Battle Groups. According to the holy scriptures, the size limit for the Starfighter Battle Groups was set at a thousand members.

Typically, a Battle Group would have a home planet. The home planet of a Battle Group did not need to pay taxes to the Empire; all its manpower and resources were at the Battle Group's disposal. A Battle Group could establish a Mortal Auxiliary Army and a Battle Group Fleet, possessing immense autonomy. They would respond to the highest calls to arms from the Empire and engage in the most terrifying of battles. Aside from that, their actions were often whimsical and enjoyed high freedom.

In Gu Hang's understanding, it was like a combination of warlords and feudal lords.

Such a Battle Group was coming to Rage Owl Star?

Gu Hang quickly became calm again.

It's that same old phrase, system products are worth their value. 50 points of favor likely couldn't even exchange for a single Starfighter, let alone a Battle Group.

It couldn't be that good of a deal.

He also noted the information provided in the event interface – this was a dying Battle Group.

That's good.

If it were a thriving Battle Group, he wouldn’t have any say. The status of a Battle Group commander might even be higher than that of a Star Sector leader.

Gu Hang realized that this event could be a blessing or a curse. He truly had to be as cautious as the system prompt suggested, or the consequences would be dire.

But overall, this also meant opportunity.

If a Starfighter could provide him with help, he would have an absolute guarantee in terms of military power on Rage Owl Star.