Governor 421

Chapter 421, Supreme Command?

“When Gu Hang first proposed to take the initiative to attack, I actually disagreed,”

Tilermungs’s voice arose next to Yelisia’s ear.

The naval battle that had erupted on the outskirts of Steel Wing Star was drawing to a close.

At this moment, the United Fleet of humanity was fiercely attacking the fleeing Green Skin Ships, trying to expand its victory as much as possible in the pursuit.

After the destruction of Green Skins’ number one ship, number two followed close behind.

The obliteration of the only two heavy cruisers caused a significant decline in the combat strength of the Green Skin Fleet.

This was just the comparison of hard power.

As the flagship of the Green Skin Ships, their pirate Military Governor was on that number one ship.

His death instantly left the huge Green Skin Fleet without a backbone.

Following the demise of the number two ship, along with several other ships not quite cruiser grade, but equally strong, being torn apart by Gu Hang in a similar way and having their Void Shields pierced, and then being destroyed by directed fire, the formation of the Green Skins’ Fleet collapsed.

They began to scatter and flee.

By this point, the Human Fleet had already secured a resounding victory beyond doubt.

The remaining task was to pursue the advantage and expand the results of the battle.

It was only then that Tilermungs finally found the time to pull someone aside for a chat.

Yelisia said with a light smile, “I also didn’t expect him to be able to go this far.”

“Then why did you still heed his command and charge forward without hesitation?”

“Because I trust him,” Yelisia said candidly, “Even though I didn’t know how he would do it or to what extent he could manage, I believe he’s not a foolish man.

He makes decisions for a reason.

The fact has proven that following his orders has brought us a brilliant victory.”

“Yes, a brilliant victory.”

At this thought, Tilermungs didn’t feel as elated as he should have been.

The victory itself was certainly exciting, but…

obviously, this victory was related to him, yet it was not his doing.

The problem he had foreseen earlierthe disunity and chaos in the command of the Human Fleetseemed in need of resolution.

If Gu Hang had made his abilities clear before the battle, then when the entire fleet launched, how could he have appeared irresolute to the point of embarrassment?

He was sure he could have led the fleet to this victory as well.

However, he didn't say these thoughts to Yelisia.

Seeing her, it was obvious she would support Gu Hang.

Tilermungs didn't feel like he was stirring internal conflict.

Unified command was important, and as the Tianma Fleet Commander, a proper Imperial Navy General, he was rightfully the holder of the highest command of the navy.

…

The Concerto was also involved in the battle of hunting down the scattered Green Skin Fleet, but not much had to do with Gu Hang anymore.

Ripping open the energy shields of four Green Skin Ships, including the first and second, and also supporting the tens of thousands from the Valor Spirit Legion in their combat inside various Green Skin Ships, had taken a considerable toll on Gu Hang.

After all, he had only torn a small hole in the veil of reality, borrowing a portion of the power from the Storm God Kingdom, not becoming one with the essence of Subspace within the Divine Realm.

The difference between the two was quite substantial.

Gu Hang's remaining Spiritual Energy was merely one-tenth of what it had been at its peak.

In a situation where the overall outcome was decided and only standard pursuit operations remained, he naturally no longer needed to intervene in ship command.

It was better to leave that to the naval generals; he needed to close his eyes and restore his spirit, to rest for a while.

In the process, he also contemplated the issue of the disordered command within this United Fleet.

Tilermungs was not suitable to be the supreme commander.

Gu Hang didn't think that even if he had explained to Tilermungs the extent of his Spiritual Energy powers in advance, General Tilermungs would be able to make correct and decisive judgments.

He was more likely to remain skeptical about what Gu Hang had said until he witnessed it himself, opting to prioritize caution in his actions, thereby missing opportunities.

Caution was certainly important; when Tilermungs was defending Steel Wing Star before Gu Hang arrived, the more cautious he was, the happier Gu Hang became.

"Don't cause trouble; just hold Steel Wing Star steadily until I come."

That was very good.

However, Tilermungs's phase of the mission was complete, and after that, pure caution was not the answer to everything.

The issue of lacking an established supreme command also needed to be resolved.

But all these matters could be put off for later; the current issues had to be handled first.

…

The 'matter at hand,' of course, referred to hunting down the remnants of the Green Skin Fleet and expanding the results of the battle as much as possible.

This pursuit lasted a full three days or more.

In the end, nearly two hundred Green Skin Ships still managed to escape.

The Human Fleet actually had the opportunity to continue the pursuit.

Wasn't it just escaping through the Star Realm Tunnel?

Human ships could pass through it as well.

However, the majority of the escaping Green Skin Ships fled through the tunnel from Steel Wing Star to the Temir Star System, which was part of the Golden Pass Star Sector already.

No one knew the current situation in Golden Pass.

Blindly pursuing them there would be too risky.

So, that was that.

Actually, this battle was never going to be an annihilation battle to begin with.

It was quite an accomplishment for the Human Navy to defeat the enemy; they didn't have the capability to encircle and wage an annihilation battle.

As the scattered Green Skin Ships fled in all directions, it was impossible for the humans to divide their forces into so many small teams to continue the pursuit.

Chapter 421, Supreme Command?_2 As the saying goes, "If you're not sure you can annihilate the Green Skins, don't force them into a corner." If you split up your Fleet to pursue them regardless of how the Green Skins divide their squads, there's a chance they'll turn around and knock you out if they see their pursuers aren't as formidable.

Securing the current victory is already quite an achievement.

Plus, though half of the Green Skin ships escaped, the loss of combat power is far greater than that proportion.

In the pursuit, since it's already clear that it's impossible to eliminate all the Green Skin ships, the focus naturally shifts to targeting the most valuable ones.

The Green Skins' two heavy cruisers were done for in the previous Fleet showdown.

Of the remaining five ships comparable to Human light cruisers, only one managed to escape.

The rest were all destroyed!

The substantial loss of the main warships means that although there are still two hundred Green Skin ships in number, they essentially have no fighting capacity.

If another Fleet battle were fought, Gu Hang wouldn't even need to lift a finger; the Human Fleet could easily wipe them out.

The battle at Steel Wing Star marked the full-scale invasion of the Eagle Horse Star Sector by the Green Skins.

At that time, the total number of Green Skin Ships entering the Eagle Horse Star Sector was around four hundred, with the number of Green Skin legions onboard totaling between 150 to 300 million.

Now, only two hundred ships have made it back.

Conservatively estimated, the Green Skins' troop losses would reach around 60 million.

Adding the Green Skin Fleet sent to the surface of Steel Wing Stareffectively abandoned at 35 millionand those still resisting in various parts of the Eagle Horse Star Sector, but ultimately doomed to be wiped out, around 20 million more, it can be concluded that the Iron-Tooth Clan has lost at least a hundred million troops in the Eagle Horse Star Sector.

This is an unquestionable major victory!

Ever since Chieftain Titus emerged with the Iron-Tooth Clan, using decades of accumulated wealth to swarm out from four fallen Star Sectors, the Iron Tooth Orcs had been defeating the Human forces from space to ground.

Starting from the Golden Pass Star Sector all the way to Yunluo, their invincible military front could only be pushed back, one retreat after another.

And now, for the first time, the spearhead of the Iron-Tooth Clan has been stopped.

Although it was just a branch Fleet, the significance of this division, consisting of four hundred Green Skin Ships, should not be underestimated.

The loss of two hundred ships, including most of the main warships, and over a hundred million in troop numbers is a blow that cannot be ignored, even for the overarching might of the Iron-Tooth Clan.

It is foreseeable that unless something major changes, the Green Skin invasion disaster in Seven Horse Territory can now be considered mitigated.

However, although the disaster has been averted, the threat remains.

It’s uncertain when the enemy might mount another massive resurgence.

And after this defeat, if the Green Skins were to invade on a large scale again, the forces they bring would undoubtedly be greater than before.

By then, will the Alliance still be able to withstand?

That depends on how much the Alliance can bolster its strength in the time to come.

In Gu Hang's view, the essential aspect of the victory at the Steel Wing Star battle was that it bought the Alliance a significant amount of time for development.

While he can't be sure how long this time will last, having time is always good.

Every minute, every second, the Alliance is getting stronger.

…

After the pursuit battle, the main force of the Human Fleet returned to Steel Wing Star.

The battle on the ground is still ongoing.

Many Orcs died in the orbital bombardment, but obviously, not all of them.

In fact, the majority of the Green Skin Orcs survived.

They are barely hanging on.

Many of their clusters were scattered and shattered in the previous large-scale orbital bombardment.

The loss of a significant amount of heavy equipment means that, although many Green Skins are still alive, they are incapable of mounting any large-scale offensive.

However, barely hanging on doesn't mean the remaining Orcs will be easy to deal with.

On the contrary, according to estimates by the Alliance Army General Staff, if Steel Wing Star is to be completely cleared of the Green Skin Orc threat, it will be a war that lasts five to ten years.

The Orcs, lacking offensive capabilities, switched to a scattered, completely defensive stance.

They dug tunnels and mixed spore creatures with local vegetation, forming numerous strongholds.

When these strongholds were discovered, they would be attacked.

The human army quickly mobilized heavy artillery to besiege and bombard them, then armored units charged in with infantry to eliminate the living Orcs and eradicate the Green Skin plants.

If a stronghold was particularly well-defended or large in scale, the human forces wouldn't tangle with them for long, opting instead to call for orbital bombardment and then sending in ground forces afterwards.

But the problem was that there were too many of these strongholds.

Tens of millions of Orcs were scattered across millions of square kilometers of land in the northern continent of the planet, with some small strongholds comprising only a few dozen or a hundred Greenskins.

It wasn't difficult to exterminate them, but finding them all, without exception, that was tough.

Orbital bombardment faced a similar issue; it wasn't feasible to bombard every single stronghold as the smaller ones might not even be worth the cost of shells or missiles, lacking the value to be bombarded.

Fleet firepower couldn't be wasted this way; even disregarding cost, stockpile and production capacity were insufficient for such extravagance.

In the end, these strongholds had to be hunted down one by one by the land forces, each one methodically tackled.

Even Gu Hang couldn't keep tens of millions from the Alliance Army stationed on Steel Wing Star for a prolonged 'bandit suppression'.

Many other planets needed the alliance's military for rescue.

In fact, he planned to withdraw all of the Alliance Army in half a year, leaving only the thirty million from the Dragonhawk Legion and the Rage Bear Legion behind.

He believed that after half a year, even if the Greenskins weren't completely eradicated, any remaining would certainly number less than ten million and be unable to form a cohesive force.

The two Star Realm Army Corps would slowly strangle the remnants, hoping to clean Steel Wing Star in three to five years.

Moreover, they would serve as the guard force, preparing for a possible future Green Skin invasion.

…

After arranging the land forces' work, Gu Hang immediately convened a navy meeting.

Within the starport on Steel Wing Star, apart from a few duty-bound on their own ships, most of the captains joined this gathering.

This included the seven cruiser captains of the Tianma Fleet; each one an Imperial General, at least holding the rank of Brigadier General, and they all attended.

Smiles beamed on everyone's faces.

In the preceding great victory, the human side had suffered minimal losses.

Less than forty warships were destroyed, and the real heartache was from only three destroyers and eleven escort shipsthe remaining twenty-six patrolling vessels or armed merchant ships were not of high value.

What reason was there not to be happy?

During the pre-meeting banquet, everyone was in high spirits.

Since they were going to have a meeting later, drinking wasn't appropriate; and considering the war had just ended, the banquet wasn't extravagant.

But regardless, it couldn't dampen the enthusiastic atmosphere of the venue.

However, within those smiles, some were not as pure.

Tilermungs and three cruiser captains were huddled together, discussing something.

Their conversation quickly concluded, as if they had reached some degree of consensus.

The banquet ended and the meeting began.

The first part was unremarkable, with Gu Hang standing alongside Tilermungs in front of many officers, jubilantly announcing the battle results, commemorating fallen comrades, and declaring that all acts of valor and achievements would be recorded.

Soldiers would receive their due honors and rewards, and the captains from the Gu Commercial Firm who were conscripted would also receive empire compensation and war bonuses.

The second part was critical.

After most people left the room, remaining were only the seven Tianma Fleet cruiser captains and Gu Hang.

At this point, Tilermungs no longer maintained his smile but seriously brought up the first topic:

“All the ships of the Tianma Fleet are present here, and we need to clarify command authority.

Given the current war situation, the Tianma Fleet does not need to remain split into two.

Major General Du Shiliang, the squadron you command will now rejoin my fleet, under my command effective immediately.”

Chapter 422, Close Your Eyes, It Will Be Fine in a Moment “`

“Major General Du Shiliang, the formation you command will return to the fleet and fall under my command,”

Upon hearing these words, Du Shiliang instinctively glanced over at Gu Hang.

It shouldn’t have been like this.

He was the captain of the Tianma Fleet’s Concerto cruiser and a Major General of the Imperial Navy.

General Tilermungs, the commanding officer at the rank of Lieutenant General, was indisputably his direct superior from any perspective.

When given a command, he should have stood up without a word and accepted it.

Why look at Gu Hang?

Yet, he did look.

Tilermungs noticed his gaze and was slightly annoyed.

However, he didn't say anything to Gu Hangnot because he didn't darebut continued to stare at Du Shiliang, his voice becoming unconsciously colder and harsher:

"Major General Du, do you have a problem?"

Du Shiliang was helpless.

He could only stand up, utter a "Yes," and then sit down again.

A smile returned to Tilermungs's face.

This was not his main goal for the day; at most, it was just an appetizer.

Now, it was a triumphant start!

Gu Hang didn't speak when he clearly received Du Shiliang's plea for help, which gave Tilermungs even more confidence.

Maybe, Mr.

Gu, too, was considering Imperial decrees, not daring to oppose his proposal that clearly conformed to the related Imperial regulations.

The encouraged General cleared his throat and continued: "Since there's no problem with this matter, let's move on to the second topic."

“In light of the current war situation and the complex composition of our space forces, I propose gathering all ships belonging to the Seven Horse Territory for unified deployment and establishing a single command system.

This would enable us to better leverage this power and combat the Green Skin Orcs, similar to how Mr.

Gu organized the signing of the Seven Horse Accord across Star Sectors.”

As he spoke, Tilermungs’s gaze kept drifting towards Gu Hang.

Aside from the Tianma Fleet, ships belonging to the Seven Horse Territory also included those of the Alliance Navy and the Gu Commercial Firm’s vessels.

Although other Star Sectors’ Planetary Governors and smaller Empire Commerce Guilds also had some ships, they were few in number, lacked capital ships, had inferior combat capabilities, and were almost negligible.

This was the issue Gu Hang was most likely to oppose and had legitimate reasons to do so.

The Alliance Navy was his, and so were the Gu Clan’s ships.

If he didn’t want to, Tilermungs couldn’t snatch them away.

But he had prepared a series of arguments and tactics for this.

Later, depending on how exactly Gu Hang opposed, he would present corresponding arguments to counter or pressure him.

“I agree,” Gu Hang was the first to express his stance.

Agreed?

Tilermungs was momentarily stunned, then quite elated!

Excellent!

What he had thought would require much argument and possibly a falling out with Gu Hang now seemed easily resolved.

Though unexpected, this was certainly good news!

This Gu Hang seemed to care about the bigger picture.

His gaze towards Gu Hang became much warmer.

But his eyes still turned slightly cold when they occasionally swept across Du Shiliang.

Although Gu Hang had a sense of the larger situation, you, young man, are quite the issue.

Wait, I will have you stripped of your position.

Of course, not right now.

I must show respect to Mr.

Gu at this moment.

With these thoughts, Tilermungs also stood, his face bearing a sincere smile as he said, “With this, we have reached a consensus.

I believe that with Mr.

Gu's support and our united efforts, those damned Green Skin Aliens will be utterly annihilated!"

He spoke these words with the air of a host.

However, at this moment, Gu Hang also rose to his feet.

His face also wore a smile, but his words sent a chilling cold through Tilermungs:

"I have another proposal: I suggest appointing Major General Yelisia and Major General Du Shiliang as the First and Second United Commanders of the Seven Horse Fleet.

Major General Yelisia is very familiar with the Tianma Fleet and can take on the responsibilities of the First United Commander; Major General Du Shiliang has amassed extensive experience in the past years, integrating the Tianma Fleet with the Alliance Escort Fleet and the Gu Clan's merchant fleet and can assist General Yelisia in coordinating the joint efforts of the three parties."

What about me?

Tilermungs did not voice this foolish question.

He stared at Gu Hang with a grim expression and said, "I object.

The position of a United Commander is unheard of."

"That's because General Tilermungs has seen too little," Gu Hang replied, "There are precedents for this when multiple Imperial Fleets operate together.

Usually, a United Commander is appointed, responsible for the coordinated command of multiple fleets.

At the Golden Pass and Silver Pass, when combating the Green Skins, wasn't it Admiral Zhang Shaoxun of the Yunluo Fleet who took on the role of the United Commander during the joint operations with the Tianma Fleet and the Northern Fleet?"

"That's required only when multiple fleets within the Imperial Navy operate together!

Right now, the only legitimate Imperial Navy here is the Tianma Fleet!

The Imperial Navy has the right to conscript…"

"No, it does not," Gu Hang interjected.

"The Eastern Star Domain is under my control, and all Imperial forces here should comply with my command and deployment.

When I say we should establish a United Fleet, it will be a United Fleet."

"What is this 'Eastern Star Domain' you speak of?"

"My appointment grants me control over everything in the Eastern Star Domain."

"Where's the document?"

"I can send you to Yunluo to request it."

Chapter 422, Close Your Eyes, It Will Be Fine in a Moment_2 By this point, Gu Hang's face was expressionless.

"You!" General Tilermungs was frantic with rage.

When Gu Hang said he would send someone off, he really dared to do it.

But did he dare to go?

Was he scared that just after setting sail, only a few steps out, he would “die in a Green Skin attack”?

Clenching his teeth and with a low growl in his voice, he questioned Gu Hang, “What exactly do you want to do?”

“I want to win this war.

And you, General Tilermungs, under your leadership, the United Fleet cannot win.

We need a leader who can bring us victory.”

“Enough!” General Tilermungs said, “I’m tired of your insatiable greed.

The Tianma Fleet will not fight alongside you anymore.

I will report to the Star Domain Naval Command.

The Tianma Fleet will also leave this place and head to the Yunluo Starfield.

You can handle things on your own!”

“Let’s go!”

With that call, he intended to leave.

What he said was partly in anger.

But now that you, Gu Hang, have shown your true colors and flipped the table, let's flip it together and see who's afraid of whom.

Without the Tianma Fleet, are you planning to use your head to block the Green Skins' military front?

Yet, no one present followed him.

Reaching the door of the conference room, General Tilermungs also realized the awkward situation at hand.

He spun around abruptly and demanded of Du Shiliang and Yelisia, "Why aren't you coming?

Do you want to cause a division?"

Yelisia's expression remained calm, but Du Shiliang looked somewhat troubled.

He had intended to consult Mr.

Gu's opinion, but he didn't expect the situation to escalate to such an outright confrontation.

Was it time to choose sides now?

If he really had to choose, he would undoubtedly choose Gu Hang.

The reasons were blatantly obvious.

Although General Tilermungs was his direct superior could the Tianma Fleet really leave the Alliance now?

Your ship's cannon shells, energy, all rely on others for resupply.

The Star Domain Naval Command you're counting on?

They are far away, separated by several Green Skin-occupied Star Sectors, can they even be counted on?

To turn against Gu Hang and stand by General Tilermungs?

And then, impoverished, lead the fleet away like a lost soul?

Or to traverse the Green Skin-occupied zones without supplies and head to Yunluo?

That's completely unrealistic!

Moreover, aside from those reasons, there's also the fact that deep down he truly agreed with Gu Hang's statement:

The most important thing right now is to win the war, and that requires a commander who can lead them to victory.

Is that person Gu Hang or General Tilermungs?

Even a fool could make the choice.

In the end, Du Shiliang closed his eyes, pursed his lips, and remained seated like a wax statue, not giving General Tilermungs any response.

"Very well!

So you want a rebellion?”

General Tilermungs was furious.

He waved at the other three captains who had always followed him.

But they too looked troubled and dared not to move.

One brigadier general spoke softly, “There’s no need for the situation to escalate like this, everyone sit down and let’s talk this through…”

Their thoughts were similar to those of Du Shiliang.

Although they hadn’t cooperated with Gu Hang for a long time and were not familiar with him, they were fully aware of the situation in the Eastern Star Domain and their performance in previous wars.

Emotionally, they were more inclined toward General Tilermungs, and they also believed that as the noble Imperial Navy, forming a United Fleet with escort teams and armed merchant ships, the leader should naturally be one of their own.

It was for this reason that when General Tilermungs communicated with them privately in advance, they all showed their support.

But their support didn’t extend to wanting to see the two sides turn against each other, let alone follow General Tilermungs out the door and accompany him to his death.

Of course, they had also realized that General Tilermungs’s so-called “heading to Yunluo” was most likely said in a moment of anger, but they didn’t want to create a situation where it would be too embarrassing to back down.

What if they were really forced into a corner and had to take that step?

That would be marching toward death.

Moreover…

all three captains have, more or less, received favors from the Fufana Family in the past.

Or you could say, there's hardly anyone in the Tianma Fleet who hasn't been lifted up by the Fufana, including Tilermungs.

If it were someone else, that'd be one thing.

But Yelisia stepping up as this United Commander…

It seems not entirely out of the question.

Within the fleet, it was tacitly understood that Yelisia would eventually be the Commander of the Tianma Fleet, it was just a matter of sooner or later.

Once she accumulated enough experience, it would be time for her promotion.

Including Tilermungs himself, everyone knew he was just a placeholder.

Of course, he wouldn't be at a loss either, with an added decade or so as the Commander of Tianma on his resume, any subsequent postings wouldn't be of a lower status.

And now, if Yelisia stepped up, it would simply be hastening the inevitable.

It seems not entirely out of the question.

Seeing their reactions, Tilermungs was truly disappointed to the extreme.

With a wave of his hand, he declared, “Disobeying a direct order from a superior, this is mutiny!

I will report all of your actions, wait for the military tribunal!”

Having said that, he pushed the door open and left.

However, just as he pushed the door open and took no more than a few steps forward, he felt two massive shadows envelop his body.

Looking up, he saw two giants clad in crimson powered armor.

Through their helmets, the indifferent gaze that fell upon him cooled his inner rage quite a bit.

He couldn’t help but take two steps back, turning his head in shock and anger to look at Gu Hang, “What are you trying to do?

Mutiny?!”

“You need to cool down, General Tilermungs.”

As Gu Hang’s voice subsided, the two Phoenix Interstellar Warriors suddenly stepped forward and directly subdued General Tilermungs.

He opened his mouth to curse angrily, but in the next moment, an iron gauntlet firmly covered his mouth and nose, making it very difficult for him to breathe, let alone make a sound.

He was thus taken away by the two Phoenix warriors, like a little chick.

Afterward, two more Phoenix warriors appeared at the door, politely closed the conference room door, and stood guard outside.

Gu Hang nodded in satisfaction and said to the remaining people with a smile, “It seems, in a little while, General Tilermungs will calm down, agree to the establishment of the United Fleet, and also agree to the appointment of the two United Commanders.”

His gaze turned towards Yelisia and Du Shiliang, continuing, “I hope we can work closely together in the future.”

Yelisia nodded with a smile, while Du Shiliang was wiping sweat off his forehead, “Certainly, certainly.”

At that moment, a commodore captain asked, “Then…

what about Tilermungs?”

Gu Hang said gently, “He is the Commander of Tianma appointed by the Imperial Navy Command, and no one will change that.

The Tianma Fleet cannot be without him; he will return to Tianma Star Sector Wings Star, to oversee the future shipbuilding projects at the Flying Wing Star Shipyard.

It’s a very important task, only with General Tilermungs can we be reassured.”

Upon hearing this, everyone felt a lot more reassured.

Of course, they knew this was akin to a forced resignation following a power grab.

But this outcome was relatively acceptable.

As long as they didn’t kill Tilermungs and make things irreparable, that was fine.

The rest could be overlooked for now; everything depended on victory in the war.

Other matters could be discussed after winning and establishing contact with the Star Domain Government.

Whether or not Gu Hang should be punished wasn't something these captains could decide.

It would depend on how Star Domain Naval Command, the Military Affairs Department, and even the Star Domain Government saw the situation.

…

After the military conference ended, only Gu Hang and Yelisia remained in the conference room.

With the formalities over, the other captains tactfully departed quickly one by one.

No one would question why Yelisia didn't follow suit.

Facing Yelisia, Gu Hang revealed a genuine smile, "Long time no see."

Indeed, it had been a long while.

Since the fleets regrouped, the two had communicated many times, but always through virtual images.

After the campaign ended, they met in person, but it was either a banquet or a military meeting, and only now did they finally have a private meeting.

Previously, Gu Hang hadn't disclosed to Yelisia what he was going to do, but it seemed there was a special tacit understanding between them, and everything went smoothly.

In this moment, freeing herself from the pretense and revealing her true tiredness, Yelisia sincerely said to Gu Hang, “Yes, it’s been a long time.”

Seeing her current state, Gu Hang thoughtfully walked behind her.

“Hmm?”

“Shh, don’t move just yet.” Gu Hang’s hands touched the sides of her forehead, “Close your eyes, it’ll be over soon.”

Chapter 423, My Hero Yelisia felt somewhat nervous, for she didn’t know exactly what Gu Hang was going to do to her.

But since she was able to cooperate tacitly and complete something as serious as assisting Gu Hang in a coup, getting rid of her immediate superior without hardly any prior coordination with Gu Hang, it was even less of an issue to give him this bit of trust.

She didn’t think Gu Hang would do anything harmful to her.

She was just quite unaccustomed to such intimate contact with the opposite sex, giving her a very strange feeling.

Her body tensed up, but she obediently sat still, allowing Gu Hang to proceed.

She could feel the warmth of Gu Hang’s fingers as they moved down the sides of her forehead, to her cheeks, then to the back of her neck.

There was a slight tingling sensation that traveled from her mind through her body, even penetrating her soul.

This tingling didn’t excite her, but it was extremely comfortable, making her relax.

Before she realized it, she fell asleep.

When she slowly woke up, she was lying on a lounge chair in a resting room, covered with a thin blanket.

First, she checked herself and found that she was wearing a set of comfortable and soft pajamas.

Her face turned slightly red, feeling somewhat embarrassed.

Gu Hang!

But then she thought, it probably wasn't him.

The image of her fiancÃ© in her memory didn't appear as someone who would do such a thing.

I must not misunderstand him.

As she was thinking this, she heard the door open.

Gu Hang, dressed casually, walked in holding a gold-rimmed porcelain plate.

"You're awake," said Gu Hang, his smile gentle and warming.

"Mm…

How long have I slept?"

"Not long, two hours."

“Oh…

How did I fall asleep?”

“It was because of me,” Gu Hang said as he sat next to her and placed the porcelain plate on a small table beside the lounge chair.

The plate was filled with neatly cut fruit.

Gu Hang fed Yelisia a piece with an exquisite fork.

“It’s very fresh,” Yelisia commented, “I haven’t had this in a long time.”

On a starship, this was undoubtedly a luxury.

Perhaps at the beginning of their departure, the Quintet’s kitchen had stored some for the senior officers, but after so many years, certainly, nothing was left.

Later, with the tense war situation, precious transportation couldn’t be used for such items.

Eating the fruit, Yelisia asked Gu Hang, “What…

did you do to me just now?”

“I saw you were very tired, mainly spiritually, so I thought of a little method using spiritual energy to help you ease it a bit.”

“Indeed, I feel much more relaxed in body and spirit.

Is this also the power of spiritual energy?

I've never heard of it before."

That's because the most powerful spiritual energy user you've ever met, is right in front of you.

But Gu Hang didn't voice this thought, instead just smiling gently: "Seeing you had fallen asleep, I brought you here and had one of my female secretaries help you change your clothes."

This finally answered the question that Yelisia had been too embarrassed to ask.

It made her breathe a sigh of relief, but why did she still feel a hint of disappointment?

One rocked back and forth on a reclining chair, the other sat beside, slicing fruit and chatting idly about various topics.

The topics of conversation were quite diverse.

First, they talked about the health of family members, especially old Fufana's condition.

Gu Hang sighed, not bothering to hide anything, and revealed that Fufana's health was declining more and more.

Without the conditions to undergo another life-extension surgery, he likely wouldn't survive another operation, and the Tianma Star Sector didn't have the capability or means to conduct it.

Now, there was no way to get to Jindi Star either.

Yelisia still seemed somewhat sad.

Of all her family, it was this grandfather, a generation removed, with whom she shared the closest bond.

This wasn’t a topic that brought happiness or relaxation.

Afterwards, Gu Hang naturally shifted the conversation to describe the changes in Flying Wing Star, and even the whole Tianma Star Sector, over the years.

The changes were indeed significant.

Even on Flying Wing Star, the transformation was substantial.

In the years since Yelisia left the Tianma Star Sector, it was the time when Gu Hang’s power expanded from Rage Owl Star and eventually dominated the entire star sector.

Most of those changes were naturally brought about by Gu Hang.

“I truly couldn’t have imagined,” Yelisia exclaimed, “just a few years ago, when you boarded my ship from the starport on Flying Wing Star, you only brought one person with you to that notorious, hopeless world of Rage Owl Star.”

“In just these few years, you’ve reached this point.”

Gu Hang said with a smile, “Your help was indispensable in all this.”

“Of course!” Yelisia puffed out her chest proudly, “I certainly won’t forget my own contributions.

Your initial capital all came from swindling on my starship.

Those mech servants, my Navy Marine Corps, and even the present commander-in-chief of your Alliance Land Forces, was once a Marine Corps officer on my ship!”

Gu Hang laughed heartily, “Hahaha!

You’re absolutely right!

You’re my angel investor!”

“My investment turned out to be hugely successful,” Yelisia reflected, “Who could have thought it?

To be honest, at first, I didn’t have much faith in what you could achieve.

Starting from scratch, penniless in a wasteland.

But now, just fourteen years later, you’ve become the sole ruler of a whole star sector, with sixty billion people submitting to you, commanding an immense army and a fleet that obscures the sky…”

“Not to mention back then, even when we had just got engaged, you were already on the rise, but the biggest label on you was still the Young Family Head of the Gu Clan.

How could I dare to imagine that, in a few years’ time, my fiancÃ© would become the biggest and only ruler of the entire star sector?”

Gu Hang teased Yelisia, “Don’t you like it?”

Yelisia’s eyes even seemed somewhat misty, “Of course not, even though I’ve always hoped to take up the family’s mantle and become the finest naval admiral.

But…

haven’t I also dreamed that my future husband would be a hero of legends?”

“Do you think I’ve met that standard?” he asked.

Yelisia smiled slyly, “What do you think?”

Gu Hang didn’t answer, instead he just lowered his head and continued to peel the fruit.

But he could feel the breath of Yelisia on his cheek:

“You certainly are, my hero.”

The tender moments between Gu Hang and Yelisia were but a fleeting episode in the cold expanse of the universe.

Brutal war was the eternal theme.

They couldn’t rest for long, as there were too many things yet to do.

Having crushed the main fleet of the Green Skins on Steel Wing Star, they immediately had to allocate forces to address the issue of Green Skins’ invasions in the Eagle Horse Star District, and in the neighbouring Mist Horse Star District.

Inside the Eagle Horse Star Sector, Green Skins’ ships should no longer exist.

If there were any, they were small raiding groups, which could cause trouble, but would not hinder the grand scheme.

The Dragonhawk and Rage Bear Star Realm Army Corps would remain on Steel Wing Star as defense forces.

Meanwhile, half of the eighty million Alliance Army would disperse to various planets in the Eagle Horse Star Sector to deal with the Green Skins’ ground invasions.

Chapter 424, Don’t Expect to Reap Without Sowing!

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Addressing the Green Skin invasion on the various planets within the Eagle Horse Star Sector won’t be too difficult.

In fact, half of the planets are already under control.

The Alliance Army dealt with them on the way to Steel Wing Star.

The other half that wasn’t on the previous marching route is what needs to be taken care of this time.

Excluding Steel Wing Star, the Alliance Army has committed about thirty-five million ground forces to the Eagle Horse Star Sector.

They face a Green Skin force that is likely less than thirty million strong, and they are assisted by a native Defense Forces that outnumber them several times over.

Overall, even if the United Fleet can’t spare resources to provide orbital fire support for the ground battles in the Eagle Horse Star Sector, eradicating the Green Skins on the surface of those planets will still not pose any problem.

It’s just a matter of the extent of casualties and the length of time it will take.

As for why the United Fleet can’t free up resources to provide orbital fire support for the ground battles in the Eagle Horse Star Sector, that’s because they have many more important tasks at hand.

The priority is to defend the Steel Wing Star System.

This is a critical transport hub, and they must guard against the possibility of the Green Skins regrouping and invading again.

After all, no matter how devastating the losses to the Green Skin fleet, at least two hundred warships remain.

Moreover, who knows how many Green-Skin ships and armies exist beyond the Golden Pass Star Sector in the Green Skins' main base?

This location requires a strong military presence, with thirty million Star Realm forces and at least half of the United Fleet's ships stationed here, unable to leave.

Major General Du Shiliang, the Second United Commander, is responsible for this war zone and will undertake this mission.

The other half of the United Fleet, under the leadership of Yelisia, the First United Commander, has entered the Mist Horse Star District with a nearly forty million-strong Alliance Army.

Although the head of the Mist Horse Star District has not signed the Seven Horses Treaty to this day, many planet governors have.

Since they have signed, they must be taken care of, which is the core principle for the establishment of the Seven Horses Treaty.

Among them, there is a key star systemEmerald Spring I.

Looking at the star map, heading north from Steel Wing Star, you reach Emerald Spring II, and further north is Emerald Spring I.

This world itself is an ordinary mining world with a population of about three hundred million people, but it is also a transportation route.

To the south, it connects to the Eagle Horse Star Sector; to the east, it leads from Xiyuan III into the heartland of the Mist Horse Star District; to the north, it connects with two worlds in the Copper Barrier Star District, an area of occupation.

Its status is similar to Steel Wing Star in the Eagle Horse Star Sector.

By securing Emerald Spring I, they can essentially prevent the Green Skins from moving south from the Copper Barrier Star District and can serve as a shield for the Mist Horse Star District, protecting the safety of the rear.

After entering Emerald Spring II and deploying an army group of one million to address the local Green Skin issue, Yelisia's forces continued north into Emerald Spring I.

Emerald Spring I has not signed the Seven Horses Treaty, not because they are unwilling to sign, but because they cannot.

About a month ago, the Planetary Governor of Emerald Spring I went missing, and even the whole planet has stopped transmitting information.

It is suspected that the planet has largely lost its ground resistance capabilities.

The people are probably not all dead, but it is feared that there are no organized forces left to confront the Green Skin Orcs on the front-line battlefields, at most there might be some guerrilla forces or the Rebel Army.

The surviving people are likely hiding in the city's underground tunnels, strong fortresses, deep mine shafts, and similar places, desperately clinging to life.

The Governor of Emerald Spring I is either dead or they have lost control of the Star Language Tower, unable to carry out interstellar communication, hence no effective signals can be transmitted.

But despite not signing the Seven Horses Treaty, the Alliance Army has still come.

This place is too important, and the Seven Horses Treaty has unilaterally declared that this planet will be included within the protective scope of the Treaty.

Upon arrival at the target star system, Yelisia's fleet quickly commenced operations.

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Without a word, they first drove away the Green Skin Ships.

In the star system, they discovered approximately six or seven Green Skin Ships.

These ships, coming from the Copper Barrier Star Sector, were likely transporting loads of Green Skin youngsters and a vast amount of military supplies.

Essentially, these vessels were used for transporting troops and supplies to various Green Skin invading forces across the Mist Horse Star District.

These garbage carriers, laden with cargo, couldn't move very fast nor did they possess any significant combat capabilities, so they were quickly disposed of.

Subsequently, the United Fleet began to bomb the surface of Emerald Spring I fiercely and indiscriminately.

Destroying the Green Skin forces on the ground was one aspect; another was to signal to any possible resistance on the planet that their savior had arrived.

Fifteen million of the Alliance Army, employing a myriad of landing crafts, established three major landing zones in the orbitally-bombarded areas safe enough to do so and then unfolded their forces.

On the one hand, they engaged in combat with the Green-Skin Army on the surface, which was estimated to be about ten million strong.

On the other hand, they were diligently searching for survivors on the planet.

The situation on the ground was almost exactly as they had anticipated: more than three hundred million people, scattered across the entire planet, wouldn't be so easily exterminated, especially hidden in the complex environments of various mineshafts, mining districts, and smelting factories.

In this universe filled with all manner of strange and dangerous creatures, the most numerous and the ones occupying the most planets were undoubtedly humans.

Such vast population numbers and the expansive empire they commanded were certainly not handed to them on a silver platter.

Never underestimate the resilience of the human race.

The Alliance Army wasn't searching for survivors because they needed local forces to help fight the Green Skins; it was unnecessary.

The native forces had already been decimated, leaving only a handful of rebels with self-made weapons, who, at best, could engage in guerrilla warfare but were of little help in direct combat.

The rescued survivors would be protected in areas under the control of the Alliance Army, assisting the soldiers with logistical transport and the construction of defensive fortifications.

Incidentally, they would also be organized to restore some production capabilities.

As for the original pillar industries of Emerald Spring Imining and smeltingthere was no hurry to restore them.

Instead, some remains of soilless cultures and vertical farms were to be reused.

If the logistics and supplies of the Alliance Army relied entirely on interstellar transport, the pressure would still be considerable.

If it were just the military, it would be manageable, but having to support a large number of local civilians significantly increased the burden.

It was necessary to find a way to reactivate the few planting factories occupied by the Green Skins.

There was no expectation to solve all food supply problems locally, but any amount that could be locally sourced would relieve some pressure.

Considering the significance of Emerald Spring I, Yelisia even left nearly half of her naval forces stationed in orbit around Emerald Spring I.

This ensured the security of the battles concerning Emerald Spring I was foolproof.

Afterward, without waiting for the conflict on Emerald Spring I to be completely resolved, Yelisia, following the star map, split her forces and dispatched them east and west.

A small contingent was sent to Emerald Spring III on the west side.

Emerald Spring III was an isolated world with no particular special features and was not considered important.

It was simply reclaimed along the way.

The main force she led proceeded eastward, heading to Xiyuan III and making its way deep into the Mist Horse territory.

Their destinations were Mist Horse I and Shangyuan Star, which were the Star Sector Capital and the vital passage to the Tianma Star Sector, respectively.

Beyond military objectives, Yelisia also bore the political task of demanding the entire Mist Horse Star District to be incorporated into the framework of the Seven Horse Accords.

To every planet in Mist Horse, and even to the Mist Horse Star Sector Government, she conveyed a message from Gu Hang:

“While we are fighting in the forefront, spilling our blood, the Alliance will not allow any world to enjoy the benefits without contributing.

Any governor, leader, or government that cannot shoulder their responsibility, that cannot stand beside the Alliance in battle, will be suspected of severe dereliction of duty or betrayal of the Empire.

The Alliance, empowered by the Seven Horse Accords and the Star Domain Government, will not tolerate such conduct!”

Chapter 425, The Seven Horses Pact Great Spread Indeed, those words had been spoken by Gu Hang.

Actually, whether it was the Mist Horse Star District or even further back the Purple Horse Sector, Border Horse Sector, or Iron Horse Sector, they’d have to decide whether to join the Seven Horse Treaty or notGu Hang would have to fight this war regardless.

After all, he could ignore the life and death of others, but he could not ignore his own.

If they didn’t defend Steel Wing Star and Emerald Spring I, the Green Skins would swarm from the two northern sectors.

The Alliance would then have to defend the Fatches Star System and the Flying Wing Star System.

It would be better to defend the former two.

Besides, Steel Wing Star was a fortress world, and Emerald Spring I was just a mining world; damaging them would not be a big loss.

If the battle took place at Flying Wing Star and a cruiser dockyard was damaged, Gu Hang would have nowhere to cry.

One should never let the flames of war reach their homeland.

And since they were going to defend Steel Wing Star and Emerald Spring I, not to mention Eagle Horse and Mist Horse, following the alliance's military actions, the four major sectors of Purple Horse, Border Horse, Iron Horse, and Cultivating Horse would all benefit and be spared from the Green Skins' invasion.

In effect, they were getting a good deal and then not joining the Seven Horse Treaty, which amounted to freeloading off the Alliance's military protection.

Could Gu Hang let people take advantage of this situation?

The Alliance wasn't trying to annex them anyway.

In fact, even if they wanted to join the Alliance, Gu Hang might not agree.

Several worlds in the Eagle Horse Sector had been holding secret discussions with the Alliance, not just to sign the Seven Horse Treaty but even to take a further step and directly join the Alliance.

But Gu Hang had rejected them.

It wasn't an outright 'no', but at least the timing was not right.

On one hand, there were political and diplomatic implications; it was easy to assimilate territories, but when the Seven Horse Treaty spread to other star sectors, things would become more complicated.

The planetary governors and leaders already had their doubts; adding this issue would make negotiations much more difficult.

Moreover, from the Alliance's internal perspective, joining the Alliance would mean a significant change in political structure and implied that the Alliance would have to treat the residents of those worlds as its own citizens.

Political reforms, economic reforms, changes in welfare benefitsall these things would have to be addressed.

Otherwise, wouldn't that be tantamount to obtaining them for nothing?

Of course, with this whole set of changes, the world would eventually be digested as part of the Alliance.

However, digestion takes time, not to mention that the initial phase would require significant investment.

The Alliance itself had already issued a level three mobilization order.

The fact that consumer spending was just barely maintained was already quite impressive, as a large amount of production shifted from civilian goods to military and heavy industry, resulting in a halt to improvements in the quality of life for the populace.

The increase in production capabilities was mainly directed at all war-related industries, with significant reductions in the production of civilian vehicles, home appliances, and the like.

Under these circumstances, asking the Alliance to shoulder the burden of rebuilding worlds ravaged by war was a task that wouldn't see returns in the short term.

It was out of the question.

At least until after the war was over.

The Seven Horse Treaty model was already a good arrangement.

This was a treaty that emphasized the concept of a military alliance.

The Alliance would not interfere with the political and economic development of the signing planets, requiring only unity in military command.

That is, the Alliance wouldn't manage how civilians lived on the planets, the structure of the governments, or the economic development.

The Alliance only cared about collecting Imperial Taxes to fight the Green Skins; ensuring that the local Defense Army's numbers and quality met certain standards and accepted the unified coordination and command of the United Fleet's headquarters; and levying a special war tax when necessary.

All this was for the sake of war.

Fighting the Green Skins was the responsibility of all governors and leaders; it was unreasonable for the Alliance to bear the brunt alone.

Just sign the Seven Horse Treaty already.

If not, fine, if the Green Skins can't reach you because I've held them off, the Alliance can still fight you.

Normally, Gu Hang couldn't deal with a Planetary Governor from a star sector away, let alone the head of a star sector.

He had previously handled Extinct Soil Star under the guise of capturing pirates, and indeed he obtained evidence of the governor of Extinct Soil colluding with the pirates, which led to Gu Hang disposing of him.

However, because of this, the Cultivating Horse Star Sector had not refrained from negotiations and verbal exchanges and even complained to the Star Domain Government.

The actual harm wasn't significant, but it was quite annoying.

But now, it was a different matter altogether.

If Gu Hang could confront the Star Domain Government, what else needed to be feared?

In fact, once Yelisia's fleet had swept through the thirteen star systems of the Mist Horse Star District, ensuring that this district joined the framework of the Seven Horse Territory, her fleet would continue westward into East Garden III, entering the territory of the Purple Horse Sector.

As of yet, the Purple Horse Sector had not been invaded by the Green Skins.

This sector had a population of thirty-eight billion, making it the second most populous in the Seven Horse Territory, after Eagle Horse.

The leadership of Purple Horse had always found excuses to avoid joining the Seven Horse Treaty, claiming that the Purple Horse Sector had been suffering from severe rebellion.

Rebels even went so far as to seize the starport and the small shipyard on Ancient Silver Star.

The rebels' land forces caused them great distress, and the proliferation of pirates also endangered the safety of the Purple Horse Sector.

They simply could not join the Seven Horse Treaty and concentrate the sector's forces on fighting the Green Skin Orcs.

Gu Hang accepted their reasoning.

The United Fleet led by Yelisia, along with nearly twenty million Alliance Army troops, entered the Purple Horse Sector to help the Purple Horse leadership quell the rebellion.

Either, after the rebellion within Purple Horse was suppressed, the entire Purple Horse Sector would sign the Seven Horse Treaty.

Or, if they were lying and deceiving the Alliance, ignoring the overall strategy of the star domain against the Iron-teeth Greenskins, the Alliance would come to administer justice, and then the new leaders and governors would likely understand the Alliance's goodwill and eventually join the framework of the Seven Horse Treaty.

Either way, the Purple Horse Sector had the freedom to choose.

They could decide how they wanted to join the Seven Horse Treaty.

Gu Hang awaited good news from the Purple Horse Sector.

Should the situation turn dire, Gu Hang neither wanted nor intended to start a civil war while external threats remained unaddressed.

He had already provided Yelisia with some additional personnel to assist her and had also allowed her to learn from the methods the Empire used when dealing with disobedient, inefficient, or non-tax-paying Planetary Governors.

These included techniques from the Empire Legal Affairs Department and the Imperial Inquisition.

These two Imperial organizations had ample experience in handling Planetary Governors, and Gu Hang felt they were worth studying closely.

If the Empire had to send a large army to suppress every world that did not pay or inadequately paid Imperial Tax, they would certainly be overwhelmed.

Too many to handle.

Trial, bribery, assassination, subversion, and coups…

these methods, coupled with small-scale military suppression and support for new spokespersons and interest groups…

Were all good strategies.

And now, these tasks were entrusted to Yelisia and the various departments of the Alliance officials accompanying her, while Gu Hang himself was busy with something else.

The rewards from the Steel Wing Star battle had been settled for him.

Chapter 426, Factory Exchange of 500,000 The battle at Steel Wing Star might be the largest campaign that Gu Hang had ever initiated and conducted.

The ground combat alone was probably even more massive than the Plague War at Korolyaexcept for the part where a Great Demon was fought in the Subspace.

But the battle at Steel Wing Star also involved lines of mighty starships firing volleys at each other across the Star Sea.

In total, Gu Hang received 930,000 grace points.

The grace points calculated from this battle were slightly less than those from the Plague War at Korolya.

The latter had reached the million mark, whereas this time it fell short.

The reason, Gu Hang surmised, was that the Demon Govaaga he had taken down provided a substantial number of grace points.

In the battle at Steel Wing Star, the main source of substantial gains in grace points was, after all, the naval part of the conflict.

Since the ships of the Tianma Fleet that served as the main force were not considered his core power, their victories were not included in the gains of grace points by the system.

Were it not for the fact that many of the enemy's main ships were brought down by the shields Gu Hang tore through with his Spiritual Energy, the calculated grace points would have been even fewer.

Nevertheless, with this, Gu Hang's grace point balance had once again surpassed one million.

In addition to the 930,000 points from this settlement, the monthly income from the past two months also added up, amounting to almost seventy thousand; plus the little left over from before, as well as some achievements earned by the Alliance Army in various worlds of the Eagle Horse Star Sector on the way to Steel Wing Staraltogether accounting for tens of thousands more.

Gu Hang still did not plan on saving these one million grace points.

He intended to spend them quickly, hoping that these points could further accelerate the Alliance's construction work, preparing for the next phase of the war.

With a bold stroke, he invested five hundred thousand grace points all into one thing: the exchange of various kinds of "Factories" in the "Construction" panel.

"Factory" buildings were a very solid exchange option.

They had no fancy effects, and did not offer anything new; they simply and directly enhanced the production efficiency of existing real-life factories.

Gu Hang had indeed studied it carefully: the factories upgraded through the exchange showed spurts of brilliance with some comrades having innovative ideas for improvements to the existing production lines, from workflow to factory design, to specific enhancements in production lines, bringing forth actual benefits.

These were the improvements in production efficiency reflected in the exchange options.

No matter how the increase in production efficiency was achieved, if enough of these options were exchanged, they would bring a substantial boost to the Alliance's overall production capacity.

Furthermore, the “Construction” interface now not only offered the initial level one factories but had also expanded up to level three.

The exchange option for a level one factory was 100 grace points, level two reached 1,000 points, and level three 10,000 points.

Gu Hang decisively upgraded every dock of the Alliance’s two major shipyards to at least level two; a few key docks, such as those at Flying Wing Star’s cruiser dockyards, were upgraded to level three.

At important ammunition production center factories on Rage Owl Star and Korolya, Gu Hang bit the bullet and upgraded them to level three production as well.

Gu Hang exchanged for a total of 10 level three factories, 100 level two factories, and 3,000 level one factories, applying them to various production lines.

Spending these five hundred thousand grace points directly boosted the total industrial output value of the Alliance from 112.3 billion tax currency to 124 billion.

This was an increase of over 10% in total production value, a development goal that, according to the plan, the Alliance would have needed one year to achieve.

Under the miraculous effect of Gu Hang’s grace points, what would have taken a whole year happened in just a second.

Moreover, the areas of growth were precisely what Gu Hang wanted: primarily in military industrial production and secondarily in the supply of various other military materials, such as field rations.

In the military industry sector, the focus was on the construction of starships, where the largest production growth occurred.

Other key areas included the production of heat-melting bombs, plasma weapons, heavy shells, and missiles.

One should not overlook theseespecially the shells, which are the biggest consumables in war.

When the intensity of a war escalates to a certain degree and the situation is dominated by a stalemate, it often happens that there are cannons but not enough shells to fire.

Having thousands of cannons fire simultaneously may sound fierce and passionately explosive, but with the Alliance's cannon technology, it's easy to fire about ten rounds per minutea higher rate of fire is possible, but it would take too heavy a toll on the barrel life.

This rate of ten rounds per minute optimizes barrel longevity.

To say that ten thousand cannons are difficult to come by would be an understatement; one Alliance Army Group genuinely has that many, and even far more.

And at that rate, one Alliance Army Group can fire a million heavy shells in an hourlighter weapons like mortars or light field guns don't even qualify for the conversation; these are all large-caliber heavy cannons, with at least 155mm howitzers, and the Alliance Land Forces even have a small number of even mightier 305mm self-propelled heavy cannons.

Without sufficient production capacity, how could one sustain the consumption of the Alliance Land Forces to this extent?

The mightier the production, the stronger the firepower.

Not to mention, it's not just the Land Forces that need various types of shells; the navy needs them just as much.

Another part of the production boost was invested in the manufacture of Lion King Tanks, Mechas, and Titans.

These ace war machines of the Land Forces were the core equipment needed to confront the Green Skin Orcs' Killer Cans, Death Cans, and Skugg War Behemoths in head-to-head battles on the frontlinenaturally, the more the better.

The fully-powered production of the Alliance will send massive amounts of war materials to the front lines via a huge transportation fleet.

Currently, the intensity of the war the Alliance faces does not actually require so much ammunition reserve and equipment consumption.

But that's alright; all these can be stored on key transit hubs like Steel Wing Star, Emerald Spring I, and the planets in the Eagle Horse and Mist Horse Star Districts.

This is in preparation for the large-scale war with the Green Skins that may very well erupt next.

The more prepared we are now, the more at ease we can be when the war starts.

And the significance of these five hundred thousand grace points Gu Hang spent goes beyond just the war.

The enhanced productivity, as long as there are no accidents, will never vanish.

In the future, it will always be effective.

Chapter 427: Investing in People 500,000 grace points brought an annual production value of 100 billion, and theoretically, this increase is permanent.

Of course, if the social environment of these planets experienced a major upheaval, or if there was widespread corruption, institutional rigidity, then it could still lead to a decrease in production.

But that would not be an issue with the exchange options, and rather a problem with Gu Hang's governance.

Whatever needed to be addressed would be addressed.

The other 500,000 grace points at his disposal had more complex uses.

He spent 200,000 on military training, which would bring 20 million qualified soldiers.

The Alliance Army no longer relied solely on his Soldier Badge Training System to train troops, and a significant portion of qualified soldiers had been trained under the competent training mechanisms established by the Alliance over the past few years.

However, the training process was still quite time-consuming.

In order to ensure the combat capability of the corresponding troops, Gu Hang still needed to train a portion of qualified T5-grade soldiers through the Army Badge System, to increase the proportion of standard Star Realm Army soldiers in certain units up to 70%, and even above 80%.

These 20 million newly trained soldiers would not be used to form new unit designations.

Instead, they would be sent from the training centres on various planets within the Tianma Star Sector to different units, especially the frontline units, to reinforce the corresponding teams.

Now, some division-level units of the Alliance Army that had been severely depleted in the war had been withdrawn for rest and recuperation.

These units would be given priority in receiving troop reinforcements.

Of course, to ensure sufficient combat personnel for the frontline units, when one division was withdrawn, the Alliance would send out another division to be incorporated into the appropriate Army Group.

Currently, the size of the Alliance Army had reached over 400 million, in terms of organization, at least.

This included 18 Army Group clusters, each comprised of 20 Army Groups, totaling 22 million personnel,

A single Army Group had approximately one million personnel, made up of 25 divisions and brigades.

Generally speaking, the sizes of both the Army Groups and Army Group clusters varied.

Some groups had fewer divisions and brigades, some had more, and the number of divisions and brigades under each group could also vary, with temporary reassignments of some units to needed areas during wars.

By contrast, the organization below the division and brigade level was fixed and unchanging.

The current situation of the Alliance's division and brigade level units had become quite complex, but generally speaking, there were three common formats:

The most numerous were the large infantry divisions, typically around 44,000 personnel, made up of 12 infantry regiments, which were the main combat force of the division; in addition, 8 artillery battalions with 400 heavy cannons supported them, and each infantry regiment also had its own self-propelled artillery support company, all of which were equipped with self-propelled artillery.

A division would thus have at least 600 self-propelled artillery units.

Smaller mortars, rocket artillery, heavy bombs, heavy plasma guns, and thermobaric bomb launchers and such were not included in this count, as these weapons were typically distributed at the company and battalion level.

They also had an air squadron with at least 60 Windfalcon Fighters.

This type of large infantry division was the undisputed main force and backbone of the Alliance, the shield and hammer of the Alliance.

They boasted a large number of personnel and heavy firepower, essential for assault and defense battles.

Once trenches were dug, and fortifications built, any enemy attempting to break through would have to endure a battering from the Alliance's heavy artillery to stand a chance.

The total cost of such a division reached 1.3 million Tax Currency.

The second most common type of unit was the heavy armored Composite Camp.

The main force consisted of 8 heavy armored battalions and 3 tank battalions.

Not to mention the large number of armored vehicles and self-propelled artillery, the main power was 320 Lion Tanks and 9 Lion King Tanks, as well as 60 Windfalcon Fighters.

Despite having only around 12,500 personnel, the massive armored force made such a heavy armored brigade virtually impervious on the battlefield!

The cost of such a division skyrocketed to nearly 5 million Tax Currency.

The least numerous was the 'Skeleton Division'; such a division could basically be understood as a combination of an infantry division and an armored division, with a total of over 60,000 personnel, fiercer firepower, stronger armored capabilities, and mainly tasked with a Group's most critical combat mission in certain aspects.

Unlike regular divisions and brigades, a significant proportion of soldiers were T4 grade; their infantry equipment was also updated to a large proportion of laser guns and electromagnetic rifles.

The number of high-grade weapons such as bombs, plasma, thermobaric and other advanced weaponry was also much higher among the infantry than in regular units.

The cost of such a division further soared to 9 million Tax Currency.

As for the 1st Extinguishing Wind Brigade, 2nd Beast Slayer Division, 10th Special Warfare Brigade, 31st Ace Airdrop Divisionthese four elite special unitstheir equipment and personnel configuration were incomparable to other division and brigade units.

This was the current composition of the Alliance Land Forces.

They had the numbers and the frontal firepower, sustained by the numerous large infantry divisions; they had the armor and the breakthrough capability, held up by the heavy brigades.

For key battles, they had the Skeleton Divisions to step in, elite units that could stand alongside any renowned high-grade Star Realm Army Corps in terms of equipment and training.

Chapter 427: Investing in People_2 Unfortunately, the Alliance is still not wealthy enough.

The “Skeleton Division,” this type of elite unit, even now can’t ensure every Army Group has one, let alone each Army Group cluster only having one or two at most.

Despite this, the Alliance Army remains Gu Hang’s pride and the trump card that the Alliance has stood tall with to this day.

Even though the Alliance has invested substantial manpower and resources, allocating the most important resources and most of the funds into the construction of the naval forces in hopes of catching up and overtaking the competition, as things stand, the Army is still the backbone of the Alliance’s existence.

A large infantry division can ensure its position is not lost under an equivalent number of Green Skins’ assaults; add one heavy composite brigade, and it can break through the positions of twice or even three times the number of Green Skins; when facing elite Green Skins with heavy equipment, the Alliance also has sufficient firepower and armored forces to contend.

All of this is extremely rare.

Even more so, Gu Hang can confidently say that within the entire Dragonhawk Star Domain, there isn’t a second human ground force that can compare with the Alliance Army.

Not even the Dragonhawk Legion can do it.

The Dragonhawk Legion has a total of thirteen legions, with a total population exceeding one billion, which is much more than the Alliance Army, but in terms of equipment and overall training level, they are certainly inferior.

As long as the Alliance catches up in naval force at least not to be a drag, then the strength of the Alliance Army can play a significant role on the cosmic battlefield.

By “not being a drag,” it means the navy doesn’t necessarily have to win naval battles, just ensure the troops can be properly delivered, and ensure the enemy can’t conduct orbital bombardments on one’s own army without restraint.

That’s enough.

This requirement is much simpler than gaining control of space.

And as long as this low standard is met, then the combat power of the Alliance can be exponentially unleashed.

After all, in this cold universe, the void itself has no value.

The most important value still lies on the many planets.

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In addition to the two hundred thousand blessing points spent on the construction of the Land Forces, Gu Hang also invested one hundred and fifty thousand blessing points in talent development.

Here, the spending was more diverse.

Further construction of academies consumed a sum of blessing points.

Flying Wing Star's educational industry was already fairly developed, but the Alliance couldn't possibly rely solely on Flying Wing Star to carry out all educational work.

On Rage Owl Star, Korolya, Fatches…

the construction of corresponding academies needed to be scheduled as well.

There was also adequate training for civil officials.

Especially after entering the war period, the Alliance launched a third-level mobilization order.

Under this scale of mobilization, large-scale social unrest was unlikely, and the entire order was maintained very well, even strengthened somewhat.

However, maintaining a stronger social order requires more governance costs.

At the same time, under the mobilization order, civilian production, if not thwarted, has at least significantly slowed down, which has led to stagnation in the growth of the public's standard of living.

This issue also requires stronger government control and propaganda to keep under control.

Gu Hang was very vigilant against systemic corruption emerging within the Alliance without his notice.

The more critical the time, the more cautious one must be of pervasive corruption.

At his insistence, on one hand, the government system needed to self-examine and self-correct, ensuring that situations like "the system forces one to be corrupt," "needing to do wrong for superior

targets and performance," "ensuring consistency between core goals and specific policies," "ensuring consistency of goals among government, officials, and the public," etc.

did not arise.

In general, a good system encourages good deeds; a bad system forces one to commit bad deeds.

All these presented higher management requirements for the Alliance Government, requiring constant vigilance and adjustments, relying on continuous system reforms to maintain vitality.

But all changes and internal adjustments require people to carry them out.

In terms of personnel quality, the conventional educational system is certainly the most important aspect.

However, training key personnel in key positions through the Loyal Heir Academy to ensure loyalty is a safeguard for the minimum standard.

Before even discussing if there is a problem with the system, one must first ensure that there is no issue with the people who reform and execute the system.

Without the latter, there is no basis for the former.

Apart from the educational foundation and training of civil officials, Gu Hang also had a special investment in personnel, focusing on special operations.

The Alliance's need for intelligence had grown with its size, becoming increasingly important.

Overseen by Lambert Chief Justice, the center of legal administration, which is independent of the Alliance Government, has internal intelligence capabilities, although they are distinguished by their functions.

The Police Bureau is responsible for public cases, primarily focusing on maintaining order and stability; the Anti-Corruption Bureau is responsible for combating corruption among government officials and state-owned enterprises; the Alliance Security Bureau is in charge of counter-espionage, subversion, surveillance, and crackdowns on rebels.

The former two need not be elaborated on, but the presence of the Total Security Bureau within the Alliance, although not widely felt, was not without its actions.

The society of the Alliance has always been stable, not only because after obtaining ruling rights over the Tianma Star Sector, the standard of living for the public did not decline but increased.

Various local forces were either bound to the chariot of the Alliance or were crushed to ashes by an iron fist.

But it can never be completely clean.

Chapter 427, Investing in People_3 “`

There are always remnants that exist.

For instance, on Heijian Star in various old kingdoms, there are diehards of the Loyalist Party, remnants of the old gangs of Korolya, former bureaucrats, remnants of the Fatches Family, and former business owners of Flying Wing Star who were nationalized…

as well as their sympathizers and supporters, have always existed.

Some were beaten by the iron fist but not thoroughly, while others pretend to get on board with the Federation but secretly continue to aid those remnants.

These guys, of course, don’t dare to act openly.

If they do, they’d be signing their death warrants.

Under the strong, unified, and tight rule of the Federation, with powerful military forces and the widespread trust of the populace, direct rebellion and confrontation would be like an egg striking a rock.

However, this does not mean that their hatred and the will to resist has been completely extinguished.

Rumors, incitements, strikes, secretly dealing in weapons to confuse the public into rioting, packaging individual tragic cases (which are unavoidable in a society of 60 billion) as faults of the Federation's governance and privately propagating them…

Such underhanded tactics have never completely ceased.

The main work of the Security Administration these years has been to fight against this very thing.

As for the internal intelligence organizations, there is the Military Security Bureau under Tadeusz's Military Center, which also engages in anti-espionage and anti-riot activities, but leans more towards military aspects; there is also the Gendarmerie Headquarters, led by the military political commissars, responsible for internal military discipline;

On the government side, there is the Ministry of Internal Affairs, responsible for self-inspection and self-correction within the government side, and purging of rebels.

All in all, the three departments under the Ministry of Justice, two under the Military Affairs Department, and one from the government, totaling six departments with clear internal monitoring and management responsibilities.

Their authorities are each weighted differently but also intersect and overlap with each other, allowing for mutual supervision.

All these institutions require special personnel with investigative and special service techniques, which are the espionage agents.

Beyond the internal intelligence organizations, there are also three major foreign intelligence organizations: the Foreign Intelligence Bureau under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Military

Intelligence Division of the Military Affairs Department, and the Central Investigation Bureau under the Ministry of Justice.

In military terms, it's fairly manageable, whether internally or externally, as of now, pulling political commissars and special forces from various units to form a forceful protection is generally sufficient.

However, the non-military espionage agents still need cultivation, as the Federation has a substantial gap in personnel in this area.

The primary requirement for these individuals is loyalty, which is mainly addressed through the training at Loyal Heir Academy and direct training by Gu Hang, who secures it with his 10-point favor.

However, training in skills and techniques relies heavily on the Federation's own development, and there are no such categories in Gu Hang's current options for troop exchange.

Fortunately, such 'trades' value quality over quantity.

Gu Hang may not be able to provide a comprehensive guarantee for the intelligence personnel of the Federation, whether internal or external, but he does have a way to enhance them: hero activation.

At present, under a population of over 600 billion, there are tens of millions with the potential to be activated as heroes.

Gu Hang can't activate all these people, but he can direct activation.

For example, if there is a need to improve the efficiency of shipyards, Gu Hang can filter through all the shipyard engineers, see how many potential heroes there are for activation, and selectively activate a portion of them; the same applies to espionage agents.

Although it's possible that the person currently working as a spy might not have his greatest potential in this field.

However, the likelihood is not high.

To become spies under the strict recruitment, training, and assessment of the eight departments, they are more likely to have specialized skills in espionage.

If occasionally a mismatch occurs, then so be it.

After all, activating a potential hero with ten points of favor isn't expensive.

The costly part is the subsequent upgrade, but they can also accumulate experience and gradually level up on their own.

All in all, on the construction of academies, the activation of heroes among espionage agents and ship engineers, Gu Hang also spent a total of 200,000 points of favor.

The remaining 100,000, he plans to use to draw a 100,000-tier piece of technology.

Chapter 428, I am the Dominant Bishop!

The investment in nurturing military backbone, the construction of academies, the loyalty training at Loyal Heir Academy, and the targeted activation of ship engineers and special agent talents are all investments in 'people,' the most fundamental and important resource.

Together with the previous investment of five hundred thousand in factories, the grace points Gu Hang had earned in this round were mostly spent.

Of the remaining one or two hundred thousand, aside from setting aside a few tens of thousands as a reserve, he planned to invest the rest in the technology tree lottery draw.

Not counting the previously exhausted prize pool, Gu Hang now had two choices: ten thousand, and one hundred thousand.

After some thought, he chose the latter.

Although the prize pool for the former hadn't dried up yet, the probabilities of drawing epic and elite-grade technologies were getting low.

True, there might be a chance to get something good with ten consecutive draws, but since he had one hundred thousand at hand and the prize pool for that was still a complete, high-probability one, it made more sense to go for a big play.

What Gu Hang most hoped for was to draw naval-related technologies to directly boost the speed at which the alliance could surge its navy.

However, after really investing the one hundred thousand grace points, things did not go as desired.

Though winning an epic-grade technology with a 50% chance, he didn't get the hoped-for naval-related technology but instead drew [Stellar Energy Technology].

Somewhat disappointed, Gu Hang quickly accepted reality and deemed the [Stellar Energy Technology] to be quite impressive.

The alliance was currently in a phase of explosive capacity production, and the daily energy consumption on the frontlines was astronomical.

Reliance on fossil fuels was certainly unrealistic, not to mention, many core war machines and high-grade manufacturing factories couldn't use fossil fuels at all.

The representatives of the former are the navy's ships and the Land Forces' Titans; of the latter, the shipyards.

The energy solution for these things depended on the elite-grade technology that Gu Hang had already drawn earlier, [Compressed Energy Technology], which transformed electrical or spirit-based energy into energy crystal blocksthese are highly dense solid-state energy crystals that can be likened to batteries with extraordinarily high performance and capacity.

Although the alliance had an oil industry, it supplied mainly medium and low-end vehicles and machinery that use the Grindstone Engine.

The energy used by high-grade machinery was all from energy crystal blocks.

Even, at critical times, when fossil fuel reserves on the frontlines weren't sufficient, and machinery needed to run, the Grindstone Engines would rely on energy crystal blocks to keep going.

At such times, cost-effectiveness was not considered; the priority was to get machines operating.

Likewise, energy crystal blocks could also be transformed back into electrical energy.

This was useful for interstellar-level energy trade, eliminating the need to build a truly interplanetary power transmission networkwhich was impossible.

Conversely, transporting a shipload of energy crystal blocks to fuel power plants on another planet was a far more convenient and rapid method.

A standard Compressed Energy Crystal Block, worth 1000 tax currency, could supply a small town with a population of over 100,000 for an entire yearof course, this doesn't include the industrial electricity consumed by factories.

Such an energy crystal block, roughly the size of a 10-centimeter cube, would not explode, fear collision, and could even be cut if not utilized with compressed energy release technology, making it convenient and reliable for transport.

However, the source of its energy was a problem to be solved.

Compressed Energy Technology could only transform available energy into these energy crystal blocks, but from where would the energy for this transformation originate?

The main source of energy for the alliance was the Low Energy Storm on Rage Owl Star.

Compressed energy factories were directly constructed in regions long tormented by the Low Energy Storm.

When the storm surged, the technology to collect it funneled energy into the factory's Energy Compressors to manufacture energy crystal blocks.

But this depended on the weather.

Even on the two barren continents of Rage Owl Star, storms didn't blow every day.

An alternative, relatively stable method was power supply.

If an energy crystal block could supply a town for a year, then a small-scale power plant of this size could theoretically produce one energy crystal block a year as well, right?

This technology was primarily utilized in large nuclear power stations in some Nest Capitals and industrial centers, mainly to collect surplus electricity during low demand periods or to release energy to meet peak demand.

Although it could produce some energy crystal blocks, relying on it for trade or war supply was definitely unrealistic.

Even some large power plants, when supplying the energy consumption for industrial production, needed to import energy crystal blocks from Rage Owl Star's conversion factories to ensure sufficient power.

As more and more starships were built,

the main method of power generation for the alliance was controlled nuclear reactors.

With just air and water, nuclear fuel could be generated and power producedthis technology was already advanced enough, and the cost of generating energy was sufficiently low.

But…

planets like Rage Owl Star and Heijian Star could be extensively developed because they had abundant water resources.

If this went on for long, even the oceans would be drained dry.

At present, with a population scale not yet dense, the situation was somewhat manageable.

However, the energy consumption required by the increasingly advanced industrial production was beginning to show its enormity.

If neglected now, environmental issues would become severe in the future.

Korolya Nest Capital World, a world now left with only industrial wastewater, with most of its living water resources relying on a water cycle system, is a testament to that.

Chapter 428, I am the Dominant Bishop!_2 If possible, Gu Hang would rather not drain every world under his command to such an extent.

He had two paths to choose from: pacify the storms at Rage Owl Star and restore it to a Spiritualized Gas Field.

There was no doubt about it; just from collecting and manufacturing energy blocks at the Spiritualized Gas Field, Rage Owl Star could obtain a net income of 8 billion tax currency annually.

That alone equaled half the yearly output value of Rage Owl Star at present.

Clearly, the Alliance lacked planetary-scale climate transformation technology, and Gu Hang wasn’t even sure if such technology was included in the epic-tier prize poolit might be of an even higher level.

Alternatively, there was [Stellar Energy Technology].

After carefully reviewing the blueprints' specifications, although Gu Hang certainly couldn't grasp the specific technology at once, he had a rough understanding of its effects.

It was feasible to build a massive stellar energy collection station around a planet; with the corresponding Compressed Energy Technology, it would be possible to continuously extract energy from a star and manufacture energy blocks.

And if enough collection stations were constructed around a star to completely encompass it, then it would form what Gu Hang recognized as a concept: the Dyson Sphere.

Of course, there were many engineering technological fortresses to overcome; it wasn't something that could be completed simply by accumulating quantity.

Moreover, even if the technology was available, the Alliance currently would neither have the qualifications nor the financial resources to invest in building such a super-structure.

The several star systems in Tianma Star Sector weren't equipped for that either; constructing a Dyson Sphere would plunge the entire star system into a dead silence.

However, it was always feasible to build a few energy extraction stations.

Such an energy extraction station had a standard output of 10,000 energy blocks per year, equivalent to about 10 million tax currency.

The cycle from inception to operation required six months to a year of construction, with a total initial investment of a hundred million tax currency per station, along with high annual maintenance costs thereafter.

All things considered, the return on investment would take about 20 years.

But this was the normal construction cost, calculated on the price of pulling out a production line and building it using the technical blueprints.

Gu Hang had the advantage of the Black Box cheat; by manufacturing key components with finished Black Boxes and then transporting and assembling them, the construction costs could be drastically reduced to nearly just labor expenses, and the construction period could be halved.

This was a cheaper source of energy than reactors.

Coupled with the compression technology, it could not only meet current and long-term future energy needs but also directly sell surplus energy for profit after the war.

Moreover, if the number of such stations wasn't too great, their impact on the environmental ecosystems of the many planets within the star system would be negligible.

Gu Hang placed the Black Box into the factory within the Subspace Storm God Kingdom, and under his command, the Alliance's Secret Research Institute began preparations for production.

Corresponding construction orders were also issued to the Alliance Government.

Subsequently, the Alliance Government would launch a certain number of energy station projects on the eight major stars in the Tianma Star Sector, as per his orders.

However, this construction time will be relatively longer.

Ms.

Wu Jiarong, Gu Hang's Chief Technical Officer, was currently not in the Tianma Star Sector.

…

In the distant Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector, the core Foundry World of the Mechanic Cult – Mingyang Sect: Jindi Star's orbit, a huge Mechanical Sect Fleet slowly departed from the port.

All the ships were painted not with the typical red of the Mechanical Sect, but primarily bright yellow with accents of bright red.

Leading the fleet was a somewhat bulky square-shaped 'battleship.' Just in terms of size, it was much larger than the flagship 'Dragonhawk' of the Yunluo Fleet, and even slightly bigger than the main battleships of the Imperial Navy.

The actual combat strength might be slightly weaker.

The 'Jindi Ark' of the Mingyang Sect, which also served both research and manufacturing functions, was not structurally designed solely for warfare.

Its firepower and defense exceeded those of battleships quite significantly, but there were gaps in terms of structural integrity, agility, speed, and maneuverability, which might make its comprehensive combat capability somewhat weaker.

However, the fact that the Mingyang Sect did not simply defend its Foundry World but chose to stand together with the Star Domain Government and take proactive measures against the catastrophe during the Green Skin invasion encouraged the entire Dragonhawk Star Domain Government greatly.

Even the previously despairing atmosphere improved.

Although the resurgent Yunluo Fleet, even with the addition of the Jindi Star Mechanical Sect Fleet, was still dwarfed by Titus's led Green Skin main force in overall scale, the main fleet ships were now boosted with the inclusion of the Jindi Ark to a level capable of confrontation.

The tremendous fleet of the Mechanical Sect was now set to depart, heading to Upper Plateau Star to rendezvous with the Yunluo Fleet.

According to the agreement between Chen Haixu, the Founding General of Jindi, and Tan Jiuyi, the Star Domain Head, the two large fleets would merge and launch a joint attack, collectively combating the Green Skin Fleet.

It was not about fighting a decisive fleet battle, but it would be possible to firmly defend Upper Plateau Star, which was a traffic hub.

Titus had already displayed his strategic intentions, with his fleet moving from Snow Eagle Star Sector unambiguously towards Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector.

Between the Stellar Capital Yunluo Star and the Foundry World Jindi Star, the great chieftain chose Jindi Star as the primary target.

And Wu Jiarong, at this moment, was aboard this ship.

More than a year ago, she had finally accepted the invitation from Wang Zhaoran, the technical director of Flying Wing Star Shipyard and the Dominant Bishop of the Mingyang Sect, to come to Jindi Star.

Chapter 428, I am the Dominant Bishop!_3 In the span of over a year, she thrived on Jindi Star like a fish in water.

The internal struggles within the Sect of Mechanics were quite intense and brutal, something Wu Jiarong knew all too well.

She was originally from Jindi Star, and before she knew it, she became a sacrificial piece and was offered as human tribute.

Of course, this was unreasonableJindi Star was the Foundry World of the Sect of Mechanics, a type of world that should not even have to shoulder Imperial Tax.

She had been utterly played by others.

But, the one who schemed against her could never have imagined that one day, she would return, and as an esteemed guest at that.

Amidst the fierce internal fights of the Sect of Mechanics, the sect's reverence for technological abilities was also profoundly intense.

Upon her return, Wu Jiarong displayed remarkable abilities in several speeches and project consultations she participated in, thus laying the foundation of respect she garnered.

Furthermore, many of the technologies she mastered weren't even present within the Mingyang Sect to begin with.

It made sense, as Wu Jiarong's academic foundation was built upon her studies on Jindi Star, but the technological and academic growth that followed was mostly due to her research on the Black Box.

She analyzed every product directly outputted by the Black Box, deducing the essence behind these most precise creations, thus she gained insight.

The so-called technologies she possessed that weren't available in the Mingyang Sect weren't just about her having the production blueprints for the Warhound Titan that Jindi Star could not build.

Of course, Jindi could build Warhounds, they even had the capability to manufacture Titans of a higher gradeWarlord Titans.

Taking the Warhound Titan as an example, Wu Jiarong learned some unique technical details; for instance, she understood specific technical aspects of a weapon component by studying key parts produced by the Black Box.

This knowledge allowed for a 7% increase in firepower and greater safety and stability when equipping Warhound Titans with melt weaponry.

She not only knew how to do it but also how to improve the production line to achieve this goal.

This was a technical detail that she mastered after researching the absolute standard parts produced by the Black Box, something absent on Jindi Star.

Without a doubt, such details were very important.

And there was much more like this.

As long as the Alliance produced output from the Black Box, and she studied it thoroughly, there would always be similar gains, the value of which varied.

Of course, she wouldn't foolishly lay all these discoveries out in the openthat would win her not admiration, but suspicion and greed.

The degree to which she disclosed her findings was just right.

The knowledge she shared had been pre-arranged with Gu Hang.

These efforts, in exchange for recognition from the Sect of Mechanics and a formal title, and the opportunity to trade for some technology in return, were a worthwhile trade-off.

She smoothly passed the review conducted by a council of six Principal Sages and acquired the title of Dominant Bishop.

In the past, her abilities were simply sufficient; now, having secured her position, the consequent honors, status, and privileges were quick to follow.

Then, in her spare time from regular activities, she did a 'little something': she looked into who was behind sending her to become an irreplaceable technical specialist within the Tianma Fleet as a human tribute.

Latterly, she realized it was indeed a trivial matter.

One of her ‘colleagues,’ also vying for a promotion to mechanic, couldn’t beat her through normal evaluations and, burdened with an old grudge, leveraged some connections, bribed his relativeit was just a Mechanical Priestand then she was sent away.

After uncovering this, she initially had no intention of pursuing it further.

It wasn’t all badin absence of that event.

If she hadn’t been sent away that year and met Mr.

Gu.

she might still be floundering on Jindi Star, possibly still stuck at the mechanic level after fourteen years.

Without extraordinary circumstances, ascending social classes is incredibly difficult.

At most, she could have found someone to mentor her, maybe reaching the grade of Mechanical Priest, likely marking the capstone of her life.

But where was she now?

Already formally recognized as a Dominant Bishop, a person of considerable influence on the entire Jindi Star.

However, she didn’t need to personally take any action.

The mere investigation of the matter drew the attention of interested parties.

Subsequently, that Mechanical Priest and his entire family swiftly became slaves.

Wu Jiarong even asked once if that was a bit too much.

A monitor acting as an engine Prophet humbly smiled and said it wasn't.

That person was already corrupt, and getting rid of him was akin to removing a pest.

Wu Jiarong said no more.

She remembered that day, she gazed up at the dim sun hanging in Jindi Star's sky, filled with myriad emotions.

All past grievances had vanished into thin air.

Gone along with them was the last shred of her desire to return to the Sect of Mechanics.

According to her original plan, it was time to go back.

She had become a Dominant Bishop officially recognized by the Sect of Mechanics and had earned some reputation, even avenging her past grudges.

The work she intended to do on Jindi had more or less been completed; it was time to return and prepare to establish her own splinter sect.

The grade of Dominant Bishop was sufficient.

Chapter 428, I am the Dominant Bishop!_4 By then, the small faction that had been established would become a part of the Mingyang Sect.

This sort of situation was quite common: A Dominant Bishop or Principal Sage would have their own unique ideas, rallying a group of Sect of Mechanics members around themselves to form a branch faction affiliated with the main sect.

Generally speaking, the stance of the main sect they attached to could be supportive, indifferent, or even hostile, depending on the Dominant Bishop's popularity within the original sect, as well as the motives and goals behind founding the branch.

As for Wu Jiarong, she had already quietly spoken with some other bishops she had met and had good relations with, even including two Sages.

It wasn't realistic to expect the full support of the Mingyang Sect for the new sect, but at present, hostility seemed unlikely at most they might face indifference.

Wu Jiarong's argument emphasized the rapid development of the alliance, crediting the governor for being particularly reliable and having a sense of enlightened and heroic leadership.

Additionally, she played a role in this progress, contributing significantly to the alliance's current state.

The alliance was a part of her life's work, which she didn't want to abandon.

With the foundation provided by Flying Wing Star and the population of Korolya, the potential for the alliance's future development was immense.

She could establish a branch of the Mingyang Sect there, and Bishop Wang Zhaoran of the Flying Wing Star Shipyard could offer some assistance.

Wang Zhaoran, who spent many years on Flying Wing Star, hadn't had much success in expanding the religious influence of the Sect of Mechanics, but she planned to change that situation.

Actually, the Mingyang Sect wasn't particularly interested in Wu Jiarong's proposition.

Or rather, the Sect of Mechanics wasn't that preoccupied with expanding traditional religious influence, unlike the state religion.

After all, as long as an Empire World required machinery and technical expertise, it couldn't escape association with the Sect of Mechanicsfaith was secondary.

What they cared more about was where there was special technology, where precious resources were located, and where a new Foundry World could potentially be constructed.

However, they wouldn't object to someone increasing religious influence either.

Overall, the message was, "Wu, if you want to help us expand our religious influence, that's fine.

We're all part of the same sect, so go ahead and establish your branch.

We won't obstruct you, and we might even offer verbal support.

But don't expect significant actual support, as this isn't a priority for us."

Wu Jiarong was completely accepting of this.

However, just as she was preparing to leave, the Iron Tooth War broke out.

Green Skin Orcs pierced through the Dragon Hawk Sector, severing east-west communications and leaving Wu Jiarong unable to return.

She became entangled in this war and began working for the Mingyang Sect within Jindi Star.

Overseeing factory production, personally taking charge of crafting high-end precision equipment…

There were benefits as well: she even acquired the ability to handcraft Titansalthough she could only do so slowly and couldn't mass-produce.

On Jindi Star, she was responsible for the handcrafting of core components, with the main production left to factories.

Additionally, using the resources of Jindi Star, she underwent a series of body augmentations.

Now, although she still appeared to be a human girl, she had four metal struts extending from her back that supported a mechanical mount about the same size as herself, which was part of her being.

It seemed merely a means of transportation, but when necessary, it could transform into various powerful weapons capable of both melee and ranged combat.

In a one-on-one fight, she could probably kill an average Interstellar Warrior without much trouble.

To be honest, she didn't want to undergo such extensive body modification.

But during the war, she had to.

Otherwise, if an accident occurred, she would be doomed without even the ability to defend herself.

Chapter 429, Battle Moon After the Mechanical Sect Fleet had departed, Wu Jiarong herself was also aboard the Mechanical Ark, along with over a hundred other Dominant Bishops, listening to the pre-battle meeting convened by Founding General Chen Haixu and another seven Principal Sages.

The phrases spoken at the meeting such as "one's fate is tied to the other's" and "fighting the battle together" were nothing special.

However, after all, this was a high-level meeting, attended only by those of at least Dominant Bishop rank.

Later on, they did discuss some substantial matters.

Wu Jiarong was not excluded.

The Sect of Mechanics still maintained a poised and confident demeanor, even though Wu Jiarong was cultivated by the Alliance and had shown closeness to it; they still considered her one of their own.

The substantial information mainly consisted of two points:

First, was the price the Star Domain Government paid to persuade the Mingyang Sect to actively attack, and these costs were to be shared amongst the various Principal Sages, with the Dominant Bishops below them participating in the spoils.

Second, was news of reinforcements.

A Battle Group known as 'Furyflame' had responded to the Star Domain's distress signal and was on its way.

The Fury Flame Battle Group was usually active within the Eastern Star Domain.

Although they faced some disapproval, with Imperial Army units that had fought alongside them often reporting that this Battle Group's style of combat was overly bloody, cruel, and impetuous.

It was tolerable in battle, but afterwards they had a penchant for desecrating corpses, piling up enemy skulls, and holding unifying cremation ceremonies, praying "to offer enemy skulls to our Emperor."

This image was somewhat too reminiscent of the behavior of certain heretics.

But they were loyal servants of the empire, always treating the enemies of the empire as their own enemies, and so much was tolerated.

Anyway, up to now, no one dared to trouble them, including the Tribunal.

However, their brutality and peculiar rituals may have raised doubts, but their combat prowess was undeniable.

A complete Battle Group with a thousand warriors, and having an entire Fleet exclusive to them.

It included nearly nine spearhead battleships at its core, forming a powerful Fleet of over a hundred warships.

There were no expendable small ships among them.

The flagship of the Fury Flame Battle Group was a combat landing ship.

These warships were almost exclusive to the Interstellar Warrior Battle Groups and in terms of size, they were even larger than the typical Imperial Battleships.

In addition, they had two Strike Cruisers and six Lunar-Class Cruisers.

The former could rival the Battleship Cruisers of the Imperial Navy, while the latter were the most common type of cruiser.

With their participation, along with the Yunluo Fleet and the Mechanical Sect's Fleet, they were powerful enough to secure a victory over the Green Skins!

The Mechanical Sect Fleet and the Yunluo Fleet heading to Upper Plateau Star wasn't to wage a decisive battle, but rather to use the Orbital Defense of Upper Plateau Star to hold the star system, drag out the enemy, and prevent the flames of war from reaching Jindi Star and Yunluo Star.

They just needed to hold on for a few months, and once the Fury Flame Battle Group arrived, victory in the war would be within reach!

This news had all the bishops inside the Mechanical Sect feeling exhilarated!

Hope for victory was near, and naturally, they were happy.

Wu Jiarong was no exception.

However, when she heard the name “Fury Flame Battle Group,” why did it seem familiar to her?

After a moment of recollection, she remembered the details of this Battle Group.

They had played a part in the “Great Cercis Flower Rebellion” back then.

The Iron Armor Battle Group also had allies, and there were three of them.

Among these was the one named “Fury Flame.”

Its parent group was once the Fifth Legion, now known as the Punisher Legion.

They were originally supposed to be stationed within the Spiderweb Domain and the Empress Starfield alongside the Iron Armor, but around fifty years ago, they had moved to the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

This did not mean that they had severed ties with Iron Armor; on the contrary, Iron Armor and other Star Domains under their rule, like Princess, were still providing them with resource support.

And as they advanced their operations in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, their prestige grew, and they began receiving support from several Star Domains there.

With Wu Jiarong’s political acumen, she could sense something particularly meaningful in Furyflame’s actions.

Moreover, she realized this situation could be very disadvantageous for the Alliance.

The Phoenix had a grudge against Furyflame, didn’t they?

After the meeting, Wu Jiarong thought it over and decided to pass this intelligence on to Gu Hang.

She had a Spiritual Energy coordinate left by Gu Hang that allowed for the transmission of brief messages.

The pieces of intelligence that the Mechanical Sect Fleet had set off for Upper Plateau Star to rendezvous with the Yunluo Fleet, and that the Fury Flame Battle Group was on its way, were all sent by her.

And soon, she received a reply.

“I know.”

…

Snow Eagle Star Sector, Frost Origin IV, planetary surface.

Titus stood on the highest building of the capital city of this civilized world, looking down below.

Encased in heavy armor, Titus appeared even more majestic and formidable than an ordinary Interstellar Warrior in Terminator armor.

His crimson eyes reflected a whole city blazing fiercely amid war.

Frost Origin IV was once a civilized world with a population of four billion.

It boasted vast plains used for farming, several developed urban agglomerations, decent industrial capacity, and lands for the Sect of Mechanics’ research and religion…

However, now, it had fallen into the hands of the Iron Tooth Orcs.

When Titus and his Fleet arrived at Frost Origin IV, the Human Fleet had already abandoned the world.

While the orc main Fleet had destroyed Frost Origin IV's Orbital Defense system, Titus also personally led his Honor Guard Legion to the planet's surface.

Chapter 429, Battle Moon_2 The Planetary Defense Force of Frost Origin IV had been consolidated; the quality and equipment level were relatively complete.

Their weapons were also quite comprehensive, although not up to the universal standard of the Star Realm Army, the whole was indeed more reliable than the majority of the Empire Worlds.

Not to mention, since the invasion of the Green Skins was anticipated, the entire planet had already begun comprehensive mobilization in preparation for war.

As a result, a population of four billion yielded six hundred million defendersa mobilization rate of 15%.

For just a few months, for the organizational level of the Empire Worlds, this was already a notable miracle.

Despite this, only about one hundred million of these troops were truly dependable.

The rest, hastily mobilized soldiers, had only a few months, or even just a couple of weeks, of training, and their equipment was rather basic, but this was already the limit under existing conditions.

These mobilized soldiers, at least, did not have a problem with morale.

In facing the existential threat of the alien Green Skins, the government only needed to do a bit of propaganda, exert a bit of effort, and it was easily able to foster a worldwide atmosphere of unity and resistance against the external enemy.

Titus also showed respect for the human struggle.

In a speech to his underling Green Skin leaders, he mentioned this.

Then, his lesser beastmen generals and lads all became even more excited.

The campaign thus far had actually been somewhat dull.

Ever since they swarmed out of the Golden Pass Star Sector, they had swept through a large part of the Dragonhawk Star Domain, and countless worlds had fallen amid their war cries.

But in reality, most of the human worlds had been unable to organize a particularly effective resistance.

Those so-called Defense Armies were not waagh at all and were easily overthrown.

Although most of the people on those worlds had not been killed, the resistance still existed, albeit dispersed and insubstantial.

In fact, many worlds seemed of little value, and the main Green Skin Fleets would bomb them a couple of times, drop a few hundred thousand troops, and then leave hastily.

Worlds like Frost Origin IV, which had managed to prepare for war thoroughly, were actually quite rare.

Having been bored this long, they were finally going to have a properly waagh-worthy battle, which really delighted them!

Under the leadership of their great chief, hundreds of millions of Green Skins landed on the surface.

Amidst the vast waagh cries, after several key battles, the main force of Frost Origin IV's Defense Army crumbled.

Many brave warriors died on the intensely fierce battlefield.

They had tried their hardest, but the real differences made the outcomes disproportionately mismatched.

The number of Green Skin Orcs, though far fewer than the human forces, was extremely troublesome because of their ability to endure dozens of bullets before dying.

And the Green Skins' gear was superior: Skugg War Behemoths, various Armored Combat Vehicles, 'canned' vessels, comparable to human Mechas, all sorts of modified super heavy gunsnone of which the Defense Army's weapons could effectively counter.

In such disparity, the human forces were eventually systematically annihilated en masse by the Beastman troops led personally by Titus after several battles.

When the last human force, attempting to conduct a desperate resistance through urban warfare, was eliminated, Titus smoothly stepped onto the highest building in the city.

At this moment, it seemed as if the whole world was under his feet.

But Titus did not feel too much excitement.

The news of the death of the Lone Fang Ghoul in the Eastern Star Domain had finally reached him.

This incident had actually occurred some time ago, but previously Titus had always been on a relentless advance through the Star Sea, either in battle or on his way to one.

The news couldn't catch up to the speed at which he was spreading the fires of war.

And of course, this news could not make Titus happy.

At that moment, on the top of the city's tallest building, many Beastman Overlords, Warlords, Prophets, and Tech Tyrants stood silently behind Titus.

These 'big bosses', held in awe by the common Green Skin lads, were as quiet as little chicks behind Titus.

Perhaps when Titus had just become the great chief, these military leaders might not have been so respectful; but as Titus led them on such a vast waagh, the great chief's prestige also grew and solidified with each victory, with the advance of the waagh.

All of this would at least continue until Titus encountered his first real defeat.

Titus's thunderous voice echoed amid the strong winds atop the tallest building, "Lone Fang Ghoul, a useless failure!

His death is proof of his weakness!"

The surrounding Beastman Warlords all lowered their heads, not daring to meet Titus's fierce red eyes.

They knew the great chief's fury was like a tempest, and any Green Skin standing before him could become the target of his wrath.

Titus turned, his gaze sharply sweeping over the multitude of Beastman leaders behind him, "Saru!

You go to the Eastern Star Domain.

I want you in charge there; don't disappoint me!"

"You should know what you're supposed to do there."

Saru, a burly Beastman Warlord clad in heavy armor, with a glint of ambition in his eyes, bowed deeply, his voice hoarse yet powerful, “Yes, great chief!

I know!

I will annihilate all the shrimp, and I will prove I am nothing like that piece of junk, the Lone Fang Ghoul!

Saru will not let you down!”

Chapter 429, Battle Moon_3 “No, Saru,” Titus vetoed his idea, “I’m not asking you to kill all the shrimps.

If you can, that would definitely be best, but your most important task is to not let any shrimp threaten our nest.”

The orc warlord named Saru was momentarily stunned.

This statement was not very waagh.

Yet Titus’s towering figure still stood before him, speaking in the most forceful voice, “The great Mr.

Mao has set the goal for this waagh for us.

We are to destroy the shrimp world called Jindi.

There are many mechanical shrimps there.

Once we take that place, we will have more and bigger waaghs!”

“The great Mr.

Mao told me that those shrimps have already gathered, and there are many canned shrimps on their way.

We must strike before they arrive if we stand any chance of achieving our goal and making Mr.

Mao happy.

I need to gather all the power I can muster to do battle with these gathered shrimps."

"As for the east, I don't care about it right now.

You don't mess things up for me.

Killing more shrimps and looting more scrap would be good, but most importantly, you must not let those shrimps take one more step towards our nest.

Do you understand what I mean?"

Saru felt a bit unhappy.

It sounded like it would be more interesting to continue advancing with the main force, where there would be a grander waagh.

Going to the east of the Star Domain seemed less waagh.

However, the prestige Titus had built left Saru without the courage to object.

All he could do was say resentfully, "I understand, but what can I use?"

"You can take your entire tribe, and the nest will provide support.

I want what I’m owed, but besides that, you can mobilize all the boys, warships, anything you want from the nest.

I’ll have the Split-Lip Spectre in the nest take orders from you as well.”

“Yes, Great Chieftain!

I’ll set off right away!”

“Go!”

After Saru left, Titus’s gaze returned to the scorched ruins of the city, his crimson eyes flickering unstoppably.

A while later, Titus declared, “Battle Moon!

Bring out the Battle Moon that Mr.

Mao gifted us from the Silver Pass.

I’ll use it to crush all enemies!”

The chief engineer behind Titus, Black Kidney, looked somewhat uneasy, “Great Chieftain, the Battle Moon is not ready yet…

The failure of Lone Fang has affected our plans.

He was supposed to plunder enough scrap for us in this waagh, but he couldn’t, and instead, many of our good ships were destroyed, and many boys died.

We didn’t get any of the resources we expected to get from the east, and our moon is not yet functional…”

Titus turned sharply, a dangerous gleam in his eyes, “I know what you’re talking about, but you should also understand what I’m saying!

I’m not asking for the complete moon from your plans, but it must be brought over, it must be present on the battlefield, and it must be able to play its part!

If the Battle Moon isn’t ready to join the battle in time, I’ll make sure you die a worse death than Lone Fang, and I guarantee Mr.

Mao will bring his wrath down on you!”

“Yes, Great Chieftain!

I will urge them immediately.

The Battle Moon will be ready when you need it!”

Titus nodded in satisfaction.

He believed his own majesty would dissipate any hesitation and delay.

He looked to the skies again as if he could see the fierce and imposing faces of Mr.

Mao and the great Mr.

Mao.

He believed the favor of Mr.

Mao and the Mechanical Sect would only grow because with him, Titus, there wasn't a waagh that couldn't be completed!

…

Wu Jiarong had arrived at Upper Plateau Star with the Mechanical Ark.

From here, only one jump through the Star Realm Tunnel was needed to reach Frost Origin IV.

The defensive works on Upper Plateau Star continued day and night.

On the surface, human warriors strengthened the base as much as possible within the limited time, deploying more Anti-Orbit Cannons that had been transported over, and inspecting fortresses and defense works.

In orbit, one after another, the firepower platforms and Armed Space Stations were being deployed.

The Starport of Upper Plateau Star was also being fortified rapidly.

This was the chosen battlefield for the humans.

After the capture of Frost Origin IV, they had prepared for the possibility that the Green Skins' main force might jump to Upper Plateau Star at any time, and that would be when the fierce defense battle would commence.

According to previous estimates, this event was not more than a month away.

But the Green Skins' Fleet remained quiet.

Their movements on Frost Origin IV seemed very sluggish.

Unable to get close, human scouts didn't know what was happening on Frost Origin IV.

Could it be that the Defense Army mobilized at Frost Origin IV was truly formidable, stalling the Green Skins?

That was indeed a possibility!

Orcs were not a race adept at strategy and waiting.

Their tactics were always straightforward, to crush everything with numbers and strength.

If nothing out of the ordinary happened, they would not wait for no reason.

Yet, this was certainly a good thing.

Delaying time was undoubtedly to the advantage of the humans.

They would rather have the Green Skins just keep delaying, preferably until the Interstellar Warriors arrived, and then, with the Yunluo Fleet, the Mechanical Sect Fleet, and the Fury Flame Battle Group all converging in one place, they could take on the main Green Skins force.

Surely then, the odds of victory would be much greater!

However, Wu Jiarong felt uneasy all the same.

Could the Green Skins, who had been unstoppable all this way, really be held back by the defenses of a single planet?

Chapter 430, No Hope Left, Await Death Wu Jiarong did not believe that Frost Origin IV could withstand the brunt of the Green Skins' military forces.

Even though this seemed the most reasonable explanation, Wu Jiarong still felt that the Green Skins were holding back a major move.

However, she did not share her thoughts with anyone else.

Firstly, there was no evidence; secondly, saying anything would be pointless.

Does knowing the Green Skins are holding back a major move mean that Upper Plateau Star should not be defended?

That, obviously, was not an option either.

The Star Domain Government and the Mingyang Sect had already gone to great lengths to arm Upper Plateau Star.

The Star Realm Army of the Dragonhawk Legion had gathered here with four sub-legions, totaling over three hundred million troops; the Protection Army from the Mingyang Sect had brought over two hundred million.

Defensive forces from several nearby planets were massively deployed, exceeding one billion in totalnot that more couldn't be mobilized, but the supply capacity of Upper Plateau Star and the deployment capabilities of the troops had to be considered.

Otherwise, they would have wished for even more troops to be transferred.

Five hundred warships couldn't even fit in the orbit, so they were divided into two groups.

One, led by the cumbersome Mechanical Arks and relying on the fortress-like starports, formed the Orbital Defense system.

The Green Skins would have to crash through it, bloody and battered.

Since the orbit could not accommodate more without becoming too cramped, the flagship of the Yunluo Fleet, Dragonhawk, along with the rest of the high-speed warships, roved the void, playing a game of the enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy retreats, we harass.

If the enemy dared to engage in a direct assault guarded by the Mechanical Arks and the Fortress Starport, the roving fleet would strike at the Green Skin Fleet's rear; if they gave chase, the division of all high-speed warships would flee.

The strategy was one of attrition.

Anyway, all preparations were completed, the pre-war mobilization was done, and abandoning the plan based on an unfounded speculation was absolutely not possible.

Moreover, what would they do if they gave up?

Behind lay the Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector, and after jumping twice more, they would reach Jindi Star.

Should the war begin on Jindi Star?

While the defensive installations there were indeed more robust, reaching that point meant there would be absolutely no defensive elasticity or room for retreat, and there was the fear that even winning would be no different from losingif Jindi Star turned into a wasteland, victory would be as good as defeat.

So be it.

Wu Jiarong could only do her utmost, continuing to work for the war effort.

After all, she herself was also there, facing the Green Skins.

If the battle was lost, she would be under severe threat to her life.

Even though she had undergone considerable high-level physical modifications, in a war of this scale, individual power was insignificant; survival mostly depended on luck.

In this tense preparation period, another month and a half passed.

The Green Skins finally arrived.

The Observatory had detected a large number of warships passing through the Star Realm Tunnel from Frost Origin IV to Upper Plateau Star.

The main forces of the Iron Tooth Orcs were assembling and approaching.

The massive size of the fleet even led humanity to abandon plans of laying traps at the jump point.

Instead, they placed some Void Thunders there, a kind of mine similar to landmines or naval mines, that could be laid in space regions.

When ships pass through the space, it would trigger the explosion of these Void Thunders.

Generally, they are laid at jump points or around orbits, where ships must pass through to take effect.

However, space is too vast, and the blast radius too small.

The area of a jump point is as large as a dozen stars combined; covering it all is impossible.

How many would they have to make?

This act is merely about doing one's best and leaving the rest to fate.

And without a doubt, the Green Skin Fleet suffered little damage as they passed through the Star Realm Tunnel and emerged in the Upper Plateau Star System.

Titus's Orion flagship stood out among them, boldly surging toward the planet.

With that, the war trumpet officially sounded.

The Green Skin Fleet launched a fierce attack on Upper Plateau Star without any buffer.

Their violent and brutal offensive put the Human Fleet in a difficult position.

From the very beginning of the fight, both sides suffered heavy casualties.

Without a doubt, it was the Green Skins who incurred the greater losses.

The human side, after all the wartime preparations, relied on the Orbital Defense system, and with the mainstay presence of the Mechanical Arks, they had turned the entire Upper Plateau Star into a formidable fortress.

Naturally, a frontal assault was bound to come with great loss.

The Green Skins' actions were somewhat unexpected, yet also within reason.

This was undeniably the style of the Orcs.

Irrational, but fierce.

Nonetheless, this also brought relief within the human ranks.

Although, every day, many orbital space stations were destroyed, orbiting Fortress cannons were blown up, and smaller ships were annihilated.

Yet the Green Skins also sustained significant casualties.

The Green Skins, with an interception rate of 80%, dropped a batch of ground forces, a steep price that yielded little in return.

With a billion Defense Army plus three hundred million Star Realm Army plus two hundred million Protection Army, the ground defense capabilities of Upper Plateau Star were quite formidable.

The million or so Green Skins that landed had little impact and barely managed to seize a small corner.

Moreover, it was estimated that they would be annihilated before long.

Even the Orcs were unable to continue sending reinforcements.

An 80% interception rate was too terrifying; even the Green Skins could not bear such a rate of loss.

Continuing the battle at this rate of exchange, even if the Human Fleet was completely lost, the Orc side would definitely lose 90% of their combat power.

By then, even if Upper Plateau Star was lost, the Orcs would no longer have the strength to keep pushing forward.

And when the Fury Flame Battle Group and their Fleet arrive, it would be time for humanity to sound the trumpet of counterattack.

Chapter 430, No Hope Left, Await Death_2 However, just when the human soldiers and Sect of Mechanics members on Upper Plateau Star were resolutely enduring Titus's fierce attacks, gritting their teeth and hoping for victory, the turning point of the war occurred at an unforeseen moment.

An alarm came from the Dragonhawk of the Yunluo Fleet: they had spotted a colossal entity that had arrived at the Upper Plateau Star system, and by the time it was discovered, it was already not far from the planet's orbit.

This was truly a shock.

The star watchers had completely failed to notice it!

Such a huge thing should have been detected when it passed through the Star Realm Tunnel, not to mention it should have shone like a star in the eyes of the star watchers once inside the void of the star system!

How could it appear so unexpectedly?

And what was even more frightening was the message that followed from the Dragonhawk: they called the unknown Green Skin construct 'Battle Moon'.

This was an ancient term, once mentioned in the annals of the empire.

At the moment, within the whole empire, the Green Skin Orcs were a detestable threat, dubbed 'cosmic cancer.' A minor presence would cause endless suffering to a planet; a major one, like the Iron Tooth Ork Empire, posed an existential threat to an entire star domain; and the largest, the Blood Axe Clan in the empire's southeastern borders, a vexation spanning over three hundred years that spanned three or four star domains, turned the entire Cosmos Domain into a war zone, staunchly enduring warfare with them.

But, none of these compared to the true 'Beastly Green Tide' that occurred six thousand years ago.

Six Ork Kings, against their nature, united and rallied almost all the orcs across the Cosmos Domain, launching a vast waaagh.

They even reached Holy Terra, posing an enormous crisis that could have obliterated the Human Empire.

The eventual outcome saw each of the six Ork Kings eliminated one by one, and humanity once again survived an extinction crisis.

The historical records of the Human Empire also left a prominent note on this event.

In those records, they mentioned the ultimate weapon of the Beastman Empire: the Battle Moon.

Named ‘moon,’ one could see its immensity, it was truly like a small planet.

It was the orcs’ ‘homeland,’ containing an efficient orc ecosystem capable of endlessly producing new Green Skin younglings;

It was an orc armory where every technological product and war tool that Green Skins could produce were manufactured;

It was the core of the orc fleet, capable of housing an entire Green-Skinned Space Fleet, while its industrial facilities could even construct new fleets;

It was an invincible space war machine; its merciless firepower could destroy an entire human fleet in a short time.

On the defensive side, even several Skyburn Torpedoes or planet-shattering weapons like Extinction Orders couldn’t destroy it when detonated on its surface.

Its super-strong structural integrity and special built-in defense mechanisms rendered it impervious to extinction-level weapons.

Furthermore, the Battle Moon could tear apart planets to absorb useful materials, then utilize its internal industrial facilities to produce new weapons, fleets, and repair itself.

Theoretically, if its defense limits were not overwhelmed, it could wage unlimited war.

A dozen Battle Moons were the most potent and despair-inducing weapons of the orcs during the 'Beastly Green Tide' that nearly destroyed the Human Empire.

One can imagine the level of despair on the human side when the Dragonhawk reported that a Battle Moon had appeared in the Upper Plateau Star system.

What else was there to do?

It's hopeless, might as well wait for death.

But soon, after the initial shock, people started to have doubts:

Historical records stated that the Green Tide that swept through the entire empire involved only about a dozen Battle Moons; currently, the largest orc empire in the universe, the Blood Axe Clan, possesses just one Battle Moon that the Human Empire can't contend with, no matter how many battle groups, Imperial Navy, and Star Realm Army units amass there.

They could only barely maintain a stalemate.

In the 'lesser' Dragonhawk Star Domain, the Iron-Tooth Clan, which hasn't unified the star domain and just a year ago only had a few star sectors, how could they manage to produce something like a Battle Moon?

Impossible!

Did the Dragonhawk get it wrong?

The captain of the Dragonhawk, also the commander of the detachment fleet, had his doubts about what he was seeing.

He could understand why it hadn't been detected earlier.

Amongst the Green Skins were so-called 'Spiritual Energy youngsters,' with orc leaders known as Shamans, Prophets.

They possessed many wondrous abilities, and perhaps it was their special skills or orc technology that cloaked their presence from the star watchers' observations.

But he was skeptical of the thing itself.

In fact, looking at it calmly, while it resembled the Battle Moons of legend, it was much smaller.

Although still many times larger than an average warship, there was a noticeable difference compared to the true 'moon-like' size mentioned in the legends.

Could it be a fake mock-up?

He was curious to test its mettle, but he was also hesitant, afraid that his fleet would be utterly destroyed in the attempt.

Caught between hesitation and indecision, he could only continue to relay warnings, then watched powerlessly as this 'Battle Moon' approached the orbit of Upper Plateau Star.

The Green Skin Fleet, following this newly arrived behemoth, began to once again launch a fierce challenge against the human Orbital Defense system.

Chapter 430, No Hope Left, Await Death_3 And this time, the outcome was vastly different.

Although humanity was extremely vigilant of the combat moon, its guns not only had incredible firepower but also accuracy that starkly contrasted with the ordinary Green Skin Shipsa precision combined with an absurdly long range.

After only two rounds of firing, a cruiser-grade flagship belonging to the Mingyang Sect received a fatal strike.

The destroyed wreckage, affected by gravity, fell into the planet's atmosphere, and the crash was likely to cause significant ground disasters.

But at this moment, no one had the mind to care about that.

Anyone with clear eyes could see that Upper Plateau Star was done for.

Indeed, this combat moon was far from as powerful as the legends claimed.

It had not yet shown the characteristics those combat moons were said to possess, but even just in terms of combat power, it was still far lacking.

But with this strength, it was already enough.

In combination with the vast numbers of the Green Skin Fleet and the previously flagship, in the following battle, human space forces would be utterly unable to withstand them.

As the next two hours passed, one human ship after another was torn to pieces, one space station after another was easily destroyed, and this viewpoint had nearly turned into reality.

What to do next?

Inside the Mechanical Ark, Wu Jiarong was at a loss.

Then, she saw Chen Haixu.

The Founding General of Jindi Star, along with a few attendants, was hurrying along.

Just as Wu Jiarong was about to ask what they should do next, before she had the chance to speak, Chen Haixu already said, “No time to dawdle, follow me.”

In a muddleheaded state, Wu Jiarong followed Chen Haixu onto a small, swift ship.

The ship left the Mechanical Ark amidst the widespread barrage of ship guns scattered across space, dangerously dodged into the planet’s atmosphere, then rounded to the other side of the planet, where things were much calmer.

After that, the ship broke out of the atmosphere and raced at full speed away from Upper Plateau Star.

On the ship, Wu Jiarong was initially astonished, having thought Chen Haixu had some brilliant plan.

It was only now that she realized the Founding General was planning to run.

Immediately after, a chill of fear struck her:

She was slow on the uptake, but her luck had indeed been good just now.

There might be twenty or thirty Dominant Bishops on the Ark, but here, she saw only eight, though all three Principal Sages who had been with her on the ship were present.

The rest, whether they were on the Ark or on the surface of Highland Star, seemed to have been abandoned.

She had neither a high status nor was she a confidant.

If she hadn’t happened upon him, Chen Haixu would have had no reason to bring her along.

In a war doomed to be lost, with the Mechanical Ark likely to be destroyed, just that momentary difference was the difference between life and death.

She had walked through the gates of hell.

Just a while ago, she had been contemplating the twists and turns of life, feeling like she had achieved success and acclaim, and now she had almost died on the Ark.

The fickleness of the world was truly terrifying.

Wu Jiarong, drenched in a cold sweat, came to her senses and thought of something else.

With the main force of the human fleet on the verge of destruction, Upper Plateau Star falling, the gateway to the Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector thrown wide open, and Jindi Star about to face the onslaught of the Green Skins without the protection of the main fleet…

The overall situation of the Orc War had undergone a major change.

She must get word to Gu Hang immediately.