Governor 471

Chapter 471, Victory Strategy Golden Pass Star Sector is an important location, not just speaking of the war with the Alliance, but also the main Green Skins forces led by Titus, half of the reinforcements and supplies obtained from their homelands also passed through the Golden Pass Star Sector.

The other half took the route through the Jiaoshou Star District on the western side of Golden Pass Star Sector.

The most significant world in the Golden Pass Star Sector is Light Blessing Star.

In fact, four years prior, it was from Light Blessing Star that Titus led the main Green Skins forces to Curse Bone Star District, then to Snow Eagle Star Sector, blazing a trail of war all the way to the heartland of the Star Domain.

After Gu Hang had won the Temir campaign, advancing with the entire army into the Golden Pass Star Sector, Light Blessing Star became a crucial strategic position and was the first to be seized by the Alliance.

Here, the Alliance even intercepted a Green Skin Transport Fleet.

The Green Skins actually didn't have entirely civilian transport ships as, according to their temperament, every ship had to be equipped with some cannons.

However, for the Green Skins, ships needed to be manufactured, and the concept of 'cost' did exist. After all, manufacturing required materials and human resource investment.

Combat ships were made more sophisticated, and weapons were as advanced as possible; transport ships prioritized internal space, necessarily simplifying it, reducing their combat effectiveness. The few forcefully mounted cannons were more an obsession.

In any case, when they came across the Alliance Fleet, even if the numbers on both sides were similar, the outcome of the battle was almost utterly one-sided. Those few cannons, more decorative than practical, only caused a slight nuisance to the Alliance Fleet.

Just a nuisance indeed.

Thirty Green Skins transport ships were turned into space junk, making it impossible to count exactly how many Green Skins or how much war material they contained.

But considering the size of these thirty Green Skins transport ships, one could tell this was a severe wave.

If they were all fully loaded, hundreds of millions of Green Skins and substantial materials were definitely involved.

The loss of these thirty ships significantly reduced the Green Skins' operational efficiency and their ability to deploy troops and resources.

Moreover, after the Alliance Fleet blockaded Light Blessing Star, it was basically impossible for Green Skins ships to leave from there.

With this route locked down, all Green Skins transport had to go through the Jiaoshou Star District.

Of course, the Beastmen could still transport resources and personnel from the Jiaoshou Star District. They would have to detour slightly through Silver Pass Sector for supplies, which didn't significantly affect the resource flow for the Green Skins sectors home to Jiang Meiyu, Iron Pass, and Kuoluo.

However, frighteningly, from Light Blessing Star westward, a single jump could take you into the Jiaoshou Star District!

If the Jiaoshou Star District were also blockaded, then the Green Skins' resources would have to take a much bigger detour from the very northwest corner of the Dragonhawk Star Domain forward to the front line. This would fatally affect the efficiency of material transfer. What was initially a journey of two to three months, could be extended to about half a year.

And attacking the Jiaoshou Star District was already part of Gu Hang's strategic plan.

His overall strategy's first step was to win a key battle in the Temir Star System and annihilate a large amount of active force, which had already been completed quite spectacularly.

The second phase of the strategy was to encompass the Golden Pass Star Sector, Copper Barrier Star District, and Jiaoshou Star District.

Golden Pass Star Sector had seven star systems comprising 12 worlds; Copper Barrier Star District had six star systems, 11 worlds; Jiaoshou Star District had nine star systems, 15 worlds.

Adding them all up, there were 38 worlds.

In Gu Hang's plan, his goal was to take all these worlds.

The method of taking them was already clearly demonstrated on Temir No.4 and Temir No.5.

In fact, the situations on these thirty-plus planets targeted by Gu Hang within these three star sectors were basically similar to the situations encountered in the three worlds of the Temir Star System.

In some places, like Temir II, they were developed and invaded by the Green Skins as key planets, and their own defense issues were also significant, basically beyond salvation; in others, like on Temir No.4, a considerable population survived due to terrain and reliable defenses, importantly because the Green Skins didn't value them much, so the human conditions were still relatively good. Some places were like Temir No.5, hanging by a thread.

Since the Green Tide emerged and the war started, it had been four years now. Golden Pass, Copper Barrier, and Jiaoshou, these three star sectors with thirty-eight worlds, were the first places to fall.

Even before the Green Tide erupted, these three star sectors were already the human frontlines against the Beastmen. They were either battlegrounds enduring continuous Green Skins invasion or supply bases providing resources to the battlegrounds.

The economic condition in these thirty-plus worlds wasn't good in any of them.

And post-subjugation, that was even more so.

These thirty-plus worlds had been subjugated for four years, but it must be emphasized again, humans are a tenacious race. No matter the harsh conditions, there will always be those who can find a way to survive, even producing both small and significant heroes. From leading dozens of people in a hard fight for survival, to leading an entire world to form resistance organizations across city ruins, countrysides, tunnels, and various environments, they continued to struggle against the Green Skins.

Of course, these are human factors, subjective factors. The real key reason they could persist for four years without being exterminated by the Green Skins was actually due to the Green Skins' strategy not being directed that way.

Chapter 471, Victory Strategy_2 Green Skin Orcs, of course, had no need to rule over humans. They indeed captured prisoners and enslaved humans, but these were sporadic cases; most of the time, they chose to slaughter. However, the forces that Green Skins deployed on various planets were actually insufficient.

Four years ago, Titus leading the Green Tide, in just a few short months, had spread the flames of war across hundreds of worlds in the Dragonhawk Star Domain. His method was certainly not to conquer each planet one by one; how slow would that be?

In any case, at that time, the human fleet had been defeated by him and was only concerned with fleeing. The vast Star Domain was all exposed, so naturally, he took his fleet and chased them down relentlessly. The many Star Systems they passed through were casually populated with tens of thousands, millions, tens of millions of youngsters and about weather whatever amount depending on the value of the planet.

Some key locations, like the Light Blessing Star, might now have an active Green Skin population of over 1.5 billion. Although a considerable portion of that had grown on the planet itself over the past few years, the fact that it could grow so quickly and so much was definitely related to the substantial number of Green Skins that were initially deployed there.

In some places, like the Shui Wuheng Star System next to the Temir Star System, there are two ocean worlds, the natural environment mainly consisting of scattered islands and floating continents, mainly surviving on fisheries and underwater resource harvesting.

This star system is not on the main route, and the natural environment is not suitable for growth of Green Skins—actually, it's not that suitable for human survival either. The original population scale of the two planets was also around two to three hundred million. The Beastman invasion only deployed a scale of several tens of thousands, and even after establishing an ecosystem on some islands, their expansion was severely limited due to the large maritime environment being hard to expand, frequent ocean storms, and the presence of powerful sea monsters within the great ocean.

Now, four years after the Green Skins invaded the Shui Wuheng Star System, the situation hasn't deteriorated too severely.

After the Human Fleet arrived, they bombarded the Green Skin-occupied islands from orbit, then deployed about a million troops from the Pact Army, along with a substantial amount of weapons and equipment, arming the local Planetary Defense Forces to reclaim the islands.

With this step, the issues on Shui Wuheng No.3 and No.7, two human colonization planets, were essentially resolved.

Of course, they also signed the Seven-Horse Covenant, becoming part of this framework. The two planets could even contribute fifty million Tax Currency in Imperial Tax revenues per year.

Gu Hang adopted similar measures and promoted them in the Golden Pass, Copper Barrier, and Jiaoshou Star District.

The overall approach and means were as follows: the Fleet arrives, destroying the main enemy strongholds; deploying a portion of the Alliance Army and Pact Army as the main force to hold the ground; providing supplies, relief, and resettlement for local civilians, arming local forces, and inducting them into the Pact Army ranks to clear the local Green Skins.

The Fleet's arrival was a symptomatic treatment, a crude sweep, and suppression; the Alliance Army provided confidence to the local planets; the last move was to integrate the planet and eradicate the problem for good.

Of course, for worlds that could still be saved, they would be treated this way.

For some hopeless worlds, like the Light Blessing Star, a crucial transit hub in the Green Skins' campaign, human activity was scarce, and Green Skins had invested a large number of troops from the beginning, slaughtering almost the entire planet.

But the Alliance didn't bother dropping a Skyburn Torpedo on Light Blessing Star.

There was no need.

Locking down the star system and bombarding the surface a few times was sufficient.

Anyway, after bombing the important Green Skin Trash Cities on Light Blessing Star, not to mention the heavy casualties among the Green Skins, their main production capacity was also lost; they didn't have the capability to build Starships to leave the surface—at least not temporarily.

Then, the Alliance started to continuously deploy troops to the surface.

Even if there was no hope for it, its importance as a transportation hub remained. The human forces deployed would establish some strongholds or repair some of the existing fortresses on the planet, and place some of the transferred Orbital Cannons on this planet.

Gu Hang, of course, still had to guard against the main Green Skin reinforcements.

However, the Alliance's military strength and its transport capabilities were ultimately limited and could not employ a retaking strategy for every planet. Matters needed to be prioritized, and although Light Blessing Star was beyond saving, its high value as a traffic hub meant that the Alliance had to commit forces to attempt its recapture. The core objective was to establish enough fortresses and Anti-Orbit Cannons on the planet to prepare for any potential wars that might follow.

But there were some planets that were both beyond saving and of little value.

For instance, planets like Lengfeng Star in the Jiaoshou Star District, Tarulah III, the Brass Star System, and the Natuo Star System all fit this description.

They were similar to Temir II, with a high activity of Green Skins and hardly any human presence; yet, unlike Light Blessing Star, they were not located in strategically contested areas.

The approach to such star systems had to be situation-specific.

If the number of Green Skins on a planet was relatively low—say, around ten or twenty billion—then the tactic would be to bomb them in one go, destroy the larger Trash Cities, and then perform regular patrols to make sure that no significantly sized Green Skin factories capable of constructing starships would emerge.

However, if the surface of a planet was teeming with Green Skins, as was the case with Golden Pass III, where estimates suggested there were over fifty billion of them gathered, one could assume that these were reserve forces Saru had placed there in preparation for the Temir campaign. The only reason they hadn't all been transported to Temir No.5 was due to the limits of transport capabilities. Yet, even on this planet, those billions of Green Skins weren't idle; humans had even spotted an open-air Green Skin factory from orbit, appearing to assemble something resembling starships.

For such planets, there would be no discussion—just send down a Skyburn Torpedo directly.

Fifty billion Green Skins gone in flames.

Yet, by doing so, the planet itself would be virtually condemned to waste. Even the thought of landing to build fortresses faced difficulties, since the planetary geology had to stabilize over several years first. As for recolonizing and utilizing the planet, that would require climate reconstruction technology, which the Alliance still lacked.

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Beyond the retaking and cleansing operations in the three major star sectors, the Alliance Army had two tasks of equal importance.

First, establishing an Orbital Defense System on Thumb Star and Capital Star in the Jiaoshou Star District as well as in the Light Blessing Star System. This was to transform these three planets into Fortress Worlds that could serve as reliable strongholds in case the Green Skins should counterattack.

This task actually consumed a significant chunk of the Alliance's efforts. Out of the twelve billion-strong main expeditionary force, half had been allocated to these destinations. Additionally, more military personnel and workers were continuously being sent there to bolster these key locations.

Should these three planets, especially Light Blessing Star, be properly fortified, the Alliance would have a barrier to the west and the strategic chokehold at the Green Skins' throat.

The other task was to invade the Green Skin homelands.

This mission seemed perilous, but when Gu Hang, aboard the Firebath Nova, along with one-third of the Alliance Fleet, arrived in the interior of the Silver Pass Sector, he found that it was not difficult at all.

Each planet here might have fallen decades ago, with hardly any humans left.

However, the number of Green Skins was not as high as one might expect.

The reason was simple: a substantial number of Green Skins had been conscripted by Titus!

His expedition was indeed an all-out effort by the Iron-Tooth Clan!

Chapter 472, Striking the Heart Titus had unified the Iron-Tooth Clan and sparked a monumental "waaagh".

For the Green Skins, joining such a vast expedition was the dream of every Iron-teeth Greenskin.

What was the point of staying in their own dens? They had gotten tired of the internal fighting among the Green Skins. Wasn't it more interesting to go out and fight the Shrimp?

Most of the Green Skins felt this way. If it were not for the fact that Titus's Fleet couldn't hold everyone, the Green Skins in the Iron-Tooth lair would have loved to follow along.

Here, it's necessary to explain what the ecosystem of the Green Skins was like on these planets, which had almost been completely taken over by them.

The core environment of the Green Skin society was made up of Trash Cities of various sizes and the ecosystems that surrounded them.

Trash Cities served as their camps and their factories, while the surrounding ecosystems were the birthplaces of the Green Skins.

The Green Skins did not have distinct sexes; their bodies contained a kind of spore. When the concentration of the spores reached a certain level, the host's consciousness would become muddled, and it would wander away from its tribe to roam alone in the wilderness.

At this point, the spores would be released from the body and take root in the soil. Afterward, the Green Skins would return to their clan, often without any recollection of what had happened.

Apart from natural reproduction, Green Skins could also proliferate under another circumstance: when a Green Skin was forced to release the spores inside its body — through injury or death. The spores carried in their blood and flesh would scatter into the air, drift with the wind to certain lands, and then take root and sprout.

Because the Green Skins directly continued their lineage upon the host's death, this innate biological trait caused only two thoughts to remain in their minds: hitting others and being hit. This trait also explains why Green Skin tribes were so keen on brawling.

The spores that were scattered about were incredibly tenacious. If the conditions were unsuitable, they could lie dormant for decades, until the wind or other creatures carried the spores to a suitable place for growth, where they would then begin to grow.

The spores in the soil would slowly germinate and spread beneath the surface, forming countless plant ovaries. This process took roughly a year.

Once there was sufficient nourishment and water, the first generation of Green Skin creatures would begin to be cultivated inside the plant ovaries: Skugg Beasts.

With just three to six months of growth, Skugg Beasts would be born en masse.

Of course, the Skugg Beasts at this stage were not giant creatures; they were at most the size of wolves or large dogs. They served as food, beasts of burden for the Green Skins, and sometimes played a role in warfare, such as being released into battle to bite the enemy or outfitted with explosive packs for suicide attacks.

Their primary use was still as food. Green Skins didn't need to eat, but having food was clearly better, as it significantly increased their stamina and allowed them to grow further.

The entire ecosystem required no external nutrients to sustain the Beastmen, ensuring they never lacked manpower or food resources no matter where they marched.

By the second year, plant ovaries could start producing larger Skugg Beasts.

By the third year, snotlings began to be cultivated, which also took about six months to develop.

Starting in the fourth year, they could cultivate proper Green Skin Orcs. Overall, however, the number of Green Skin Orcs cultivated was much less than the previous two species: the Skugg Beasts and snotlings. Moreover, the development of the orc younglings in the ovaries took three to five years, depending on whether the environment was suitable.

Three to five years may seem lengthy, but it was an incredibly fast pace. Green Skins were born at an adult stage, no less than one meter eighty to one meter ninety in height, which were considered short and weak. These individuals were those bullied among the groups of orc younglings. Normally, they were well over two meters tall, with sturdy, robust bodies.

Compared to humans who required both sexes to reproduce, occupied a mother for ten months of pregnancy, and took more than a decade to reach adulthood—with only half being female, not necessarily the most suitable source for soldiers…

As for the Green Skins, without a distinction of sexes, a scattering resulted in vast swaths of land covered with Green Skin plants, birthed at an adult state, with a three-to-five-year development period,

emerging much stronger than an average human… In terms of the war potential brought by racial characteristics, Green Skin Orcs utterly trounced humans.

In the four major Star Sectors long dominated by the Green Skins, they had developed a population of hundreds of billions in just a few decades. For humans, this would be unimaginable.

Moreover, Green Skin technology was astonishing. The master technologists among them could even produce Starships with just their hands and the brilliant ideas in their minds, which was utterly preposterous.

This was a race born for war.

However, they also faced problems. Their belligerent blood made it impossible to contain the infighting among them. When a whole region was filled with Green Skin ecosystems and there was nothing else to fight, they would fight among themselves.

They fought with brutal and bloody ferocity.

Without a leader, tribes would engage in fierce fights with each other; even when they were united under the banner of a leader, it would at best contain large-scale infighting, prompting the Green Skins to strive towards the same war objective. But individual skirmishes could not be stopped.

Green Skins did not live long and had no process of birth, aging, sickness, and death. They simply fought amongst themselves, each striving to emerge as a squad leader. Squad leaders would brawl with other squad leaders, producing platoon leaders… and so on.

Chapter 472, Straight to the Heart _2 A Green Skin youngster could either climb higher in this endless battle or die somewhere along the way.

This also led to a situation where once an area became completely Green Skin, their numbers would actually reach a certain limit. The carrying capacity of the land and nutrition, as well as internal strife among the Green Skins, would curb their numbers, achieving a dynamic equilibrium.

According to scholars in the Star Domain who studied Green Skins, an alien species, the total number of Green Skin life forms within the four star sectors—only counting the youngsters and pests, not the

Skugg Beasts—is estimated to be around 150 billion. Based on the usual ratio of one Beastman to ten pests, the number of proper Beastmen could reach 15 billion.

Before the third Iron Teeth War, this number might have been only three or four hundred billion. In twenty-six years, their numbers had surged four or five times, and they had all become warriors.

After Titus rose to power, the expeditions that unfolded led to a fierce craze among the Iron Tooth Orcs. In the wars, Green Skin Transport Ships were constantly moving Green Skins away from the four major star sectors without a moment's rest. The Green Skin Orcs were also scattered across various worlds along with the expedition.

In this process, the total number of Green Skins moved out of the four major star sectors might have already exceeded seventy billion.

The total population of the Iron-Tooth Clan had definitely increased during the last four years of warfare, even as they were constantly involved in war and continuously losing people in the brutal battles. In the Eastern War Zone alone, Gu Hang was wiping them out by the billions. The Green Skins' losses on other battlefields, especially the main frontal ones, were estimated to be immense.

However, with vast living spaces freed up within their homelands in the four major star sectors, their population began to explode; after taking root on various planets, their populations also started to grow.

Of course, the latter's contribution to growth was actually not that significant after only four years; but in their homelands, where ecosystems had long been established, the numbers of Green Skins were rising fiercely.

Yet in this process, due to overextension of their battle lines and the continuous transport ship movements without pause, the population of the Green Skin homelands within the four star sectors was in a downtrend.

But even more so, the emptiest area within the Iron-teeth Empire was its navy warships.

Titus also faced immense pressures at the frontlines; there was a high demand for ground troops and likewise, navy ships. The ships produced from the massive Trash City within their homeland were almost immediately filled with Green Skins and sent off to battlefields as soon as they were completed.

Now, within the four star sectors, there were hardly any Green Skin Ships to be seen.

And this was indeed the case.

When Gu Hang led a third of the Alliance Fleet with a very cautious attitude into the Silver Pass Star Sector, the intense opposition he had expected did not occur.

Hardly any Green Skin ships were sighted.

There was even an unexpected gain, as they destroyed several Green Skin Transport Ships.

Moreover, on White Fog Star, they received information from the ground: there were still survivors from the Expeditionary Force of four years ago.

Initially, when the Star Domain Government mobilized forces to deal with the problem of the Iron-Tooth Clan, they conscripted three major fleets from within the Star Domain and numerous Star Realm Armies, as well as a lot of personnel levied from across the Star Domain.

A portion of the population conscripted through these levies was deployed to various worlds in the Golden Pass Star Sector to replenish lost wartime population and to serve as laborers; a considerable part was sent alongside the military to the then-reclaimed human-controlled planets such as White Fog Star, Water Fog Star, Silver Pass II, and Silver Pass III.

They established many ground fortresses and strongholds; the original plan of the Star Domain Government was for these four planets to serve as bridgeheads for the offensive into Green Skin territory.

However, the Green Tide instigated by Titus demolished the Star Domain Government’s plan.

Nonetheless, the fortresses and strongholds, along with the personnel and Star Realm Army deployed on the ground, were solid investments.

The war truly defied all expectations, the Northern Fleet was destroyed, and all personnel deployed to the four planets were lost contact with.

The only choice was to hold their ground locally without space reinforcements or external supplies.

This resistance lasted four years.

During these four years, they were unable to receive any external messages. On the same planet, they could only hear daily about one fortress being breached, another settlement being massacred.

The number of losses grew, as did the casualties.

The Green Skin Orcs were so eager to rush out to war that they didn't deploy many troops to these four planets, otherwise, it wouldn't have been possible for anyone to survive.

Now, on these four planets, the smaller ones have an army of one to two million, and a population of thirty-five to fifty million; the most populated, White Fog Star, has a population of two hundred million and over ten million human troops.

It's worth mentioning that among these 'populations,' a significant proportion are Korolya people. Before the Alliance took over, Korolya had to contribute four hundred million people every two years as an alien population tax, many of whom naturally ended up here.

Gu Hang gladly accepted these legacies left behind by the Star Domain Government for the Expeditionary Force.

He sent a proxy governor to each of the four planets and, as the Supreme Commander, took command of all the populations and armies there, integrating them into the Eastern War Zone.

Following the template of the Treaty of Seven Horses, he carried out orbital bombings to destroy the Green Skins' core Trash Cities and ecosystems, then deployed Alliance troops to reinforce the fortresses and ramparts, and proactively started to clear out the Green Skins in large swaths.

Taking about a week to tidy up these four planets a bit, Gu Hang continued to lead his fleet forward.

Deeper in, there were truly no traces of human presence.

But that also meant that Gu Hang could be more unrestrained.

He didn't plan to deploy a single soldier to these planets completely occupied by Green Skins.

There was no need.

These planets were completely hopeless for occupation, each with at least two billion Green Skins, often many tens of billions or even over a hundred billion—how could they be occupied?

Even with the Alliance's power, or even the entire power of the Treaty of Seven Horses thrown onto the ground, they couldn't outlast the Green Skins.

What Gu Hang needed to do was to destroy the Green Skins' war potential to the greatest extent possible.

Population, industry, and resources.

He would bomb every Green Skin planet he came across. He didn't have time to have his fleet baptize an entire planet, and even if there was time, there weren't enough shells—all costing money.

But he could find the largest Trash City and ecosystem on the planet and then bomb them specifically.

With the Green Skins' ability to turn waste into treasure, a Trash City wouldn't take long to rebuild after being bombed; and once those ecosystems were destroyed, the spores would spread and soon grow again.

However, these all required time.

The developing Green Skin plant ovules would take at least three to five years before they could start producing Beastman offspring; and those massive Trash Cities, even capable of constructing starships, would take years to rebuild to their original size after being destroyed.

For the Green Skins, these were all major losses.

On top of this, the Alliance deployed four 'Skyburn Torpedoes.'

These four Extinction Order Weapons were deployed in places such as the Silver Pass Star Sector's Thousand Yuan Star and Silver Pass I, as well as the Iron Pass Star Sector's Exon 5 and Iron Pass V.

Choosing these four planets because their environmental conditions are quite suitable for Green Skin growth, and it is estimated that there are indeed nearly one hundred billion Green Skins on them.

Four Skyburn Torpedoes later, the Iron-teeth Greenskins lost over three billion of their population!

Even on Exon 5, the Alliance observed the largest Trash City on the planet, which contained a Green Skin Ship nearing completion, similar in scale to a human Battleship Cruiser!

This was a significant surprise and definitely needed to be eliminated!

Chapter 473, The Chieftain's End Gu Hang led a third of the Alliance Fleet and caused mayhem for three months within the four major Star Sectors occupied by the Green Skin Orcs.

Four Skyburn Torpedoes destroyed the four most prosperous worlds of the Green Skins, killing over thirty billion of them, and annihilated one of their most important industrial core Trash Cities.

For the Green Skins, this was an utterly heart-wrenching blow.

And undoubtedly, Gu Hang's actions had a profoundly significant impact on the entire battlefield.

The Golden Pass Star Sector and Jiaoshou Star District were controlled, which severed the Green Skins' direct southbound channels for troop and resource transportation. They were forced to take a long detour from the northernmost part of the Star Domain, extending the time by two to three times. Not to mention, during the Human Fleet's advance, many of the Green Skins' transport ships were blasted apart.

This pressure was immediately felt in the main war efforts on the frontline.

Originally, alongside the Fury Flame Battle Group, spanning several Star Sectors, a remarkable counterattack was fought on Eagle Cry Star within the Snow Eagle Star Sector. The flames of war had been reignited on Upper Plateau Star, and an unimaginable amount of resources were being fiercely contested to the death.

Now, with their lair pillaged and rear support cut off, the frontline battlefields faced immense problems.

On the main battlefield of the Snow Eagle Star Sector, the battles had become incredibly intense. The total forces committed by both sides exceeded a hundred billion, with over two thousand warships of various kinds chasing, pulling, and occasionally engaging in decisive skirmishes across several Star Systems.

In such intense battlefields, ingenious and fanciful tactical maneuvers, or even what seemed to be a gloriously decisive victory or significant defeat, had little impact on the overall war situation.

Last week, a great defeat incurred the loss of seventy million troops, but this week they could receive a reinforcement of fifty to sixty million and mount another large-scale campaign. Winning against the enemy also meant heavy losses…

Both sides were competing in their endurance, seeing who couldn't bear the attrition, whose losses couldn't be replenished. All tactical objectives served this purpose.

Unless they managed to annihilate both sides' flagships, kill the leaders of the war, or destroy over a billion enemy forces in one fell swoop, the outcome of a single battle certainly mattered, but not as significantly.

And now, the reinforcements for the Green Skins suddenly stopped. Several campaigns in a row faced retreats due to the tardiness of reinforcements and supplies.

Titus was of course aware of Saru's defeat and that his lair had been swept clean.

To be honest, this was an outcome he had completely not foreseen.

When he launched this earth-shattering waaagh, his target was directly aimed at the most central and prosperous places within this Star Domain—the Yunluo Sector and Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector.

These were his goals, and he never expected that the Eastern Front Battlefields, which he had never taken seriously from the start, would cause such a big problem.

He assumed that places like the Tianma Star Sector would be similar to the other regions of the Dragonhawk Star Domain. As long as he sent Fleet ships everywhere, scattering Green Skin children would solve the issue.

At first, things did unfold as he predicted; the Eagle Horse Star Sector, Mist Horse Star District, like all the other invaded Star Sectors, put up little resistance and were turned upside down.

Then, the so-called Alliance struck him a heavy blow.

His invasion-ready Fleet was eradicated in one battle; during the Steel Wing Star campaign, his top general, the Lone Tooth Ghost, died along with billions of Green Skin youngsters across various places on the Eastern Front.

By then, he realized a powerful adversary had emerged on the Eastern Front.

And he did not underestimate it.

He sent his general, King Saru, giving him a Fleet, troops, and a high level of authority. Saru even enjoyed a share of the resources levied from the Green Skin lair.

He made it clear to Saru that he didn't expect him to achieve any results on the Eastern Front but to just hold it and maintain a stalemate against the so-called Alliance "Shrimp".

Saru heeded his command and indeed met his goals. Even though Saru had bothered him frequently in recent years, cutting away many reinforcements, he tolerated it all as long as the Eastern Front remained stable.

Saru held for two and a half years, and the Eastern Front was safe and sound.

Titus had already let his guard down.

But unexpectedly, Saru made a move that turned the world upside down.

Following the devastating defeat in the Temir campaign, the Alliance Army locked down the paths south from the Iron Tooth lair, forcing them to detour northward, which was already unbearable for Titus as all supplies slowed down.

Then, when the Alliance broke into his lair, even that slow supply was gone.

As one Green Skin core world after another was destroyed, how was he to continue?

Titus realized the overall situation had gone seriously awry.

Without the need for the annoying canned-shrimp to attack, he was already actively contracting his battle lines.

But those canned-shrimp seemed to have received some news, launching a full-scale offensive.

One side intended to retreat defensively, the other seized the chance to pursue and expand their victory. Naturally, the result was the Green Skin Orcs' defense lines collapsing a thousand miles at a time.

Chapter 473, The Chieftain's End_2 In a state of emergency, Titus had no choice but to act. With no way to muster troops from his stronghold, he could only call upon forces from other planets that had been invaded over the past four years.

It was definitely not a good choice; most of those planets had not been fully occupied by the Green Skins and could not provide adequate support of all kinds.

However, he had no other option. He must first safeguard the main force on the main battleground.

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Kazimir Erso, of course, also learned about what was happening on the Eastern Front Battlefields.

In fact, after the victory at Temir, Gu Hang changed his style of the past few years of limited contact with the Western Front, sending news of the victory immediately.

Six months ago, I sent an envoy to urge you to take the offensive, and you ignored me, even citing the Eastern Cosmos Domain Chair, Zuo Zhaofeng, to pressure me; now, you've launched a full offensive without even a signal?

What exactly does the Alliance want to do?

Erso, indignant, doubted the battle reports sent by the Alliance in truth.

When hearing about the annihilation of three hundred warships and several billion Green Skins, Erso could hardly believe it.

Such a scale, if it occurred on their Western Front main battleground, would be a severe blow to the Green Skins and would allow him to push the battle line far forward.

The Eastern Front can achieve this?

You have battleships? Then there's no problem.

After the Battle of Temir, Gu Hang continued to maintain this full communication with him.

In fact, saying it's comprehensive is only in comparison to the previous two years. Gu Hang essentially only sent one-sided messages and had no intention of consulting with Erso, the Supreme Commander, about how to conduct the war.

The Alliance would simply clarify to these allies what we have done, what we are doing, and what we're going to do.

As for whether you coordinate with us, that's up to you to decide.

The attitude of the Alliance actually irritated Erso.

But he couldn't just let it out.

Gu Hang ignored him, and after weighing his options, he realized he seemed to have no other choice.

Besides seizing this opportunity to pursue the enemy actively, what else could he do?

He privately harbored a thought: let the Green Skins' main force retreat, follow behind them, and then watch the Alliance engage in a fierce battle with the Green Skins' main force, eager to see what Gu Hang's expression would look like then.

But that was just wishful thinking.

The Green Skins' former flagship had already been destroyed by the Fury Flame Battle Group; what remained was a beggar's version of a combat moon, whose real combat effectiveness was about the same as a battleship; the main force of the Green Skins' ground troops might be around several billion.

If they retreated and fought with the Alliance, the Alliance might not necessarily lose.

Especially since he received a notice from the Alliance: on Capital Star and Light Blessing Star, the inevitable paths of the Green Skins' retreat, the Alliance was fully committed to building a Defense System, vigorously fortifying the planets. Those places, in later battles, would likely not be the Green Skins' home field.

If the Alliance won or even fought to a draw, what would he do then?

He had been ostentatiously aiding the Dragonhawk Star Domain, serving as the main force for two and a half years, losing ships one by one, watching squads of brothers die—and the Iron-Tooth Clan would end up being defeated by the Alliance?

All glory attributed to the Alliance?

Thinking of such a scenario, Erso just couldn't accept it.

Now, no one could erase the Alliance's role in this war. Objectively, they did, indeed, make enormous contributions on the overall battlefield level.

But in front of Erso, there still remained the greatest trophy of the entire Iron Teeth War:

Titus himself.

The Beastman chieftain leading the Green Skins' main force could not be allowed to escape.

Capturing them and eliminating this chieftain would mean that the Iron-Tooth Clan would become another medal in the history of the Fury Flame Battle Group.

The value of this medal was high. After all, the annihilation of a large Green Skin nation, which had troubled a Star Domain for decades and possessed a combat moon—even a beggar's version—along with hundreds of billions in total number, by the Fury Flame Battle Group would count among the most boast-worthy achievements in the Battle Group's long history.

Although the Alliance played a significant role in this war, at best, they were of secondary status, merely a small episode in the story behind their medal.

From this perspective, he had to thank the Alliance.

Without the immense advantage created by the Alliance on the Eastern Front, the Fury Flame Battle Group wouldn't know how long it would be entangled with the Iron Tooth Orcs in the Dragonhawk Star Domain, nor how many sacrifices would have to be made.

Now, they possessed an overwhelming advantage and could win in one decisive battle.

And if they won, killing Titus, it would not only inscribe a glorious page in the history of the Battle Group but also fulfill their primary objective for participating in the Iron Teeth War: to expand the Battle Group's influence in the Eastern Cosmos Domain through battle merits.

Of course, all this was predicated on Titus's death becoming his crowning achievement. If the Alliance took that crown, then the Fury Flame Battle Group would be utterly foolish.

Fortunately, the Alliance didn't seem to have any intentions in this regard. The Alliance's Fleet had merely held their southernmost position at strategic points like Capital Star and Light Blessing Star, merely blocking the Green Skins' northern escape route with no desire to move south to join the main battlefield.

Chapter 473, The Chieftain's End_3 Although Gu Hang didn't spell it out, his meaning was clear enough: If you want it, go get it yourself; I've already given you the greatest help I can.

Erso decided to set aside some of his complaints about Gu Hang and focus on the battlefield.

…

The relentless pursuit by the Fury Flame Battle Group indeed had a significant effect.

After suffering several defeats, Titus dared not continue the fight and fled.

Moreover, he couldn't dare to escape directly from the Snow Eagle Sector to the Jiaoshou Star District.

The Alliance Fleet, guarding the Capital Star, would have blocked him.

Though his main force was much larger than the Alliance's defending army in scale, he was not confident he could swiftly crush the Capital Star, which the Alliance had been fortifying for months.

If he became mired in a protracted battle with the Alliance there and the Fury Flame Battle Group caught up to him, it would spell his doom.

At the Eagle Cry Star, where the Snow Eagle, Jiaoshou, and Thunder Dragon Sectors intersected, Titus only hesitated briefly before making a decision.

He fled towards the Thunder Dragon Sector.

Here, the human armies hadn't yet made a large-scale incursion. The main force of the Sect of Mechanics, countering from the Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector, had just conquered the Dragon Biter Sector and had not had the chance to block his northern escape route.

Using the Thunder Dragon Sector as a stepping stone, with just two jumps, he could reach the Thunder Element Sector.

There, he once again faced a choice: he could head southeast through the Five Fingers Star to slip into the Jiaoshou Star District and then further flee north into the Kuoluo Sector, which would bring him back to his lair.

But that was risky.

Although Five Fingers Star wasn't fortified by the Alliance like Capital Star, it was still closer to the main Alliance forces. The Alliance had ample time to deploy forces and assemble troops to cut him off before he could return to the Kuoluo Sector.

His pursuers at his heels were no longer just the Fury Flame Battle Group. The Mingyang Sect's Protection Army had also caught up. The Mechanical Ark of the Oil Heads had been destroyed by the Green Skins, and Foundry World's Jindi Star had faced invasion by the Green Skins. They harbored a deep-seated hatred for the Iron Tooth Beastmen.

Another option was to continue fleeing north from the Thunder Element Sector to the Barbarian Dance Sector. From there, he could directly enter the Jiang Meiyu Sector. The Barbarian Dance Sector had not yet seen human conflict, and of the four main sectors of the Iron-Tooth Clan, the Jiang Meiyu Sector was the only one the Alliance had not yet swept through. Both the training of troops and the Green Skins industry were well maintained there.

There, he had the best chance of making a comeback.

Two plans: one high-risk but a fast return, the other a safe but long diversion.

What to choose?

Before he could decide, something that should have been anticipated, but that he absolutely did not want to see, happened.

Rebellion.

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Additionally, I need to explain that I hadn't originally planned to write the setting in the previous chapter, but some comrades mentioned earlier that they wanted to know the specifics of the Green Skins' ecology and growth and expressed confusion about the scale and potential of the Iron Tooth.

So I thought of adding some detail.

And yet I continue to be criticized…

I'll try to write less about settings in the future, and when the plot necessarily relates to such details, I'll keep it as concise as possible.

Chapter 474, Let me show you the corpse Titus encountered his first deadly problem, and it was not human pursuit but an internal rebellion.

Actually, calling it a rebellion isn't quite accurate. In Green Skin culture, there isn't much concept of "betrayal."

They have always abided by the notion that the strong rule over the weak, and the weak must step down.

Titus was no different.

For the Iron-Tooth Clan, he was certainly a heaven-sent warrior. With a gun, a hand cannon, and a battle axe, he killed his original leader, then the warlord who ruled over them, and took over as leader. He then unified his own planet, later boarded a starship, and unified the entire Iron-Tooth Clan.

He was also one of the few rationalists among the Green Skins. After unification, he managed to suppress unrest and farmed quietly in his old lair for several years, making the brutal infighting somewhat milder, amassing elite trusted aides — those heavily armored, can-to-can fighting chiefs' guards.

Moreover, he accumulated many Green Skins' Mechas, even Titans that could rival those of Yunluo's Shrimps.

Not to mention the fleet.

His original plan was to keep accumulating for a few more years, but the humans' proactive attack four years ago still troubled his plans.

Green Skin society is like a powder keg, sitting on which he managed to suppress the inherent brutality with great difficulty, something many Beastman leaders could not achieve.

But the human strike lit the powder keg.

Unable to suppress it any longer, there was no need to keep suppressing; he led his troops to counterattack the human offensive and launched a full-scale assault.

Victory, victory, victory, a grand waaagh ignited the passion of the entire Iron-Tooth Clan, pushing his prestige to its peak.

However, the prestige gained from the war could also be lost due to the war.

Green Skin thinkers are quite straightforward; they do not entertain notions of loyalty or betrayal. You say you're strong, you show it by overthrowing the current leader, then you'll be the leader; and if you can lead us in a fight and win, then you are a good leader, and we will follow you.

But if you start losing, don't blame the Green Skins for having second thoughts.

In the past two or three years, after the arrival of the Fury Flame Battle Group, this was the situation.

The aggressive momentum of victory was halted.

Of course, during that phase, it was still manageable; although the front lines couldn't advance further, the declared target of the waaagh by the grand chieftain was in sight — Jindi Star and Yunluo Star,

where they fought, were not too far either. Moreover, there was always intense, interesting combats to be had with those Shrimps, with wins and losses going back and forth.

However, in recent months, the situation took a drastic downturn.

Losing a battle, retreating; then losing another battle, retreating again…

Losing one, two, three battles — okay, no problem, as Mr. Mao taught us, to be both ruthless and cunning. Temporary defeat can be seen as a strategic necessity, a cunning ploy to lure the enemy into a trap for a greater victory.

But continuous losses are unacceptable.

Moreover, Titus was not only losing, but also constantly retreating.

This is the most despised behavior in the nature of Green Skin Orcs.

No matter how much broad and deep vision you have, how much patience you must exhibit for the greater good, if you keep retreating and fail to deliver timely victories to prove these are cunning rather than cowardly acts, then don't blame the plummeting prestige.

As prestige fell, other issues naturally followed.

The first was the Challenger.

Hoisting the warhammer, Titus looked emotionlessly at the subordinate in front of him, battered and tattered.

This was the third Challenger he had killed in the past two days. Each was an important lieutenant he had relied on, holding titles of general or great king.

In the past two days, they had all stepped forward to challenge him one by one.

Titus granted them this honor and personally bestowed death upon them.

However, the matter did not end there.

Three Challengers can still be said to have “followed the rules” by engaging Titus in public duels.

But how could the power struggles among the Green Skins all follow the rules?

As he killed the second Challenger and faced the third, a rebellion erupted on the battle moon where he was stationed.

Two chiefs, along with their trusted aides, incited quite a large number of youngsters to attack the area where Titus was located.

The number of incited Beastman youngsters accounted for about half of the entire battle moon.

The trusted aides loyal to Titus engaged in a fight to the death with these rebels — or rather, power contenders.

Titus too joined the battle personally.

He felt weakened.

Three consecutive challenges, and those daring to directly challenge him were, of course, the three most formidable chiefs in the Iron-Tooth Clan besides himself. Although he won every fight, that did not mean it came without a cost; he was injured and had expended a great deal of energy.

While this battle to suppress the rebellion was still unresolved, everyone suddenly felt the battle moon where they were violently shaking.

It was the Green Skin Overlords and kings outside starting their challenges, in their own manner.

Chapter 474, Showing You the Corpse_2 To kill Titus in a one-on-one duel was to usurp his position;

to lead an army to kill Titus was also to usurp his position;

to bring a Fleet to destroy Titus's chariot—that is, this Combat Moon—would also allow for usurpation of his place;

in such moments, the infighting of the Iron-Tooth Clan erupted in the most disorderly fashion.

And in the end, Titus did not die.

But it was impossible for him to continue sitting in the position of a great chieftain.

Under his leadership, one-third of the entire Iron-Tooth Clan's main Battle Group and Fleet were destroyed in this battle, and his Combat Moon was ruined as well. The internal rebellion combined with external bombardments had turned this supreme war machine into junk. Titus, too, had boarded a spaceship at the last moment to flee to another vessel that remained loyal to him, narrowly escaping burial with the Combat Moon.

One-third, under the leadership of a renowned Orc Warlord, headed south for a decisive battle to the death with the pursuing Fury Flame Battle Group. This King Muru now claimed to be the new chieftain of the Iron-Tooth Clan, and he garnered massive support because he vowed to lead the Green Skins no longer to flee. He declared that he had Mr. Mao's blessing, and that they were fated to triumph in this battle.

Of course, this was impossible.

Titus knew that Muru's pandering to the Green Skins' belligerent and bloodthirsty nature would only lead this elite force of the Iron-Tooth Clan to extinction.

They could not possibly triumph without supplies or reinforcements.

But, this was for the best.

In fact, Muru's actions served as the role of his rearguard.

No matter how inept or lacking in combat prowess, they were still one-third of the Green-Skin main force. With such strength, they could definitely hold back the Fury Flame Battle Group and the Oil Heads of the Sect of Mechanics for a considerable time.

And he could take this opportunity to escape back to the Jiang Meiyu Sector.

He still commanded one-third of the Green Skins' main force; of the four Star Sectors that comprised the Iron-Tooth's home base, the Jiang Meiyu remained untouched and unscathed.

Upon returning there, he would properly manage the entire Star Sector, suppressing internal unrest on the one hand and fortifying every planet on the other.

He anticipated that once humanity had claimed victories on all fronts and was free to focus, they would surely press their advantage and seek to exterminate them.

By that time, he would be in Jiang Meiyu, taking full advantage of home territory, to drag those Shrimps into the mire of war, and seek development amidst the conflict.

He still had the chance for a comeback!

…

The first half of the story progressed just as he had envisioned.

The one-third Green-Skin main force, their morale boosted by King Muru, engaged in fierce battle with the human army in the Leilong and Thunder Element sectors.

The intensity of the battle was exceptional.

Though their forces were smaller, Muru's stance was to attack on all fronts, leaving no room for retreat. The combat power that erupted from them was quite terrifying.

The human pursuit forces were caught off guard, and the two squads of the Fury Flame Battle Group that were in hottest pursuit were even wiped out.

Erso, the Battle Group Leader of Fury Flame, was quite enraged.

Being bitten back by a duck that was thought to be cooked was surely aggravating.

He embarked on the Battle Group Fleet's flagship—a Combat Shuttle equivalent to a Battleship class—to personally join the battle.

The normal intensity of the battle was high, but it ended quickly.

King Muru suffered defeat at sea, his fleet nearly eradicated; the planet where he resided was also subjected to an invasion by the Fury Flame Battle Group led by Kazimir Erso himself. In this ground decisive battle, the numerous and well-equipped Green Skins were mercilessly annihilated, having entirely lost orbital control.

Muru himself was also beheaded by Erso.

But Erso still was not happy.

He wanted the head of Titus, not Muru. This fellow claimed to be a great chieftain, but the state of the Green-Skin leaders had been largely figured out by humans over the past few years. Erso knew that although this fellow's status was not low, he was actually just a warlord, a 'king'.

He originally thought that the Green Skins turning to fight desperately against him was a last stand by the great chieftain Titus, but it turned out not to be the case.

Combining the received information about the internal strife within the Green Skins, Gu Hang had almost confirmed Titus had fled.

Furthermore, even with the speed at which Erso had been annihilating this group of Green Skins, due to King Muru's obstruction, it still took two months.

During these two months, the distance between the two sides had suddenly widened significantly.

Perhaps Titus had already retreated to his lair?

This speculation was very likely true, which only infuriated Erso even more.

The Iron-Tooth chieftain fleeing back to the Iron-Tooth nest, this bunch of Green Skins still having a part of their fleet remaining, with the full control of the planetary ground orbits for support, and possibly billions of Green Skin armies on those planets.

No longer in an expedition status, the Green Skins would no longer be restricted by supply and reinforcement, allowing their war potential to be fully unleashed.

Conversely, it was the humans that had become the Expeditionary Force. Though the main battlefield of the entire Star Domain had been won, the Green Skin invasion on over a hundred planets was yet to end. The number of Green Skins on these planets varied, but given their nature, they were like incurable diseases on the planets, like ringworm, and only through prolonged combat and management could they be completely rid of the Green Skin threat.

As a result, the newly reclaimed planets could provide very limited support to the human Expeditionary Force. Even worse, in some places, Erso might even have to invest troops to help them resolve issues.

Under these circumstances, Erso could imagine that hunting down the Iron-Tooth Clan one planet at a time and capturing the chieftain, Titus, to execute him would become incredibly difficult.

Not that it couldn't be done, but it would take a very long time, cost a hefty price, and require a lot of blood and money to achieve the goal.

But could he just not do it?

After the Fury Flame Battle Group had already shed so much blood, was he supposed to release his grip now?

Then, all the costs previously incurred would truly become sunk costs.

Annoying!

Infuriating!

That was Erso's mood now.

Having missed the best opportunity to annihilate Titus during the chase, he was infuriated; endless troubles afterward made his scalp tingle.

However, at this time, a communication request from Gu Hang came through.

This was normal.

Since the end of the Temir Campaign, the Alliance had changed its previous style and began communicating frequently with him. Although still not obedient, there was some unspoken understanding.

The best example was that the Alliance had diligently blocked the Green Skins' southward reinforcements from reaching their nest and set fierce fires in the Green Skin lair, destroying their war potential and leading to their full retreat. This allowed Erso and the Sect of Mechanics to expand their victorious results through a rout, achieving a decisive victory on the front.

Secondly, during the Fury Flame Battle Group's pursuit of the Green Skins, the Alliance also blocked multiple northern escape routes of the Green Skins, forcing the Green Skin legions to escape along the Thunder Dragon, through the Thunder Element Sector, creating a major detour and providing ample chasing space for the Fury Flame Battle Group and Mingyang Sect.

Because of this, in recent exchanges, Erso had been a bit more polite.

Just a bit.

He still complained about the Alliance every time, demanding they release the detained Fury Flame Battle Group contingent and threatened the Alliance, accusing them of disloyalty.

At best, he was just a little gentler in word choice.

But today was a bit different.

The one making this call wasn't the diplomat who had been communicating with Erso all this time but the Alliance's highest leader: Gu Hang.

Not being able to talk directly to Gu Hang had always been an annoyance to Erso.

On top of that, with the war going unfavorably and Titus having escaped, Erso was in a very bad mood.

Today he wouldn't give any face:

"Mr. Governor, is that you? You coward, have you decided not to hide and suckle milk today and dare to speak to me directly?"

Faced with this direct and malicious comment, Gu Hang showed no intention of stooping to his level; instead, he revealed a smile and delivered a piece of news to Erso:

“We have already killed Titus, would you like to see his corpse?”

Chapter 475, Let’s First Get Past Mr. Gu The atmosphere between Erso and Gu Hang suddenly fell silent after this statement.

After a few seconds, or perhaps a few minutes, Erso spoke up:

“What did you say?”

After he spoke, he felt that his question was rather lame.

No one would joke about such matters, or spread false information.

And indeed, it was highly possible. The main forces of the Alliance were already stirring troubles in the Green Skins’ den. It was understandable that Titus headed toward the Iron-Tooth lair and got blocked by the Alliance.

Yet, he couldn’t help but seek confirmation.

At the same time, he felt a great sense of absurdity rising within him.

If Titus had died at the hands of the Alliance, then what were the gains of the Fury Flame Battle Group’s years of struggle?

Previously, no matter how much noise the Alliance made on the eastern front, it was still a side battle. The main battlefield was here, with the Beastman leader, the great chieftain Titus, right before him.

According to the centuries-old history of the Empire's battles against the Green Skins, everyone knew that the leader of the Beastmen was the crucial element in a war against them.

Only by eliminating the supreme leader of the Beastmen could a war be declared victorious.

As long as Fury Flame killed Titus, the major credit for the Iron Teeth War would undoubtedly belong to them. Any other contributions would at best be secondary, merely aiding the main battlefield without overshadowing it.

But now, this great achievement had been snatched away by the Alliance.

The narrative would immediately change.

The Alliance would no longer be just a supporting role.

Overall, it was the Fury Flame Battle Group that held back the main forces of the Green Skins at the front, while the Alliance struck directly from the side, significantly destroying the war potential of the Iron-Tooth Clan, forced Titus to retreat, causing internal chaos among the Green Skins, and during the encirclement, annihilated a significant part of the Green Skins' main forces and killed the Beastman chieftain Titus, achieving victory in the war.

In this version of the story, the Alliance was clearly not a side character. On the contrary, the Fury Flame Battle Group was the supporting role.

Their role was to distract the Green Skins at the front, creating an opportunity for the true heroes—the main characters—to strike directly at the target and intercept the Beastman leader.

Yes, golden leaves to the golden medal, the perfect supporting role.

But that wasn't acceptable to Erso!

The Fury Flame Battle Group was not an ordinary battle group.

The logic of normal Interstellar Warrior battle groups fighting wars was actually quite simple.

They possessed their own mother planet, whose outputs all belonged to them. In return, the Empire would receive the Interstellar Warriors' compliance with imperial conscription.

However, direct orders from the Empire were rare, and Interstellar Warriors could even refuse to act—though they usually didn't. More often, battle groups responded to distress signals from a planet, deploying a company or sometimes less than a company, depending on the trouble encountered on the planet.

They could also ignore these distress signals.

From these perspectives, the independence of Interstellar Warriors was very strong.

Of course, most Interstellar Warriors would not ignore a distress call or refuse an imperial order. Such was their honor.

The Fury Flame Battle Group came to fight in the Dragonhawk Star Domain following this protocol.

But the difference lay in that ordinary battle groups, upon achieving honor, were content.

From this perspective, being a supporting character, though regrettable, was usually not a deal-breaker for ordinary battle groups.

But not for the Fury Flame Battle Group. What they valued more was the real significance behind the honor.

If it were only as simple as being a supporting character, but the key point was, they paid such a high price to spread their fame through victory in the war, thereby indirectly exerting influence over the Dragonhawk Star Domain, and developing this Star Domain as part of the outskirts of the 'Iron Fury Stone' sphere of influence.

Now, after they had already paid a heavy price, the gain they sought was intercepted by Gu Hang.

Even Erso, with his hundreds of years of life experience as a Battle Group Leader, struggled to remain composed.

He tried to breathe deeply, but still couldn't suppress the annoyance in his heart.

"Fine, very well, Mr. Gu has done a great job."

"However, the war isn't over yet and our Fury Flame Battle Group will remain in the Dragonhawk Star Domain for a while, there will be time to come."

With that, Erso ended the communication.

…

The last statement from Erso was clearly a threat.

But Gu Hang wasn't concerned.

The death of Titus by his hand was not something he actively sought.

However, he similarly realized that he couldn't allow Titus to escape alive back to the Green Skin lair, or else the subsequent extermination operations would become extremely challenging.

The rallying power of a Beastman chieftain was formidable. If he returned alive, it meant that during the Alliance's operation to wipe out the four major Green Skin star sectors, they would face a unified and coordinated Green Skin realm.

Then, even if the Alliance could complete the extermination operation, the cost would be significantly different.

Thus, after learning about the internal chaos among the Green Skins, Gu Hang immediately deduced that the Iron-Tooth chieftain's intention was to detour back to the Jiang Meiyu Sector. He led the main part of the fleet in advance to that sector, catching Titus' returning fleet squarely.

Chapter 475, let's get past Mr. Gu first_2 The returning Titus, with one-third of the Green Skins' main force, was still no small scale. However, under the sudden assault, Gu Hang let all other fleets go, but he wouldn't let go of the Green Skin flagship that Titus himself was on.

Titus, realizing he couldn't escape the pursuit and had no chance of winning in the star battle, wanted to land on the surface of the nearest planet and make one last stand.

But even this plan was seen through by Gu Hang.

His warship, with its Void Shield torn apart by psychic power, became the target of the Firebath Nova and several human cruisers, which fired upon it together. Titus' current ride was no longer the Green Skin battleship it once was—that one had been blasted apart by the Fury Flame Battle Group—nor was it the Fighting Moon, which was destroyed in the Green Skin civil war. What he now rode was merely a regular Green Skin cruiser, utterly incapable of withstanding such an attack.

After his warship was destroyed, Gu Hang made sure of his death by sending people to search his ship's shattered remnants for his body.

This was quite a stroke of luck; even with a Beastman chieftain's strong physique, surviving the destruction of his ship was impossible. Whether there was a whole body left depended entirely on the specifics of the situation.

But Gu Hang was fortunate; the Phoenixes, combing through the many pieces of wreckage drifting in space, actually found his body.

He was critically injured by an exploding steel beam that had pierced through his chest. There were signs that he struggled to break and pull out the steel beam to survive. There was even evidence of wound healing in his pierced chest due to his strong physique.

However, because the life support system was destroyed, the extreme cold of space meant his damaged war armor could not sustain his life.

But even with the severe injuries and direct exposure to space, he managed to survive for at least thirty-nine hours. When the Phoenixes found him, he was still alive and moving.

Such a dangerous individual—after consulting Gu Hang—was executed immediately to prevent any future threats, with only the body to be brought back.

With the assistance of a Warband Apothecary, Titus' body was made into a specimen.

Then came Gu Hang's interstellar call with Erso.

At first, Gu Hang had considered whether to completely fall out with Erso and the Fury Flame Battle Group. He even thought about whether he could use Titus' body to negotiate some benefits.

But Erso's initial attitude was a bit too much.

Gu Hang was mature, but when it was time to settle a score, he wouldn't shrink back.

Besides, would selling Titus' body really ease the relationship between the two parties?

After careful analysis of the big picture, Gu Hang believed it was impossible.

Any easing would be only temporary. There existed fundamental, irreconcilable differences between the two sides.

Would Gu Hang, after the end of the Iron Teeth War, retreat back to the Tianma Star Sector with full honors, content with the current nine-planet structure of the Alliance, and abandon the political framework brought by the Seven Horse Treaty, abolishing it?

Clearly not.

The Alliance had already demonstrated its strength, and it would be impossible for him to quietly make a fortune going forward.

He must expand the Alliance's base, from the Tianma Star Sector to at least the Seven Horse Territory. At the same time, he had to adopt political unions for shared defense and economic alliances as strategies to bring many star systems into the Alliance's fold, only then would he live up to this opportunity.

To acquire so much territory, a number of conditions were required. Military and economic strength were the basics; Gu Hang must have the capacity to stabilize these planets and restore their economies.

At the same time, great prestige and political legitimacy were absolutely essential.

Relying solely on the so-called 'interstellar political body,' that is, the license of the Alliance, would definitely not be adequate for such a vast area. Although there was no limit to the number of Governors that could join his Alliance, in reality, if he added hundreds of worlds all at once, it would certainly cause a massive upheaval.

The impact of this would be monumental, not just regionally, but also drawing the attention of the Central Empire's political arena.

Galaraldo couldn't cope with that.

Gu Hang had to gain this legitimacy from other areas.

The most direct route was to seek the position of the Dragonhawk Star Domain Leader.

With the identity of the first leader of the Star Domain Government, the Alliance's strength could be turned into legitimate political influence, securing his position more than anyone else's; at the same

time, the identity of the Star Domain Head would also shelter the Alliance from the elements, allowing the Alliance to develop with ease across the entire Star Domain.

A secondary plan, if he could not become the Star Domain Leader, was to make the Star Domain Leader one of his own. That could achieve a similar effect, though there would be some hidden dangers and problems.

Even worse, if the Star Domain Leader stood against Gu Hang, then his only option would be to resort to standard interstellar trade, military exchange, and political alliances. That wasn't necessarily bad, who says a few planets can't help each other out? But once the scale of operations increased without a legitimate political title, it was very easy to trip over and run into trouble.

Gu Hang did not want to end up in the third situation; he could only strive for the first two.

This brought an irreconcilable contradiction with the Fury Flame Battle Group.

The so-called 'Iron Fury Stone' referred to the political entity led by the Iron Armor Battle Group, along with two staunch allies, the Fury Flame Battle Group and the Bedrock Shield Warband, radiating from the Princess Star Domain to several surrounding Star Domains.

They could almost be considered a separatist force within the Empire, much more so than Gu Hang's Alliance.

Although the three Battle Groups had made some disguises, it was clear to the discerning eye that their numbers and grade were far beyond the stipulations of the Star Warrior Codex.

Generally speaking, it was normal for a Battle Group to exceed the limits slightly, or to behave differently than the regulations. After all, they held special identities, and each had a different cultural and historical heritage; as long as they were loyal to the Empire, the Empire would typically turn a blind eye.

But when you multiply the scale by ten or twenty times, what do you still call a Battle Group? You might as well just return to the era of legions.

Moreover, it wasn't just the Interstellar Warriors who were breaking the rules. The Imperial Tax in the Princess Star Domain was now pretty much whatever they felt like paying.

Paying a bit of Imperial Tax was giving face; when not giving face, the Void Insect Species had been invading fiercely recently, spending a lot, so come and pay me back, Empire.

Not approved? Then the Star Domains next door felt sorry for us and donated, please exempt them from the Imperial Tax, Empire.

Not possible?

I'd like to see who comes to collect it.

This was the current attitude of 'The Husband of the Princess', 'The Tyrant of the Web', 'The Steadfast Shield of the Void's Eye', Iron Legion Commander Li Guoshi.

It was much more overbearing than the Alliance, which had never fallen behind on Imperial Tax to date. Every account of Imperial Tax collected recently, how much money was collected, where it was spent, what battles were won, it was all clear and transparent. Later on, after the war, Gu Hang also had no intention of refusing to pay Imperial Tax, at most…uh, just pay it flexibly.

In Gu Hang's view—not just his, but many high-ranking officials in the Central Empire—'Iron Fury Stone' had become a de facto separatist regime and was brazen about it.

Galaraldo had once discussed this matter with Gu Hang.

From this perspective, the Fury Flame Battle Group's arrival in the Dragonhawk Star Domain meant they were on a mission to expand territory.

What should Gu Hang do?

Bow down and submit, from now on, be ‘Iron Fury Stone’s’ lapdog like many of the Imperial forces in the Princess Star Domain and the surrounding Star Domains?

Of course not.

Political conflict was inevitable.

Gu Hang thus abandoned any hope of appeasement.

Relying on this war achievement, the strength of the Alliance, and upper echelon relationships, Gu Hang had the chance to fight for what he wanted.

Moreover, Gu Hang planned to find shared interests for supporting the Alliance with certain people in the Central Empire’s upper echelons.

If ‘Iron Fury Stone’ wanted to take over the Dragonhawk Star Domain, they would first have to contend with me, Gu Hang.

Chapter 476: Racing to Claim Land After the brief conversation between Gu Hang and Erso had ended, the two largest military and political forces within the Dragonhawk Star Domain had ceased any high-level communication.

This was a dangerous situation.

It was such an obvious situation that anyone in the Dragonhawk Star Domain who was even slightly in the know could sense an unusual scent in the air, causing countless people to worry and even tremble with fear.

The Iron-Tooth Clan had just been defeated on a grand scale, and countless worlds were still engulfed in the flames of war—the war had not yet ended. And now, the two greatest war heroes were turning against each other, ready to draw their swords?

How could this not make people shiver with fear?

However, although there were irreconcilable core contradictions between the Alliance and the Fury Flame Battle Group, and their relationship was poor, they actually had no intention of fighting each other directly—at least not imminently.

Both parties, after all, were part of the Empire. No matter how much they despised each other, wishing death upon the other, employing ruthless underground tactics, and sparing no insult in their words, they could not truly face each other with knives and guns on the battlefield.

If it came to that, there was a very clear term for it:

Civil war.

And once a civil war broke out, the nature of the conflict would immediately become exceedingly foul, something the Central Government of the Empire absolutely could not tolerate; it was beyond the bottom line.

The likelihood of the two sides going to war directly wasn't actually that high.

Gu Hang had no intention of firing the first shot.

The high political risk forced him to proceed with caution.

Erso, on the other side, likely felt roughly the same way.

However, no one could completely guarantee that accidents wouldn't happen.

The crux of the issue was that the probability of the armies from both sides encountering each other was still quite high.

Titus had been killed, and the main force of the Green Skins had been almost entirely annihilated. According to the latest report provided to Gu Hang by the intelligence department of the Alliance, they

believed that there were still around twenty billion Green Skins within the entire Dragonhawk Star Domain, apart from the four Star Sectors completely occupied by the Green Skins.

This was an estimated data, the specifics of which no one could currently clarify. But the Alliance's intelligence department believed this data to be quite reliable, without orders of magnitude deviation from the actual situation.

These Green Skins, scattered across various worlds throughout the Star Domain, were more numerous in some places and less so in others. Yet, most of these worlds invaded by the Green Skins had not fully escaped their influence.

On some poorer planets, the human population might total just a few hundred million, with underdeveloped productivity, not to mention wealth or power. On such planets, a few million Green Skins posed a problem beyond their capability to resolve.

And on some more powerful worlds, facing hundreds of millions, or even billions of Green Skins also caused significant headaches.

These planets, relying solely on their own strength, found it hard to resist the crisis brought by these Green Skins.

At this time, external assistance was needed.

There were three factions currently capable of addressing this in the entire Star Domain.

The Alliance, the Fury Flame Battle Group, and the Mingyang Sect of the Sect of Mechanics.

The Mingyang Sect could be set aside for now. Among the three, the Mingyang Sect was the weakest; their core territories were damaged in the war, and their losses were substantial throughout the conflict.

Also, the Sect of Mechanics generally chose not to get involved in such matters and were not keen on expanding their territory. These Oil Heads, sticking to their small portion of land on the Foundry World,

engaged in scientific research, faith, and production. The manpower and resources they needed could always be acquired from the outside world through trade; no one would refuse or reject a Foundry World as a partner.

Their involvement in this massacre against the Green Skins was purely because the Green Skins threatened their existence, coupled with hatred.

In actual operations, the Mingyang Sect focused mainly on cleaning up in the Steel Fire Dragon Star Sector where Jindi Star was located, as well as in the Tamer Sector and Dragon Pass Sector, which hosted several important resource sites for the Mingyang Sect.

In other places, they lacked the strength and interest to compete.

Of course, no one would provoke them either.

The Protection Army of the Mingyang Sect had once briefly been part of the Allied Forces, under the command of the Furyflame Battalion Commander Erso. But after the war had ended, the Sages of the Mingyang Sect took back military command and went their separate ways.

As far as Erso was concerned, although he would have liked to attach the Mingyang Sect to his chariot—an important part

Chapter 476, Land Grab_2 This was certainly a war waged against external forces, and in fact, the dispersion of twenty billion Green Skins across various planets into dozens of battlefields meant that both parties had to dedicate troops to multiple fronts. For either side, this was a considerable pressure. Dividing troops so widely was not guaranteed to be foolproof; in the midst of battle, a surge from the Green Skins could result in significant losses, a fact that had occurred in the operations of both sides.

However, overall, those Green Skins, now virtually unable to traverse the cosmos and isolated on their respective planets, were no longer a major concern.

It was the Alliance and the Furyflame Battle Group that posed significant trouble to each other.

Both parties' actions were reminiscent of a rush to claim territory after the war.

And during this process, it was inevitable that they would encounter each other.

Ships from both sides arriving simultaneously in a star system, both commencing troop deployments to a world…

Such scenarios were quite common.

Under a mutual, tense attitude, coupled with direct competition, it wouldn't be impossible for an accidental discharge to occur.

Gu Hang had no desire to fire the first shot, let alone provoke a civil war with Furyflame.

Winning wasn't the issue, but should a war break out, then his sector would become the Empire's headline news.

Gu Hang did not wish for things to escalate to that level.

He estimated that the Furyflame Battle Group were likely in a similar boat.

Did the 'Iron Fury Stone' not realize that their independent rule in the Princess Star Domain was a thorn in the side of the Central Empire?

Unless they had prepared for some indiscernible contingency, they too would not want to stir up major news within the Dragonhawk Star Domain.

But Gu Hang never placed his safety on the rationality of others.

What if Kazimir Erso went mad? What if the troops below acted independently?

He always retained a flexible force at hand so that, in the event of a worst-case scenario, he could respond swiftly. His spread-out forces for claiming territory would not prevent him from assembling enough strength to avoid being defeated piece by piece.

Fortunately, an accidental firing hadn't truly occurred.

Generally, when either the Alliance or the Furyflame Battle Group entered a star system and discovered the other side well-established, after an assessment, they would withdraw.

There was no point in assisting the enemy by complimenting their efforts.

And if the enemy's establishment was subpar, the other side would immediately intervene, deploying ground forces to thrash the Green Skins anyway and vying to gain the support of the local planetary government.

In that sense, it almost seemed like friendly competition.

But in reality, underhanded sabotage was not in short supply.

If they couldn't be direct rivals, why not fire from the shadows?

That would stop short of erroneous bombings, for if they started, the enemy might just bomb back, escalating to a deadly exchange.

It was a slippery slope that couldn't be fallen into.

But what could be said about using the Green Skins to one's advantage?

It was perfectly fine to stand back during an ally's hardships like an immovable mountain, or to lead the Green Skins on a chase and then suddenly withdraw; to willingly cede a flank on the battlefield, allowing the Green Skins an opportunity to ambush the enemy's rear…

Similar strategies were endless.

In this way, both parties engaged in countless cunning competitions across many star sectors and worlds.

In this matter, both sides had their strengths and weaknesses.

The Furyflame Battle Group's advantage lay in their control over the Star Domain Government.

This was the source of the greatest political legitimacy. The Star Sector Governments listened to the Star Domain Government, and in turn, the Planetary Governments listened to the Star Sector Governments. Wasn't that how it should be?

But the disadvantage was also here.

The Furyflame Battle Group's control over the Star Domain Government was not absolute.

For Tan Jiuyi and those from the Dragonhawk Star Domain Government, being under the Furyflame Battle Group's control was a reluctant predicament with no alternative.

What they hoped for, of course, was that the Furyflame Battle Group would act like any typical Interstellar Warrior Battle Group: come to help fight, and after the battle's end, depart with honors. In such cases, local governments were usually generous in awarding honors to these assisting Emperor Angels. Medals were freely given, and praises to the Empire were profusely sung.

Even if tangible benefits were sought, that was also acceptable. After helping us fight, recruiting soldiers within the Star Domain, requesting supplies, or desiring various types of materials could all be amply satisfied.

But the Furyflame Battle Group's apparent intention not to leave indeed caused displeasure.

And moreover, they had even directly intervened in the affairs of the Star Domain.

Could the Dragonhawk Government be pleased with this?

Clearly, they could not.

But they were powerless to act.

The military power lay with the Fury Flame Battle Group, with their command system forming a faction of its own, leaving no room for others to intervene. They could only dutifully serve as logistics officers, and even then, they were under the supervision of the Fury Flame Battle Group. Inefficient work was penalized, and several high-ranking officials of the Star Domain had already been made examples of.

Furthermore, there was another matter that greatly worried the Star Domain Government.

From this perspective, the introduction of the Fury Flame Battle Group was an unavoidable measure.

What would happen if the Fury Flame Battle Group truly decided to withdraw immediately?

Compared to the present Alliance, and the Star Domain Government that had already exhausted all its force…

Who would eventually call the shots in the Dragonhawk Star Domain?

Of course, on this matter, the internal factions within the Dragonhawk Government were also divided.

Some believed that matters within the Star Domain should be resolved internally, and that the Fury Flame Battle Group and their ‘Iron Fury Stone’ were not to be trifled with.

Others believed that no matter what, the Interstellar Warriors from the Fury Flame Battle Group, who had no roots in Dragonhawk, would eventually leave one day. However, the Alliance was here to stay, unchallenged, and thus the power of the Fury Flame Battle Group was essential.

Both factions were vocal, and neither was insignificant.

Tan Jiuyi, as the leader of the Star Domain Government, seemed to be leaning toward the latter.

Kazimir Erso had visited him more than once, and perhaps they had reached some confidential agreements in private.

This was why, for the most part, the Star Domain Government was cooperating with the Fury Flame Battle Group's operations, providing a veneer of legitimacy to many of the group's actions, which made overcoming certain obstacles much easier.

However, those within the government who were dragging their feet were making the Fury Flame Battle Group's operations less smooth.

…

On the other hand, the situation was largely the opposite for the Alliance.

The Alliance's military operations were more swift.

Both sides had Interstellar Warriors, but the Alliance's Mortal Troops were clearly more elite and battle-hardened compared to those under the Fury Flame Battle Group's control.

Interstellar Warriors were ultimately limited, and many battlefronts relied on Mortal Troops. In military performance, the Fury Flame Battle Group indeed fell short compared to the Alliance.

The Alliance was more efficient at pummeling the Green Skins than Fury Flame.

Moreover, the Alliance consistently produced quite attractive economic cooperation plans—something the Fury Flame Battle Group simply couldn't match.

The Star Domain Government had been practically bled dry by the war and couldn't sustain such support; Jindi Star, which had been once relied upon by the Star Domain Government, was still licking its wounds. And the Oil Heads, preferring neutrality, provided very little support.

They could not afford the price offered by the Alliance.

If it weren't for the rulers of many planets harboring doubts about the Alliance's system, worried about their own authority being undermined, perhaps more planets would have already sided with the Alliance.

But the Alliance was making some changes too.

Did anyone think it was easy to join the Alliance? Not everyone wishing to join had the opportunity!

At best, these planets could be developed into peripheral forces, and economic aid required something in exchange.

Ports, resources, manpower, orders, markets…

Nothing was given for free.

This was a process of mutual benefit; the Alliance didn't seek domination.

These strategies alleviated some of the planets' suspicions, and coupled with the Alliance's military strength, and the driving away of Fury Flame's influence, they ultimately chose to side with the Alliance.

Overall, both parties were staking their claims, each with its own gains and losses.

A series of strategic and cunning battles were still ongoing.

And Gu Hang, aside from focusing on these larger issues, was also troubled by another matter.

He now had tens of millions of Grace Points at hand—what should he do with them?

Chapter 477, Spending Big Bucks “Securing new territories” was a matter of general direction for Gu Hang, but he did not meddle too much with the specific strategies and execution.

Spread across dozens of planets as battlefields, the situation was changing every day, and it was impossible for him to handle it all by himself.

His powerful spiritual energy granted him the ability to multitask, but there was no need for him to oversee everything.

He placed full trust in the Alliance’s military command system and left it to them.

Meanwhile, Gu Hang started to ponder how to use the millions of Grace Points at his disposal.

This was the real foundation of the Alliance’s future development.

The largest two windfalls came from the great victory at Temir and the interception of Titus.

The former brought him upwards of 8.78 million Grace Points; the latter, although the war was brief, was still not small in scale.

When Gu Hang blocked Titus in the Jiang Meiyu Sector, that guy still had about a third of the Green Skins’ main force with him, most of which were annihilated at sea by Gu Hang. A small portion piloted their ships toward the planet surface, preferring to crash land and disintegrate rather than be destroyed in space by human warships.

Only a very few managed to flee.

It was impossible to tally the total number of Green Skins that died, but Gu Hang could see from the battle reports.

There were seven hundred million Green Skins.

Plus over two hundred Green Skin warships.

These battle achievements provided Gu Hang with roughly four million Grace Points in total.

Additionally, in these recent days, the Alliance had been bombarding the four major Green Skin sectors, yielding an additional two million plus Grace Points.

All together, this made up 15.22 million Grace Points.

With so many Grace Points, Gu Hang did not plan to hoard them; he was definitely going to spend them.

He roughly divided these Grace Points into three areas of spending.

The first was for civil economic development, with the core goal of increasing productivity, which took approximately 5 million of Gu Hang's Grace Points.

He enlightened talents in various fields such as engineers, teachers, civil servants, and so on. A significant number of heroic individuals at production positions enhanced the potential of the Alliance's productivity. Here, Gu Hang spent 2 million, and tens of thousands of people suddenly felt their talents had been further augmented in their areas of expertise, becoming 'heroes' within their domains.

These individuals would also subsequently be listed in the Alliance Development Department's talent reserve. After a period of evaluation, these people would be promoted quickly within the Alliance system and more likely positioned in key roles to have a greater impact.

Then, Gu Hang spent another 3 million on exchanges for civilian structures like factories, academies, and churches.

This resulted in tens of thousands of factories receiving system blessings and thousands of schools and churches being established across various worlds.

Half of these expenditures were spent on the Tianma Star Sector, while the other half was spent on worlds that had signed the Economic Community Act.

The initial ten worlds that had signed the Economic Community Act had reached Vassal Level LV5, and upon consideration, Gu Hang decided to merge these worlds into the Alliance to expand the core territories and enhance the Alliance's developmental potential.

This meant that the Alliance directly dispatched officials to govern these planets—since the Economic Community already involved a large number of Alliance officials integrating into the governments, it was now establishing direct Alliance Planetary Governments.

The amalgamation of these LV5 planets did not cause any particular upheaval on the planets themselves. On the contrary, both the native inhabitants and the ruling classes, after two years of being nurtured by Alliance policies, were eager to formally join the Alliance.

However, this development did have a certain impact on other worlds that either had a lower Vassal Level or had not yet signed the Economic Community Act.

The ruling classes on those planets were apprehensive, worried that the Alliance's absorption could come for them in a few years.

The Alliance's propaganda and diplomatic departments are working together, striving to minimize the negative impacts brought by world integration and Alliance expansion.

The main methods are twofold:

First, propagandize to the public about the benefits of signing the Economic Community Act and joining the Alliance, which will solve unemployment and survival problems, and ensure a better prospective future.

Second, propagate to the ruling class that joining the Alliance will not result in purges, citing examples of worlds that have joined the Alliance—whether they wish to lie back and enjoy wealth, the Alliance provides, or if they wish to progress, under the Alliance's large system, there are more opportunities. After all, they have broken out of being confined to a single planet and now have dozens of planetary stages.

Their work has indeed achieved some results, with much of the resistance dissipating due to the propaganda.

The elevation of the civilian economy will make the Alliance wealthier and more developed in the future.

…

Additionally, Gu Hang expended six million Grace Points on military construction.

The largest expenditure was on the training of personnel for the Alliance Land Forces and Navy.

There were also tens of thousands of enlightened officers and generals.

Moreover, four hundred million soldiers—most of whom were Land Forces, with a few being naval sailors—received training through the Army Badge System.

The Alliance has developed a Land Forces army with a total strength of five hundred million, which previously seemed ample, but now seems entirely insufficient.

Moreover, the effectiveness that the Alliance Land Forces can demonstrate is completely incomparable to the Pact Army. In some key battles, even ten or twenty times the number of Pact Army troops is futile.

In a trench, after all, only so many people can crouch, and the Alliance Land Forces can hold out there for a month while the Pact Army, having arrived today, would collapse by tomorrow.

Not that the Pact Army is too weak—they all have at least one year of military training. But the level of the Alliance Land Forces is too high, having reached the standard of the Star Realm Army, with a qualitative difference between them.

Conveniently, after merging ten new worlds, the core population of the Alliance also increased by about 15 billion, greatly expanding the manpower pool.

Subsequently, Gu Hang planned to expand the number of Alliance Land Forces to over one billion and ensure at least an 80% ratio of Tier 5 soldiers.

This means that later on, Gu Hang had to use the [Soldier Tag] System to train four hundred million soldiers.

That's an investment of four million Grace Points.

Another investment was in Interstellar Warriors.

Gu Hang planned to fill the last five hundred vacancies of the Phoenix Battle Group all at once, which cost about five hundred thousand Grace Points.

Thus, Phoenix now possessed a thousand-person scale, reaching the standard Battle Group numbers.

But actually, that's not enough.

It seems the Alliance will inevitably have to deal with 'Tie Nu Shi' in the future. Just the Fury Flame Battle Group—rumor has it they've overbred to around three thousand in scale.

Not to mention the Iron Armor Battle Group, which may truly reach tens of thousands in number.

By the Empire's standards, Phoenix is definitely revitalized. But looking at the need to confront 'Tie Nu Shi', Phoenix is still not able to compete.

What to do?

Directly increasing numbers is not a problem. If Gu Hang wished, he could save a bit from various other areas, keep ten million Grace Points aside, and instantly raise Phoenix's numbers to a ten-thousand-person scale.

But… overbreeding can't withstand scrutiny.

Iron Armor has no shame, clearly carving out their own territory, should Gu Hang do the same?

Chapter 478, The Long-Awaited Technology Lottery Interstellar Warriors' "superbirth" was something Gu Hang considered, but he still didn't dare to do it blatantly.

Just take it slow for now.

However, it wouldn't hurt to make some preparations in advance.

In this regard, Gu Hang had two strategies: quality and quantity.

Of course, these two weren't in conflict and could be used simultaneously.

Gu Hang was already implementing the quality plan.

Whether it was the new Phoenix recruits trained by Gu Hang or the veterans, not all were fresh soldiers.

The cost of cultivating a Phoenix, from the Gene Seed to training the individual, was 100 for the seed, 100 for training, with an additional 200-300 for the elimination process, not to mention a roughly 10% chance of surgical failure.

The full cost of nurturing a Phoenix Newblood ran to about 400 to 500 Grace Points. Add in the urgency for superhuman organ growth acceleration, and that's another 100 Grace Points.

Then came training everyone to at least the level of a seasoned veteran, costing an average of 200 per person.

But Gu Hang didn't stop there.

He would spend another 300 to get each to the "Sergeant" grade.

At this grade, every Interstellar Warrior was practically a veteran among veterans. Compared to the seven who first arrived at Rage Owl Star after a century of penitential expedition, they were only slightly lacking.

Cultivating an Interstellar Warrior like this, a thousand Grace Points was the starting point, not to mention if you added a think tank team of about thirty people to scout for those newbloods with spiritual energy talents, the point consumption would be far greater.

If Gu Hang wanted to train the Phoenixes to the level of an 'Company Champion,' that was feasible too. Each would cost an additional four hundred points, totaling four hundred thousand to attain that level. That was equivalent to having undergone a penitential expedition, just one grade below Matins, who possessed the strength of an Interstellar Warrior Company Commander.

If that weren't enough, Gu Hang could even use the [Heroes] panel to enlighten them, boosting their hero potential one by one and directly upgrading them with Grace Points as soon as they were eligible, instead of waiting for them to grow. However, to take this step, the cost in Grace Points per person would run wild like an unbridled stallion, completely out of control.

That was a bit too shocking and extravagant, and also the point expenditure was too high, Gu Hang was somewhat reluctant.

Yet if the number issue of Interstellar Warriors couldn't be solved and a thousand was the limit, when Gu Hang had plenty of Grace Points at his disposal and really needed to use the Interstellar Warriors to confront a crisis, he wouldn't care about the cost.

To pull each one up to the level of a ‘Company Champion’ and give a little push with the hero enlightenment. They might not reach the level of a Battle Group Champion, but if every veteran could take on five or even ten opponents, that was feasible too.

There was a solution for quality; actually, there was one for quantity as well.

Gu Hang thought about expanding another Battle Group, but after careful consideration, it didn’t seem feasible. Battle Groups were numbered, and each was officially documented with corresponding paperwork by the Empire. Starting one, naming it, designing its livery, creating a group on his own, that was definitely illegal, and if discovered, it would be a major crime.

It was also difficult to hide; it would be better to rely on Phoenix superbirth if discovered.

Nevertheless, Gu Hang could use the reserve force, under the guise of new soldier training, to create a Shadow Battle Group outside of the Phoenix.

The Gene Seeds of the Phoenix would still be used, as those were the only seeds Gu Hang could exchange for now.

But once the Interstellar Warriors were trained, he would hide them away and not use them.

Their most common use was to seamlessly replenish the Phoenix in case of personnel losses. The Empire wouldn’t have anything to say about this approach. They weren’t formal Interstellar Warriors, just a reserve force. What was there to say? It just happened that this reserve force was particularly strong.

But with this reasoning, Gu Hang could at most maintain an additional one or two hundred in size. Anything more wouldn’t be tolerated by the Empire.

Another use was more borderline. When necessary, these reservists from the Shadow Battle Group could have their Powered Armor painted to resemble the Phoenix’s and pretend to be them in operations.

However, if the number of Phoenix operative at the same time grew too large, it would end up similar to what happened with the Iron Armor Battle Group.

Though it was an idea, no matter how, the notion of absurdly expanding the number of Interstellar Warriors seemed very difficult currently.

First, the cost was exorbitant. Aside from an immense amount of Grace Points, equipping so many powered armors and a complete set of expensive single-soldier equipment would require a lot of money.

Secondly, the political risk was too high. If exposed, it would be indefensible and a serious taboo. His and the Phoenix's reputation would plummet to the level of Iron Armor.

If Iron Armor was considered a hypothetical enemy, Gu Hang could not let his reputation fall to that level. If the Central Government of the Empire thought the conflict between the Alliance and 'Iron Fury Stone' was a matter of warlords biting each other, that would be very bad indeed.

Firstly, Gu Hang didn't see himself as a separatist power;

Secondly, he couldn't let others think he was;

At the very least, even if others did think so, they couldn't have concrete evidence against him.

The consequences of these three degrees of perception were vastly different. Most directly, if Gu Hang got into a real dispute with the Fury Flame Battle Group, would the official Empire support him or simply watch from the sidelines?

After much thought, Gu Hang decided to also put the idea of expanding numbers on hold as an alternative.

Chapter 478, The Long-Awaited Technology Lottery_2 …

Gu Hang had about fifteen hundred thousand Grace Points remaining for military construction.

He reserved five hundred thousand for emergencies, to ensure that when necessary, he could instantly bring all the Phoenix to the level of champions.

With the remaining one million Grace Points, Gu Hang focused on Commissar training.

Ten thousand Commissars were recruited for active duty. They would be distributed among units at the battalion level and above, and a smaller number at the company level as well. There simply weren't enough Grace Points to provide the same support at the platoon level.

Within the organizational structure of the Star Realm Army, the role of Commissars could not be neglected. Discipline, morale, and ideology were core factors determining the combat effectiveness of troops. Sometimes, these were even more important than the level of training and the hardware quality of equipment.

In reality, the Commissar system of the Alliance began with instructors at the platoon level and education officers at the battalion level. However, the Commissars trained by Gu Hang couldn't possibly be deployed to that extent; the numbers needed were just too great.

A single Commissar cost ten Grace Points. Gu Hang simply couldn't afford that.

The Alliance Army was expected to grow to a scale of one billion personnel; he could only take care of units at the battalion level and above. Not to mention the Pact Army, which was several times the size of the Alliance Army and possibly had already reached over four billion in total. To ensure these Pact forces stood with the Alliance and fulfilled its unified objectives, a substantial number of Commissars were needed, at least down to the divisional and corps levels, where they had to be paired up with Alliance Commissars.

Honestly, calculating it this way, even one hundred thousand Commissars might not be enough.

When Gu Hang first obtained fifteen million Grace Points, he felt unsure of how to spend such a large sum, but once he started spending, he realized that no matter how many points he had, given the scale of hundreds of millions, it was still not enough.

But Gu Hang could no longer afford to toss more Grace Points into these “bottomless pits.”

The remaining four million had to be allocated entirely to the lottery.

He had lost interest in the ten thousand tier rewards, having almost drained that prize pool; but the one hundred thousand tier had only recently been unlocked, and the rewards there were still rich.

And he could go for a whopping forty consecutive draws!

He decided to draw thirty first, and with the remaining million Grace Points, he would decide whether or not to go for the million tier based on the situation.

The probability of getting Epic Technology on the hundred-thousand tier was 50%. Previously, Gu Hang had seven draws at this tier and acquired three Epic Technologies; now the probability had dropped to 35%.

Every successful draw decreased the odds by 5%.

Nevertheless, a 35% chance was still fairly high.

He got five Epic Technologies from thirty consecutive draws, in addition to eighteen Normal, Advanced, and Elite Level technologies, with seven blanks.

Overall, it was in line with expectations.

Though they weren’t Epic, some of the other technologies were a pleasant surprise. While mostly upgrades or variants of existing Alliance technologies and nothing new, some of them could still be effective.

For example, there was more efficient Servo Skull manufacturing technology, and two types of Interstellar Warrior Powered Armors, one of which was a Feedback-Type Powered Armor.

The first two were MK.5 and MK.8, of which Gu Hang didn't plan to put MK.5 into production at all. This type of Powered Armor wasn't fashionable among current Interstellar Warriors, and there wasn't anything particularly outstanding in its performance; it was, in fact, the most numerous among the Chaos Starfield Warriors, due to historical factors;

The latter could indeed be manufactured. Although its performance is not as good as the most commonly used MK.4 Majestic Powered Armor by Phoenix, its production is relatively simple and costs half as much. If Gu Hang decides to substantially increase the number of Interstellar Warriors in the future, but the production of the MK.4 Majestic type is quite low, the saved-up MK.8 Sky Eagle Powered Armors could be put to use. If all else fails, they could also be used for foreign trade.

As for the Feedback-Type Power Armor, named "Commander," it differs significantly from the "Servant God" model, which the Alliance currently has. The latter was actually developed for the Battle Nuns, and some theological steps are involved in its manufacturing process. In the hands of the Battle Nuns, these steps can produce some metaphysical effects, making the nuns luckier and even allowing them to perform miracles as if they were favored by The Emperor in special circumstances. However, when worn by ordinary mortals, these effects are not present, and due to these special manufacturing steps, the production cost is higher.

In contrast, the "Commander" type is different, being a battle armor developed for the Star Realm Army. Although it has a significant gap in individual performance compared to "Servant God," its production cost is dramatically reduced, and it integrates many command communication systems. Commanders donning it wouldn't need command vehicles; also, a whole team of soldiers in "Commander" armors could better coordinate in battle.

Gu Hang plans to significantly increase the production of this kind of power armor.

During the training of the new Phoenix bloodlines, those who were weeded out in the selection process were only slightly inadequate for Interstellar Warriors. But looking at the entire human population, they have considerable talent and, with the training bonuses from the "Soldier Token" system, are rare elite soldiers.

In the recent training of 500 Phoenix Newbloods, more than nine thousand T2 level soldiers and nearly thirty thousand T3 level soldiers were also produced. T4 levels weren't worth mentioning since there were relatively few.

Some of these T2 and T3 soldiers would be sent to the special warfare brigades and Skeleton Divisions established within various frontline units of the Alliance Land Forces. Others would be gathered to form an elite force named “Glory Guard Legion.”

Their predecessor was the 10th Special Combat Brigade of the Alliance Army.

Gu Hang’s vision for the “Glory Guard” aligned them with the elite forces among the famous Star Realm armies of the Empire, similar to the “Kashergin,” “Katchang,” and the like.

The Alliance didn’t have the environment to create such Supermen, but the Alliance had money to invest in training and equipment.

In Gu Hang’s plan, the “Glory Guard Legion” would be able to face Interstellar Warriors in direct combat when necessary. Even if it meant high casualty rates, they would still be capable of resisting rather than being quickly annihilated.

This also served as a supplement to the issue of insufficient numbers of Interstellar Warriors.

The “Glory Guard” would at least be equipped with Exoskeleton Plus Carapace Armor, and the aim was to outfit them with Feedback-Type Power Armor as much as possible.

Their numbers are many times greater than the Interstellar Warriors, hence the need for a much larger quantity of powered armor. The “Servant God” was too expensive to produce and in too small quantities, so the cheaper “Commander Type” would be a good supplement.

Other technological draws were somewhat similar, such as the “Walrus-Class” Transport Ship, which is a bit smaller but faster than the Whale-Class, and also has the potential to be converted into an Armed Merchant Ship. However, its cost is even higher…

Having these technologies is definitely better than not having them. But for the Alliance, they are more like icing on the cake; they don’t solve the problem of creating something from nothing and don’t lead to a qualitative change.

For a qualitative change, one must look at the five pieces of Epic Technology that have been acquired:

["Doom" L-type Missile Weapon, Scorching East Wind], [L-type Howitzer, Wrath of Loyalty], [Predator-Class Titan], [Dreadnought Mech], [Strike Cruiser].

The first two technologies directly fulfilled the Alliance's need for various L-type weapons. Before this, the Alliance only had the capability to produce "Doom" Light Spear Arrays, which led to the Alliance's newly built four Moon-Class cruisers having only light spears as their main gun.

This was a passive situation. Before this, the cruisers built on Flying Wing Star with Musician-class main guns had their heavy cannons imported from Jindi Star and then assembled onto the ships, because Flying Wing Star itself didn't have the capability to produce these L-class heavy cannons.

Now, these problems no longer exist.

The [Predator-Class Titan] is a proper medium-class Titan, much larger than the Warhound-class Tela known as 'Dog Titan,' and in the ranks of the famous Titan Legions, the Predator is considered a pillar of strength.

Following this addition, the "Alliance National Knights" transitioning towards a Titan Legion could finally be considered to have properly arrived.

As for the last two, [Dreadnought Mech] and [Strike Cruiser], they fall under Interstellar Warrior technology.

Chapter 479, Apocalypse-level Technology [Dreadnought Mech] and [Strike Cruiser] are both part of Star Warrior Technology.

The reason for this is that these two technologies are essentially only seen within the Starfighter Battle Groups.

Let's start with the Dreadnought Mech; it's a type of Mecha exclusive to Interstellar Warriors, but not everyone can use it.

Interstellar Warriors are incredibly strong, but they are not immune to injury or death. When a comrade is so severely injured that no amount of conventional medical treatment can restore their combat abilities, a typical Battle Group has two options: donate their Gene Seed and receive the peace bestowed by The Emperor, or enter a stone sarcophagus with a life support system, fusing their nerves with machinery to become a Dreadnought Mech.

Entering a Dreadnought Mech means never coming out again, merging as one with the Mecha. At the same time, the life support system inside the Mecha can make its operator virtually immortal. Therefore, a Dreadnought Mech is not only an extremely powerful combat unit but also a veteran filled with rich experience.

The one Gu Hang drew was an [Iron Rampart Invincible Mech], which could almost be considered the most common type of Dreadnought.

This thing's combat power is fierce, and its size is huge, only slightly smaller than a typical Knight Mecha that one might see. But this slight difference in size allows it to engage in operations such as combat inside a Warship; it is practically the limit in size for fighting within a ship.

However, although a Dreadnought Mech is a bit smaller than a Ranger-class Knight Mech, if put into confrontation, the former can generally win steadily against the latter; even facing a larger Dominator-class Knight Mecha still offers a considerable chance of victory.

This is mainly because a Dreadnought Mech, having merged with an Interstellar Warrior and connected spiritually, means that many control systems are unnecessary. Their Iron Coffin is their body, offering greater flexibility in operation than a Knight Mecha, and the warrior's strength itself surpasses that of the Knight. With the control systems saved, the vast space inside a Dreadnought Mech can be used for loading weapons, thickening armor…

The biggest problem with using Dreadnought Mechs, however, lies in the scarcity of soldiers.

It has to be a dying Interstellar Warrior.

A normal, living Interstellar Warrior could be put into a Dreadnought Mech, and it wouldn't be impossible, but such a procedure is too inhumane. At least Gu Hang had never heard of any Battle Group operating this way, and of course, he wouldn't either.

In the wars of these years, the Phoenix Battle Group also had about three hundred casualties. In particular, during the Temir campaign's landing operations, the Phoenix clashed hard with the elite trusted aides of the Green Skins, resulting in significant losses;

In the subsequent ground combat operations on multiple planets, the Phoenix also served as the main offensive force in each location, accompanying the operations. A considerable part of particularly dangerous battlefields was ventured into by the Interstellar Warriors themselves for assaults.

About one hundred out of these three hundred casualties were truly killed in action. Nearly two hundred more were seriously injured and could no longer hold on, hence they were evacuated back.

Among them, a hundred or so people, even with the Alliance's fairly advanced medical measures now available—drawn from various civil technologies, including those related to medical care—could have their lives saved. Even after a period of recovery, and at most fitting some mechanical prosthetics, they would be able to return to the battlefield.

Only a few dozen people were truly unable to heal from severe injuries, either dying in the rear or simply retiring with disabilities.

After consulting with Matins, these Phoenixes who could return to the battlefield were also retired.

This could definitely not be considered excess survival; interstellar warriors retiring due to injuries, and not counting them when we recruit new personnel is reasonable, right?

Not afraid to check!

Those few dozen who were severely injured and unable to return to the battlefield became the candidates for Dreadnought Mechs.

Of course, this still had to adhere to the principle of voluntariness. They had already sacrificed a lot for the Alliance, for the Battle Group, and if they did not wish to continue fighting, both the Alliance and the Battle Group would respect the wishes of these heroes.

However, in reality, a considerable proportion of injured warriors signed up to become Dreadnought. Being unable to return to the battlefield was something they were very reluctant to come to terms with, and now that there was an opportunity, naturally, they would seize it. Even if the cost was never again being able to leave the Fearless Iron Coffin and even enduring prolonged agony inside—the experience of being stuffed into a Dreadnought was definitely uncomfortable.

But these injured soldiers were unhesitating.

With several dozen backups, the Alliance might not have enough Dreadnought manufactured on the spot through the Black Box system, and produced through the production lines just for a while; they might have to wait for a year, a year and a half, or even several years to get in.

Regardless, with the addition of Dreadnought Mechs, the Phoenix Battle Group once again possessed powerful weapons and could preserve the lives of some veterans who had survived harsh battles, which was definitely a significant enhancement to the entire group's strength.

As for the [Strike Cruiser], this too was a piece of Interstellar Warrior Technology.

The Empire commissioned the Sect of Mechanics to create a Warship specifically tailored for the needs of the Starfighter Battle Group. The requirements were to be rapidly deployable, facilitate the deployment of elite forces, and possess strong independent operational capabilities, without any weaknesses…

Thus, the Sect of Mechanics came up with something called a Strike Cruiser.

In terms of performance, the Strike Cruiser surpasses standard cruisers and supports Interstellar Warriors directly connecting to the ship's command and control system via the Black interface, just like operating Powered Armor, although it is much more complex.

Chapter 479: Apocalypse-level Technology_2 It was slightly smaller than the Moon-Class cruiser, but in terms of firepower, defense, speed… its performance exceeded that of a conventional cruiser in every aspect.

The construction cost of a Moon-Class cruiser was 8.5 billion tax currency, while the cost of the Strike Cruiser reached 12 billion, almost 1.5 times that of the Moon-Class.

However, constructing it should not conflict with the Moon-Class. Its dockyard would also need to be custom made.

At the shipyards of Flying Wing Star and Rage Owl Star, there were currently two Musician-class dockyards, two Moon-Class dockyards, and the third Moon-Class dockyard was under construction. Now, one more Strike Cruiser dockyard could be commenced.

In the future, over a four-year cycle, the Alliance could burst out six cruiser-grade main warships!

Moreover, the Alliance's dockyard construction was ongoing; the output of starships was set to continuously rise.

According to the productivity of Flying Wing Star and Rage Owl Star, it was estimated that producing ten cruisers every four years was about reaching the limit.

This limit was determined by the size of the starports, labor costs, and production capacity. Anymore, and it would require expanding the starports, increasing the scale of various production lines supporting the starship manufacturing on the ground, and the addition of more labor. But if this was done, the production of other resources and products would be significantly impacted.

It was quite the squeeze.

But the Alliance had other tricks up its sleeve.

On the one hand, Rage Owl Star was continually absorbing population. When the population of Rage Owl reached about five to six billion—the approximate carrying capacity of this planet—it would be possible to further expand the dockyards.

Additionally, Gu Hang planned to construct large dockyards on Fatches No. 1, Korolya, and on Baishuo Star in the Purple Horse Sector.

The starports on Fatches No. 1 and Korolya Starport were quite large and suitable for expanding dockyards; Baishuo Star, the capital planet in the Purple Horse Sector, inherently possessed shipbuilding capabilities, albeit only small warships, but having a foundation was better than starting from scratch. This planet had signed the Economic Community Act in the second batch and was now even incorporated into the Alliance; the conditions were already ripe for massive investment and construction.

Once the large dockyards were established on these three planets, Gu Hang's planned naval construction program could reach about twenty warships every four years.

Just these twenty cruisers in shipbuilding industry represented an annual mega-industry worth 500 billion.

For comparison, the total annual output of the more than eighty worlds across the six star sectors excluding the Tianma Star Sector in the Seven Horse Territory amounted to about 1.2 trillion.

The shipbuilding industry would not only provide a large number of powerful warships for the Alliance in the future but would also become a massive economic development engine. It would catalyze the development of a series of supporting industries in multiple planets and star sectors, and all kinds of heavy industries related to shipbuilding would burst with vigorous vitality.

Of course, such a large-scale expansion plan for the shipbuilding industry definitely couldn't be achieved overnight. It would occupy a significant chapter in one after another of the Alliance's four-year plans, being pushed forward as a core focus.

Given a bit more time to develop, the future of the Alliance's fleet was promising!

…

After drawing the thirty shots of technology at the hundred-thousand grade, Gu Hang still had one million grace points left.

The epic-grade draw rate of the hundred-thousand tier had been pushed down to a mere 5%.

This was already a less than ideal number.

Although the prize pool was not considered drained, the cost-performance ratio was not particularly high.

Gu Hang turned his gaze to the million tier.

This was virgin territory he had never touched before, with maxed-out odds.

Not to mention the 50% epic-grade draw rate, more importantly, there was an even higher tier of Apocalypse-level technology.

Previously, looking at what was obtained from the epic tier, Gu Hang faintly felt that the technology of battleships, the top-tier, was probably not as simple as just being epic-grade.

He thought so because the items from the epic tier clearly did not reach the level of battleships.

Later, this was indeed proven to be the case.

This time, Gu Hang's one million lottery was quite fortunate. Despite the 20% odds, he managed to draw an Apocalypse-level technology.

[Grade-X Giant Macro Cannon: Destruction Verdict].

This was the main cannon of the Retribution-class battleship.

It was a bit regrettable that it was not the battleship technology that the Alliance most urgently needed, but it was basically confirmed that battleship technology definitely resided within the Apocalypse-class.

The significance of ‘Destruction Verdict’ was certainly there; in fact, without the production capability for the Grade-X cannon, drawing a battleship without a cannon was of no use. It was a necessary technological reserve.

Additionally, in terms of current practical significance, the produced ‘Destruction Verdict’ could also be installed on star fortresses.

When outfitted on some vital core positions, a starport equipped with ‘Destruction Verdict’ would be akin to an immovable battleship. Moreover, since the defense system of a star fortress was not limited by a ship’s structure, its combat capability as a fixed fire platform might even be stronger than a battleship.

The same principle applied when deployed on the ground.

In short, with ‘Destruction Verdict’, the Alliance, when fortifying a planet, would truly make that planet difficult to conquer.

Right now, Gu Hang had several worlds that needed such fortification.

Light Blessing Star and Capital Star were prominently on the list.

The Alliance was currently engaged in a battle of wits with the Fury Flame Battle Group on the front lines. Who knew if it would eventually escalate into a civil war?

Chapter 479, Apocalypse-level Technology_3 These two worlds were essential paths for the Fury Flame Battle Group to strike into the heartland of the Alliance, making it imperative to strengthen defenses.

Gu Hang was still very much looking forward to having a few more draws in million-point ranges.

For the current Alliance, accumulating one million Grace Points was not a particularly difficult task.

First came the fixed monthly Grace Points that had increased significantly, mainly sourced from the growing number of vassals.

Not to mention the Iron Tooth Greenskin Lair's four Star Sectors, which were almost devoid of humans and thus inconsequential; however, the regions previously acting as buffer zones between humans and Greenskins, known as the Iron Tooth Defense Line, had always been under human control. Indeed, to ensure the stability of the Iron Tooth Defense Line, the Star Domain Government had relocated countless people to these areas over the past few decades to bolster local defenses.

Although four to five years under the Greenskin onslaught had severely damaged these worlds, the sheer number of them still stood. Golden Pass, Copper Barrier, and three other major Star Sectors were now largely under the control of the Alliance.

Combined, these five Star Sectors comprised fifty-nine worlds, with an estimated total population exceeding 76 billion. This number was stark, as pre-war estimates had placed the population of these five Star Sectors at over 110 billion. In just four to five years, the Greenskins' comprehensive erosion had resulted in a 30% loss of the population, amounting to hundreds of billions of deaths.

Terrifying indeed.

But at least 76 billion people were left.

These worlds were all incorporated into the Alliance's "Seven Horse" framework. In fact, many of the original planetary governments had collapsed and ceased to exist. After taking over, the Alliance simply established cooperative governments on-site, directly incorporating them into the Economic Community Act, which brought them even closer to the Alliance than the Seven Horse framework.

Moreover, as the "savior," the Alliance had garnered substantial support from the local populations, ensuring that none of these worlds were vassalized below LV3.

They collectively contributed over three thousand Grace Points to the Alliance's monthly income.

Adding to this the eight thousand from the Seven Horse Territory, the total exceeded ten thousand.

Moreover, the domestic Grace Points income of the Alliance had skyrocketed from 39,000 to 58,000.

This substantial increase was partly due to the continuous improvement in the Alliance's productivity. On the other hand, over ten worlds had been integrated into the Alliance's homeland.

The worlds developing well under the Economic Community Act, which already provided substantial Grace Points, naturally yielded a significant boost when the vassal limits were removed and they were counted as part of the homeland.

Now, Gu Hang received about seventy thousand Grace Points a month. Relying solely on a fixed income, he could accumulate over eight hundred thousand in a year, nearly enough for a million-point draw.

The Alliance also had another major source of Grace Points income: war.

Although the Temir War had ended, and the war that aimed at assassinating Chieftain Titus had also concluded, there appeared to be no large-scale combat operations forthcoming against the Greenskins.

However, the threat of Greenskins still persisted on many worlds currently controlled by the Alliance and those it was disputing with the Fury Flame Battle Group.

These isolated wars on various planetary surfaces provided Gu Hang with considerable Grace Points income for every victory.

The exact amount depended on the scale of warfare on each planet.

Regardless, a war staged on a planet that resulted in a landmark victory would allow for settlements; even if the cleanup of remaining enemies didn't yield many Grace Points, there were still some to be garnered.

For example, on Temir No.5, the tens of billions of surviving Greenskins were essentially like pigs waiting to be slaughtered, with a very low proportion of Beastman youngsters, most being mere riffraffs. The Land Forces left there by the Alliance weren't numerous, primarily relying on the Pact Army formed locally and supported by war supplies sent by the Alliance, to carry out the extermination of the remaining Greenskins.

According to reports from the Alliance War Committee to Gu Hang, Temir No.5 no longer needed much additional input from the Alliance; they were expected to clear the Greenskin threat from the planet within three to five years.

The subsequent land purification and long-term control measures against the Greenskins would continue for decades, perhaps even centuries. But at least for now, the ongoing extermination operations could bring Gu Hang several thousand Grace Points each month.

In similar ways, all these worlds were clearing out Greenskins, and Gu Hang was currently receiving about one hundred fifty thousand Grace Points a month from this aspect.

An even larger revenue source came from clearing out the Greenskin strongholds.

Jiang Meiyu, Iron Pass, Silver Pass, Kuoluo—these four Star Sectors, once fully occupied by Greenskins, had minimal deployment of ground troops by the Alliance. They were meticulously assessing the condition of each planet to decide which were worth saving.

Only those planets with sufficient resources or favorable natural environments, where the Greenskins could be efficiently cleared at a small cost, were deemed worth saving.

For those worlds lacking these factors, it was just as well to drop a Skyburn Torpedo.

Currently, the Alliance had fewer than ten Skyburn Torpedoes left, certainly not enough to cover all the worlds in these four Star Sectors needing an Extinction Order. But it didn’t matter; surrounding them was sufficient while more Extinction Orders were being produced.

Wherever the recovery cost exceeded the production cost of an Extinction Order, a torpedo would simply be dropped.

And by clearing out a world in this way, Gu Hang could earn at least several tens of thousands of Grace Points.

Chapter 480, Battleship Cruiser Technology The monthly income from our homeland, the income from vassal territories, the profits from clearing out the Green Skins in the controlled regions, the clearing operations in the four Star Sectors of the Iron Teeth's old nest…

These constituted the overall situation of Gu Hang's subsequent income of Grace Points.

The bulk of it came from the last two items.

Gu Hang even had a dark thought at one point, "What if I don't exterminate all these Green Skins and instead wait for them to grow for a while before 'harvesting' them for a wave? Wouldn't that be an effective method for racking up Grace Points?"

However, this idea only fleetingly crossed his mind before he cast it aside.

It sounded tempting, but when he thought about it calmly, he realized it had the scent of courting death.

Would anyone dare to breed something like the Green Skins? When you're delightfully collecting Grace Points, and in the midst of your collection, they suddenly produce a formidable figure capable of causing a huge disaster, that's all too possible.

If it's another Titus, that's something the Alliance can't handle.

Even if the Alliance has the ability to suppress a Green Skin uprising, what if the Alliance is engaged in external warfare at the time? A Green Skin uprising in the heartlands would be unbearable.

Furthermore, Gu Hang seriously doubted the system panel's war mechanism would allow such a loophole, speculating that it might even reduce or completely withhold Grace Points in such instances.

So, he decided to let it be.

…

Two years had passed, and Gu Hang was still calculating his Grace Points in his office.

Oh, don't get the wrong idea, he definitely hadn't been sitting in his office for two years calculating. In fact, he had been very busy over the past two years.

A third of his time on the front lines fighting, another third inspecting planets on tours, and the remainder of his time governing from the current capital world of the Alliance—Flying Wing Star.

Over the two years, the Alliance's military constantly battled the Green Skin Orcs across various fronts, while also competing with the Furyflame Battle Group in countless ways other than direct warfare.

This competition still had a positive effect.

At least within the Dragonhawk Star Domain, the number of Green Skins and Aliens invading various planets was rapidly decreasing due to the strife between the two sides.

In the struggle between two powers, the Green Skins were almost wiped out.

After Titus's death, it was estimated that there were roughly 20 billion Green Skin invaders surviving across various Star Sectors. Now, that number might have dropped to less than eight billion. In fact, many worlds that suffered less damage could essentially declare that the Green Skins had been completely eradicated.

As a result, Gu Hang had accrued 3.6 million Grace Points from this.

His fixed monthly income continued to rise with the development of the Alliance, with more planets reaching vassal status or even joining the Alliance outright. From this development, Gu Hang had gained an additional two million and some over two years.

The cleanup operation in the four Star Sectors that housed the Green Skin strongholds had also progressed smoothly. Among them, the Silver Pass Sector could basically declare the initial cleanup a success, with three worlds having experienced the scourge of the Skyburn Torpedo and been declared

destroyed, while the remaining worlds were occupied by the Land Forces and the Pact Army. With the support of the Fleet, ground cleanup operations were underway. There were even tens of millions of civilians, under the guidance of the Alliance, who had immigrated to these planets.

This was, of course, a tough job, but at times like this, the Alliance couldn't afford to be overly compassionate.

For these planetary clearing operations, Gu Hang had reaped about five million more Grace Points.

All in all, after two years, he had amassed another ten million Grace Points in his hands.

Compared to the previous ten million Grace Points, this ten million was much easier to earn.

But that did not mean the previous ten million were obtained in vain. On the contrary, without the victory of the Temir campaign, without the triumph of slaying Titus and destroying the Green Skin's main force, the Iron Teeth War might still be at a stalemate over the past two years. Where would one go to earn so many Grace Points?

The current gains, in essence, were the cumulative benefits of the victories from two years ago.

Now that he had ten million Grace Points in hand, Gu Hang was ready to begin his technological lottery again.

Ten consecutive draws at the million-point tier!

The opening chance of drawing Apocalypse-level Technology from the million-point tier was 20%. Last time fortune smiled upon him, and he hit it on his first attempt, reducing the chance to 15%. His ten consecutive draws, given this probability, would not be excessive to expect one or two, right?

And the results were just as Gu Hang had hoped.

One Apocalypse-class, four Epic-level, with the remaining five being less significant.

Among these four Epic-level technologies, three were civilian technologies.

[Nest Capital Design and Construction], [Planetary Climate Transformation Technology], [Advanced Biochemical Research Facilities].

These three technologies were, of course, very useful.

The Nest Capitals, no matter how crappy the living conditions, with the people at the bottom levels living lives that are miserable, require an extremely high level of city development.

A three-dimensional city containing multiple levels, hundreds of different planes, with buildings distributed in an orderly fashion, capable of accommodating hundreds of millions of people. Maintaining smooth traffic and ensuring the efficient operation of various functional areas under such high density… The level of city construction is incredibly astonishing.

In Gu Hang's view, the miserable lives of many inhabitants of the Empire's Nest Capital Worlds were primarily due to a serious mismatch in productive forces, poor management levels, and an excess population that had exceeded the environmental carrying capacity.

In conclusion, it was a man-made disaster, unrelated to the level of design of the Nest Capitals.

Chapter 480, Battleship Cruiser Technology_2 On the contrary, the city construction technology and design level of "Nest Capital," handed down from ancient times, have concealed quite a number of issues. If it weren't for the advanced urban construction capabilities, those poorly constructed Nest Capital Worlds could not support the population of tens or even hundreds of billions—they would have descended into chaos long ago.

The Alliance wouldn't make such a mistake; they've already gained corresponding experience in Korolya, a proper Nest Capital World.

Subsequently, if there's a need to construct a Nest Capital, the first consideration should be its purpose. It's certainly not for thoughtlessly increasing the population; instead, the causality should be reversed. If a planet truly needs a large population due to environmental capacity and industrial scale requirements and necessitates high-density conglomerations, then constructing a Nest Capital is warranted;

otherwise, maintaining an excessively large population on the planet isn't justified, and surplus population should be directed toward interstellar colonization.

And when the condition of accommodating an ultra-high-density population is indeed met, and Nest Capitals are to be built, the corresponding level of city management must also keep pace.

Nest Capitals should be developed, super-structured urban complexes with high standards in production, living, and commerce, not super-high-density, giant slums.

Nest Capitals established on various worlds, and areas resembling Nest Capital districts, are the result of historical legacies that can't be helped. But even so, the Alliance hasn't abandoned governance. In the subsequent development plans, transforming these high-density residential areas is a priority, not to mention the construction of new Nest Capitals.

And the technology that Gu Hang has drawn now is not only useful for future Nest Capital construction but also provides significant technical support for the renovation of current high-density residential areas and Nest Capitals throughout Alliance territories.

With the Alliance's level of governance catching up, better technology can fix the original, irrational aspects of Nest Capital design and construction and maintain the infrastructure of Nest Capitals that have aged and deteriorated over long periods of use.

Moreover, even if it's not a Nest Capital, but at least a city or urban agglomeration, Nest Capital technology has many aspects that can be referenced and applied.

This is obviously beneficial for the development of the Alliance.

The use of [Planetary Climate Modification Technology] is even more straightforward.

It's like getting a pillow when you're sleepy.

The Alliance has already deployed quite a few Skyburn Torpedoes. This Extinction Order burns away the entire planet's atmosphere and oceans in a great conflagration, which solves the problem once and for

all, but also completely devastates the planet's climate. Without an atmosphere, the soil turns into a lifeless, pure desert, and in some areas, even "glassified," with the oceans no longer existing.

A planet like this cannot be reused or recolonized.

However, Planetary Climate Modification Technology can offer salvation.

Of course, it's not a total change. Sometimes Skyburn Torpedoes don't burn thoroughly enough; in that case, modifying the climate might suffice. But if a planet has truly been turned into a "glass ball," then merely modifying the climate won't be effective—it might also require Terrareform Technology.

But that might be a bit higher-end. If Terrareform and Climate Modification technologies are both available, they can almost transform a completely dead planet into one suitable for habitation.

Even if not used on worlds dealt with by the Extinction Order, among the many Star Systems currently under Alliance control, there are some with subpar climate and environmental conditions.

If it can save one, it saves one.

However, the costs of climate modification technology are quite substantial, and too drastic climate changes can also cause adverse effects. Hence, the specific application of this technology must still be tailored to different worlds and specific conditions. Especially for planets that already have certain development, we must be cautious and slow, even if the effects are less than ideal.

Nevertheless, it has an immediate application: Rage Owl Star.

The place where Gu Hang started has now become a jewel of the Alliance. Its development mainly relied on the various production capacities Gu Hang began with, as well as numerous new industries subsequently introduced there.

The planet's inherent conditions, before the devastating war a hundred years ago, were top-notch; but now, they're deficient.

Modifying the climate and adding Gu Hang's ability to harness the Storm God Kingdom to handle the subspace energy leak, could effectively mitigate Low Energy Storm issues, and even reignite the Spiritualized Gas Fields.

This could elevate Rage Owl Star's natural environment and planetary resources by several grades.

This matter, Gu Hang no longer intended to delay. He was ready to immediately go to Rage Owl Star and start handling it, estimating that it would take about three months to complete the preliminary work.

Of course, all of this still depended on the Black Box of "Planetary Climate Modification Technology" to produce the relevant equipment, which would also require a massive amount of energy supply.

But now, the Alliance actually wasn't short on energy. Stellar Energy Technology had been in use for a while, and around many star systems controlled by the Alliance, these energy factories were distributed.

Certainly nowhere near the extent of a "Dyson Sphere," but building a small section had little impact on the balance of a star system. However, the energy collected was already quite powerful. These accumulated energies should be enough to support the application of the climate modification technology.

The third technology, "Advanced Biochemical Research Facilities," was a Black Box for creating a variety of high-end biochemical research equipment, used to assemble corresponding laboratories and research offices.

In Gu Hang's view, its greatest significance was not about inventing new creations—creating new technologies in this universe was a very difficult and dangerous affair.

Its main significance lay in helping the Alliance fully digest and master those technologies Gu Hang had already obtained through the lottery.

Relying purely on the lottery was unreliable; it only gave one finished product Black Box and a mother machine Black Box. The latter could indeed pull out production lines, but it could only do so one by one, and the Alliance itself did not have the ability to build corresponding production lines. But if the

technology could be thoroughly understood, it would be different; the speed of production capacity would become much faster.

However, the biochemical research facility was a bit unreliable. Among the technologies Gu Hang currently obtained, especially the high-grade technologies, not so many were related to biochemistry.

But it was a good signal; if a facility for engineering research or vessel research was drawn later, the benefit would be even greater.

…

Besides the three civilian technologies, an Epic Technology also emerged—"Dragon Elephant War Machine."

It was a continuation of the Wind Falcon and Qilin lineage but of a higher grade and larger size.

This machine was not cheap to build, costing about 1.4 million apiece. This price was almost two hundred times that of the Wind Falcon, and twelve times that of the Qilin.

But similarly, its value was extraordinary.

Its huge size made it look more like an airship; unlike the Wind Falcon which could only carry individual soldiers, or the Qilin which could only carry light vehicles, the Dragon Elephant could carry Knight Mecha, Warhound Titan, and Lion Tanks, which were heavy armor and vehicles.

This would provide troops with a stronger deployment capacity during rapid maneuvers and strikes behind enemy lines.

Moreover, if not used to transport troops but purely as an aerial combat platform, the Dragon Elephant's role was also very significant. It could directly carry a starship-grade M-class cannon onboard. Although it was a castrated version, it was still a cannon, offering incredibly powerful air-to-ground support.

Even more, it could carry two L-class grade “Scorching East Wind” air-launched missiles, or fourteen M-class grade Sky Cleave Axe Missiles.

Having several Dragon Elephants in support was akin to having a destroyer floating in the sky.

Of course, it could be shot down by anti-air firepower, and that loss could be quite substantial. A single Dragon Elephant was worth millions, and if it carried two Scorching East Wind missiles, the cost of the missiles alone could surpass the machine itself.

But regardless, with the “Dragon Elephant,” the Alliance Army Air Corps now had a powerful weapon; likewise, the Alliance Navy could also equip some space versions of the Dragon Elephant War Machines for space battles.

…

Aside from these four Epic Technologies, the last Apocalypse-level Technology that Gu Hang drew had finally lived up to his two years of waiting.

“Battleship Cruiser Technology”!

It had finally arrived!