Governor 561

Chapter 561, Alfonso's Ark Fleet

"Politos is a capable person," Gu Hang remarked wistfully.

At the moment, he was chatting casually with his wife, Yelisia.

Their marital relationship was naturally quite different from that of ordinary people.

The two spent more time apart than together, with very little time to be with each other throughout the year.

Gu Hang was very busy, and Yelisia was also extremely busy.

However, despite this, their relationship was not affected.

Their union was not primarily driven by emotion but rather an inseparable union of interests.

Initially, they may have simply appreciated each other, not averse to being together.

But emotions can be cultivated, especially when goals align, aspirations converge, and many aspects are strongly bonded together, emotions instead become more stable.

And especially as the Alliance, which Gu Hang completely controlled, grew stronger, and he essentially became the foremost power figure in the entire Eastern Cosmos Domain, Yelisia couldn't possibly part from Gu Hang.

At the same time, Yelisia, as an Admiral, also helped Gu Hang better control the naval forces crucial to a space power, and Gu Hang couldn't really do without her either.

So the emotions couldn't possibly be poor.

For political interests, emotions stabilized; conversely, it also stands true that stable emotions lead to stable interests.

Initially, they might have been separate, but as time went on, they became inextricably intertwined.

Or to put it another way, if the emotions were not good, Gu Hang would never entrust the important navy to Yelisia's command.

As high-ranking figures in Human Empire society, the two had considered creating a descendant together to leave behind a bloodline.

It was just that, on one hand, they were busy, and on the other, the timing was fine.

Although, by calculation, both of them were nearly fifty years old. However, with advanced human technology, Yelisia, who had long undergone life-extension surgery, had a lifespan of at least several centuries and remained eternally youthful; whereas Gu Hang, who hadn't had the surgery, since becoming Rage Owl Star Governor years ago, for almost thirty years now, his appearance had hardly changed.

He is already fifty years old, yet still looks in his prime.

The power of Spiritual Energy played a significant role in it. High-level Psychics actually don't extend their lifespan but may appear very short-lived due to the erosion of their bodies by this supernatural power.

But Gu Hang could completely control the Spiritual Energy with the help of the system.

That is a completely different concept.

His current life form is still that of a mortal, but his 'life essence' compared to a normal person—it's hard to say how similar they are.

Both of them could be considered immortals. Five or six decades of a life journey that for ordinary people have reached its end, for them, they had just taken a few steps in a long life.

The perception of life differs greatly, and so does the perception of offspring.

At present, it could be considered the interlude of war. It was at this time that they found the leisure to gather for mutual communication.

What they exchanged wasn't important; it was the act of communication itself that mattered.

The main force of the Alliance Fleet, after the Hyeyang battle, traveled to Bowang Star at a not-so-fast pace, maintaining silent mode.

This planet itself wasn't much to talk about: a regular world with a development level of 1, five to six billion people, with technology levels in the electrical era. It had no particularly notable resources, wasn't on any major trade routes, and had very average orbital defense capabilities.

They even lacked adequate means to observe deep-space conditions.

The only reason for the Alliance's main force to be here was that, according to the information received from the front, the Fury Fleet was traveling on a star path that would pass through Bowang, heading towards Wuqi Star.

It's worth mentioning that Bowang is not the only possible route to Wuqi Star, just an option, and a rather lengthy detour at that. The reason why the Fury Fleet chose this path was, of course, not by choice. They wished they could reach Wuqi Star sooner to take advantage of its comprehensive defense system as a crucial connecting channel between the two Star Domains to hold out until Alfonso Fleet's arrival, ensuring much more safety.

Being forced by the Blood Shark was purely the reason for this situation.

And the Bowang system was the slaughterhouse Gu Hang had prepared for them.

While waiting for the 'sheep' to come, there was some relative downtime, during which Gu Hang finally found time for a rare exchange with his wife.

So naturally, they talked about the target doomed to be slaughtered next, and also about Politos, the new leader of the Fury Flame Battle Group.

Gu Hang once again repeated his evaluation of Politos: "Politos is a capable person."

"He's capable? Capable of being toyed with by you like this? You seem to take him lightly; even for the upcoming war destined to happen here at Bowang, you don't really care. It's not critical; it's just a part of your plan… You don't regard him as anything, not even an opponent, yet you say he's quite capable?"

"It's not contradictory." Gu Hang waved his hand, smiling as he said, "He did everything right, made every right choice, there's naturally praise in order."

"Did everything right and ended up in his current situation?"

"Yes," Gu Hang sighed, "That's the disparity between our strengths. He couldn't possibly contend with us on any previous battlefield. Hold firm at Shangdong, Guangfeng? Defend Mentus II, Aoya Star, Hyeyang VIII? His chances of success would never exceed 30%, and that's even without counting me in."

Chapter 561, Alfonso's Ark Fleet_2

"As long as he loses, he will lose everything."

"And each time he made the right choice. Objectively speaking, as the weaker side, adopting the strategy of a 'fleet in being' was correct. As long as his fleet existed, we had to find ways to deploy military forces to guard against it, thereby weakening our control over the entire Proudclaw Cosmos and slowing down our offensive pace. He achieved that, and the trouble it brought us far exceeded the extent of losing if he fought a decisive battle and lost."

“He also successfully divided our fleet, making us deploy three war cruisers in the rear for defense. Furthermore, targeting the Flying Wing, Furious Owl, and Korolya was a smart choice. Tactically, he indeed successfully completed an ambush, almost defeating our precious war cruisers.”

“To achieve this level, I already have some appreciation for him. He lost also due to the information disparity, the Blood Shark Battle Group… very peculiar, even I am somewhat surprised by their elusive capabilities. Without prior intel on the Blood Shark, he certainly couldn’t make the right decisions.”

At this point, Gu Hang added: “I think he’s a bit more formidable than his predecessor, the former leader of the Furyflame, Erso, and a bit more difficult to deal with.”

Yelisia laughed: “But in the end, he still lost. Are you praising your opponent to highlight your own superiority?”

“Not at all, I’m just objectively evaluating him.” Gu Hang said, “Of course, he could have done better.”

“For example? If you were in his place, what would you do?” Yelisia asked curiously.

“If possible, I would continue with the strategic retreat, not only abandoning Proudclaw but also Thistle Muster Star Field. The Alliance’s strength is rapidly expanding, controlling one star domain was already the limit. If they dare to pursue into Thistle Muster Star Field, the chance of tearing the Alliance apart afterward becomes even greater.”

“But there could be political factors preventing him from doing so?” Yelisia pointed out, “Military actions can never be isolated from politics, just like us initiating an offensive at this time isn’t necessarily the best choice.”

“Exactly, every commander wants to purely focus on how to defeat their enemy, but that’s often not realistic.”

“If retreating and defending isn’t possible? What would you do?”

“Final battle.” Gu Hang stated.

Yelisia said in surprise: “Don’t you believe that adhering to a strategic retreat is the best option? The victory rate of the final battle is not even 30%.”

After some thought, Gu Hang said: “As the weaker side, to turn the tide, to create a miracle, one must take a difficult path and then find something in that difficulty, to turn the impossible into possible.”

Yelisia gazed at Gu Hang’s face.

“Why are you looking at me like that?”

“It’s nothing, it just seems… when someone else says that, it sounds boastful, but when you say it, somehow it makes a bit of sense.”

“Haha!”

…

A Terra standard month passed quickly.

Alfonso’s Ark Fleet arrived at the Proudclaw Cosmos.

This was news that shocked all around.

The entire Proudclaw Cosmos was filled with apprehension.

Worlds that had already joined the Alliance feared that Alfonso’s Ark Fleet’s arrival would bring reckoning; those that hadn’t joined were elated.

This marked the official entry of the Alfonso Sect into the war, and the news quickly spread to Holy Terra.

The immense internal conflict involving multiple Cosmos Domains and over twenty thousand Interstellar Warriors at the Imperial's Eastern Frontier was drawing significant attention from the elders on Holy Terra.

Most people understood that the Alfonso Sect was certainly an enemy, and there should be no illusions about them.

But since they hadn't officially entered the war, everyone seemed to be able to be the ostrich burying its head in the sand.

And now, this illusion was thoroughly shattered, and undue panic began to spread.

Especially when further reports came in, revealing the specific strength of Alfonso's Ark Fleet, leaving people astonished.

Two Retribution-class Battleships, one Zhege-class Carrier, nine Dragon-Snake Class Battleship Cruisers… this was already a very powerful configuration, surpassing the combined naval forces in a conventional Empire Cosmos Domain.

Moreover, these are all considered conventional ships.

In this Ark Fleet, there are two ships that make one quiver just by hearing their names.

Firstly, there's the Mechanical Ark itself. According to information from the front lines, it's not an ordinary Mechanical Ark. Although the combat capability of the Mechanical Sect Ark is strong, its primary role is as a mobile base during space voyages, integrating many production, industrial, research, and other functions, akin to a mobile Founding World of the Sect of Mechanics.

However, this Ark can be referred to as a 'War Ark', specially designed for wartime specialization. Its combat power is certainly above that of a normal battleship.

The Alfonso Sect is quite wealthy, and the configuration of this War Ark they built is likely to be terrifyingly high.

The other is also a battleship.

An Emperor-class Battleship.

This is the most powerful battleship model in the Human Empire.

If the Retribution-class is ordinary…

For such a fleet configuration, even on the North Line or West Line, it would be a significant factor capable of changing the situation.

Moreover, the strength controlled by the Alliance on the Southern Line is actually weaker than on the North Line and West Line.

Now, public opinion has turned instantly.

Previously, there were voices in Holy Terra questioning why the Alliance wasn't advancing quickly, why they weren't destroying the Furyflame Fleet sooner, and why they hadn't pushed the frontlines deeper into the Iron Armor Battle Group's territory to threaten them more extensively.

Now, new voices have emerged, questioning why the Alliance was so reckless, why they provoked the Alfonso Sect into action, why they didn't just defend and ensure the South wouldn't collapse.

Now with reckless warfare provoking Alfonso… well now, if the Alliance's main forces are destroyed, not only would they have to give back the Proudclaw Cosmos, but Alfonso's Ark Fleet might take this power and pierce all the way south through the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

Chapter 562, Where is the Alliance?

Some people were deeply worried, some were filled with fear, and naturally, some were overjoyed.

Without a doubt, the most delighted were the Fury Fleet.

Although they had been herded like sheep, which made them very uneasy, the much-anticipated strong reinforcement had finally arrived as promised.

They were unaware of the cost of this request and the direction it might take the battle group in the future, but there was nevertheless a greater hope to save the fate of the battle group at present.

They eagerly established contact with the Ark Fleet, which had traversed the Wenqi-Wuqi Corridor and entered the Proudclaw Cosmos, through Boreson, the Sage, as their intermediary.

Based on the current location of the Fury Fleet, they calculated a rendezvous point.

Then, they set out on a two-way journey.

However, Blood Shark, like a villain determined to separate them, appeared with three Alliance battle cruisers, constantly interfering.

Politos frequently demonstrated great determination, believing that one must act according to one's goals.

Yet, at the final moment, he would still compromise.

The closer they got to the moment of hope, with hope seemingly rushing toward them, the less courage they had for a desperate fight.

Clearly, they were about to unite smoothly; Fury and the Ark Fleet combined would not only greatly surpass the Alliance in fleet strength but also bring together 2,500 Interstellar Warriors from both battle groups, allowing them to maximize their potential. Together, they could not only defend the Proudclaw

Cosmos but even launch a massive counterattack, creating a third front for Iron Fury against the Empire, and perhaps this front would be the most fruitful!

As dawn was approaching, how could one fall at the last moment before dawn?

They decisively admitted defeat, choosing another route if obstructed.

At the same time, they would relay this information to the Ark Fleet of the Sect of Mechanics, allowing the Mechanical Fleet to adjust their route at any time to ensure a swift rendezvous.

Throughout the entire process, the Fury Fleet was fully prepared.

Politos did not overlook a significant concern: the main fleet of the Alliance had vanished since clearing the orbital defense system of He Yang VIII.

According to the information Boreson provided, it was predicted at the time that the main fleet of the Alliance was coming to find them.

This was, in fact, Politos' longest-standing fear.

Logically, the Alliance Main Fleet should have arrived long ago. Coming from He Yang VIII to find them, with Blood Shark chasing from behind, there should be no problem locating them. The Alliance fleet's main force shouldn't have any difficulty coming to attack them, and it would definitely be faster than the Sect of Mechanics.

After all, according to what was said at that time, the Mechanical Fleet needed a month to reach the Proudclaw Cosmos, and it was uncertain how long the subsequent rendezvous would take.

Before this, the Alliance fleet would definitely be able to find the Fury Fleet, which would be the most dangerous moment indeed.

Politos made many preparations, all aimed at surviving an attack from the Alliance's main fleet.

He had even considered the worst-case scenario.

In times of necessity, both the Triumph Flame and the Starfire Wings mega-ships could be sacrificed.

Not out of willingness, but necessity.

He had some plans:

For instance, finding a planet with a relatively good defense system so the Fury Fleet could take advantage of that planet's orbital defense system to hold their ground;

Or immediately dispersing upon encountering the Alliance's main fleet, as the two mega-ships would surely be the most closely watched and thus given to the Alliance. As long as they could resist fiercely for a while, they could delay as much as possible. The surviving forces of the two battle groups could be scattered in small ships, quickly escaping, attempting to evade the Alliance's pursuit, and subsequently reconvening with the Sect of Mechanics.

Both options had their own problems.

The former involved finding a place with a complete defense system, which was not easy, and even if found, they may not hold out until reinforcements from the Alfonso Sect arrived. Once the defense failed, it would spell total disaster.

The latter involved certain loss of the two flagships, and scattered ships might not evade pursuit entirely. Blood Shark was a highly skilled hunter, and the Alliance likely had plenty of relevant means. Moreover, with the Alliance Main Fleet's number plus Blood Shark, they held an absolute advantage in ship numbers, and splitting up might not allow many to escape.

If too few surviving forces manage to escape, it's no different from the battle group being entirely annihilated. As for leaving a legacy, the battle group still had people in their home world in the Princess Star Domain, ensuring their lineage would not be extinguished.

Torn between the options, Politos decided to try both tactics.

He would lead the fleet around the star or choose to traverse hazardous areas like asteroid belts, hoping to temporarily escape Blood Shark's surveillance, and then rapidly send out one or two small ships to stealthily slip away.

But the results were quite poor.

Such connections usually lasted only a few days before the ship suddenly lost all contact.

Was it a communication failure?

Politos did not think so.

These independently operating ships likely met an unfortunate fate.

He had to consider the first option more carefully.

Chapter 562, Where is the Alliance?_2

When the feeling of unease in his heart intensified to the point of extreme anxiety, he made a decision: to advance no further.

Just then, they were passing through a star system called 'Phantom Moon,' which seemed quite a suitable place.

The main habitable world here is not a standalone planet but rather a satellite orbiting the largest gas giant of the star system, named Phantom Moon.

Firstly, Phantom Moon is a fairly developed place, with decent industrial capacity and a relatively complete orbital defense system established around it. Moreover, with the gas giant blocking one side, the attacking options for the aggressor become fairly limited.

Overall, Phantom Moon is a fairly decent defensive location that the Fury Fleet has found on their journey.

Politos decided to stay here with the entire fleet, not moving forward.

Meanwhile, he also contacted the Ark Fleet of the Sect of Mechanics, informing them of his decision and hoping that the Ark Fleet would join them soon.

The Alfonso Fleet quickly responded:

“Alright, remain on defense, we are about to reach the Bowang Star System, estimated to be six jumps away from your location, expected to arrive in 21 days.”

“No problem, we will definitely hold out for 21 days.”

Then, the Alfonso Ark Fleet sent their last communication signal to the Fury Fleet:

“Good luck to you all.”

…

After Boreson confirmed sending out the last message, he left the communication cabin and returned to the conference room.

Seven Principal Sages gathered on the mechanical ark ’Alfonso II.’

At this moment, Boreson’s true self was here.

Once the Ark Fleet entered the Proudclaw Cosmos, a sub-fleet headed to Heyang VIII.

They not only retrieved Boreson, the Principal Sage, but also took along a significant portion of the Heyang Knights from Heyang VIII.

These knights, whose homeland's orbital defense systems were dismantled by the Alliance, harbored a certain animosity towards the Alliance. Having suffered, they hoped to personally give the Alliance a painful lesson in the coming war.

Upon seeing Boreson return, Sage Anton Dubo, the leader among the sages, spoke, "Have you appeased that battle group?"

"Yes."

"Hehe, good." Dubo said, "Soon, we will reap a deep friendship with two battle groups. War, too, has its advantages. Otherwise, under normal circumstances, how could it be so easy to make those proud Angels lower their heads?"

"Indeed, sir," Boreson replied respectfully.

Though he and Anton Dubo are both Principal Sages, there are hierarchies even among Principal Sages.

He is about to be promoted to a true Great Sage level soon.

There are thirty-six Principal Sages in the Alfonso Sect and one Great Sage.

Great Sage Martin Valuk is the sect leader. Below him are the three Founding Generals who each control one of the Alfonso Founding Worlds. Though they are just Principal Sages, their status is considerably high.

Apart from these four, the leading figure among the remaining Principal Sages is Anton Dubo.

He is the absolute Hawk Faction within the Alfonso Sect, always being the most active in the cooperation between Alfonso and the Iron Armor Battle Group, and a strong advocate for the sect's participation in the Iron Armor War.

He succeeded, and his status in the sect has risen as a result.

With the support of Humphrey Paolo, his status now seems to slightly surpass those of the three Founding Generals.

This time, as the Alfonso Sect formally enters the war, Dubo personally leads a powerful Ark Fleet southward to open up a new battlefield.

If he succeeds in annihilating the Alliance Fleet and taking control of the entire Proudclaw Cosmos, he could extend the sect's sphere of influence further south to the Eastern Cosmos Domain, and he will surely be able to leap into the ranks of a Great Sage.

Even though this so-called Great Sage certainly wouldn't be recognized by the Mars Headquarters of the Sect of Mechanics.

But what difference does it make?

In the future, it's uncertain whether the main religion of the Sect of Mechanics will still be Mars.

Boreson has already decided to cling tightly to this influential figure.

Although he is also a Principal Sage, his ranking among the thirty-six is quite low.

If Dubo can soar to new heights, he could gain significant benefits from it as well.

Cautiously and earnestly reporting on matters concerning the Fury Fleet, he quietly took his seat to listen to the other sages' reports.

After the Ark Fleet arrived in the Proudclaw Cosmos and joined forces with the Fury Fleet, incorporating the two battle groups was only the first step.

Important, but not crucial.

The most critical objective is to annihilate the Alliance Main Fleet.

But where is the Alliance Main Fleet?

Initially, it was presumed that they would seize the opportunity, before the Ark Fleet's arrival, to seek and destroy Fury, preventing the two from merging and strengthening.

However, this presumed event hadn't occurred at all.

The Alliance didn't even go to attack Fury.

At least, apart from the Blood Shark perpetually trailing behind Fury, there were no signals from any Alliance ships.

Where did they go?

The Ark Fleet has been tirelessly employing various means to gather intelligence on the Alliance Fleet.

Expanding detection systems to several nearby star systems, constantly on guard; dispatched reconnaissance fleets explored multiple Star Sectors in the Proudclaw Cosmos over the past month, yet found no trace of the Alliance; the Star Language Tower aboard the Starship contacted over a hundred worlds still on their side, inquiring if there were any sightings of the Alliance Fleet movements, but obtained no valuable information either.

It seemed as if the Alliance Main Fleet had turned into ghosts after leaving Heyang VIII.

This instilled a slight sense of unease.

But not a strong one.

Because, there's another hypothesis: Could the Alliance have fled?

Seeing the formidable formation of his fleet, knowing they absolutely stood no chance against them in the Proudclaw Cosmos, they might have simply abandoned the Star Domain which was never theirs and retreated southward.

This isn't impossible.

Rather, it's quite a rational decision.

After all, if they fled southward to the Shangdong Star in the Menghe Star Domain, relying on Shangdong's fairly solid planetary defense system, blocking the sole passage from Proudclaw into the Eastern Cosmos Domain would be quite advantageous.

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Chapter 563, Fleet Decisive Battle

On the 'Alfonso II' War Ark, the sages' meeting ended abruptly.

There was completely no need to continue.

The core theme of their meeting was to consolidate information, attempting to determine the location of the Alliance Main Fleet.

But now, it was unnecessary.

The Alliance Main Fleet had already appeared before them and launched a strong attack against them.

In the grand conference hall where the sages were located, the surrounding screens immediately lit up, receiving signals that observed the outside of the starship scene by scene. Some of these were processed images, while others were pure data streams.

These data streams, on conventional human ships, would require specialized technical experts to access the information, processing and translating it before reporting to the captain, commander.

But in the fleet of the Sect of Mechanics, that was unnecessary.

The sages were both commanders and highly skilled technicians.

With the information accessing the brain's core processor, they could completely and swiftly understand what was happening.

They had been ambushed, and it was the Alliance Main Fleet. Of the eight giant ships mentioned in the intelligence, seven were present; only the Flying Wing, which had previously suffered an attack by Furyflame and was significantly damaged, seemed to be missing.

However, in the absence of the Flying Wing, a 'Ghost Shark' combat barge was added, which is the flagship of the Blood Shark Battle Group, a combat barge specialized for rapid strikes.

Overall combat power certainly increased.

But in any case, the strength of the Ark Fleet far surpassed that of the Alliance.

This made the seven Mechanical Sages on 'Alfonso II' feel an incredible astonishment:

"How dare they?"

This was not only what they thought in their hearts; one sage even uttered it aloud.

No matter how they thought, they couldn't understand.

An ambush?

This was indeed an ambush. After entering the Bowang Star System, they had contacted the local planets. As of now, Bowang Star should still be neutral, not siding with the Alliance, and they said they hadn't observed any traces of the Alliance fleet.

Now it seems that it might have been a deception, or perhaps the Alliance used some means to mask their whereabouts, preventing even Bowang Star from observing the Alliance's actions in space.

The latter seems more likely because before the Alliance fleet revealed themselves to attack, the Ark Fleet also couldn't detect them and naturally couldn't blame the people of Bowang Star.

Of course, that's not important anymore.

The Alliance had already appeared, and investigating the cause is not what needs to be done right now.

An ambush naturally has advantages for the attacker.

But in interstellar naval warfare, the advantages that an ambush can bring are quite limited.

It’s not like being accurately ambushed at a warp point, where the Void Shield and weapon systems need to be rebooted. During normal navigation, although ships would not fully engage the Void Shield, the defensive systems must still operate at minimal levels for safe navigation.

Upon the first strike, they can immediately increase operational power and enter combat status.

The weapon systems are the same.

The Alliance ships opened fire, and simultaneously, the fleet of the Sect of Mechanics could use the fire control systems to target the Alliance ships and retaliate quickly.

The Alliance only gained an initial preemptive advantage through the ambush.

It’s indeed useful; the Mechanical Sect Fleet suffered a wave of fire during the initial surprise attack while the shields weren’t fully activated. Then, even with full shield activation, they took another round of volleys before they started to retaliate.

Overall, the damage wasn’t significant.

The Alliance launching the attack without the Mechanical Ark Fleet detecting them was already quite extreme. No matter how sophisticated the stealth methods, it’s impossible to get very close to the Ark Fleet without being discovered.

The starting engagement distance between both sides was quite far.

The farther the distance, the lower the accuracy of various weapons; apart from missile-type weapons, the power of the Colossal Cannon and light spear would also slightly diminish.

This way, the threat posed by the two rounds of firepower the Alliance managed to quickly unleash was actually relatively limited.

The Ark Fleet endured some damage, but it was primarily focused on some smaller ships.

Their destruction had minimal impact on the overall fleet's strength.

When the Ark Fleet launched their counterattack, the Alliance naturally suffered damage as well, with some smaller ships being destroyed.

Overall, the Ark Fleet certainly suffered more losses.

But it was still within an acceptable range.

Next was the showdown as both sides deployed their formations for a frontal engagement.

At this stage, the initial advantage gained by the Alliance through the ambush had already been expended, and ultimately, it was down to a contest of fleet raw power.

In this regard, the Alliance fleet would not have any advantage.

So, why did the Alliance fleet choose to fight this battle proactively?

Originally, it was believed that such a well-hidden Alliance must have some grand conspiracy; the sages had held more than one or two meetings over this.

But this is it?

That Gu Hang, has he gone mad?

The sages of Alfonso indeed couldn't comprehend this question.

"It's not a bad thing; at least now we know exactly where the Alliance Main Fleet is, right?"

“They are right in front of us.”

“Destroy them! Victory belongs to Alfonso!”

From this moment on, the largest naval battle to occur within the Proudclaw Cosmos in hundreds of years erupted.

Chapter 563, Fleet Decisive Battle_2

The combined number of battlecruisers and above class ships from both sides participating in the battle has reached a total of twenty-two ships! Altogether, that may be worth over a trillion currency in value.

The outcome of this war will directly determine the course of the entire Southern Line battlefield.

In an instant, the fleets from both sides, engaged in a decisive battle, started bombarding each other frantically.

Countless beams of light, Colossal Cannons, and missiles scorched the sky, covering this vast expanse of space.

In the starry sky, the firelight and explosions interwove into a magnificent war scene. The Colossal Cannons and beams of the Alfonso Fleet bombarded the Alliance ships, each cannon blast causing the space to tremble, as if it were about to tear the void apart. Although the Alliance Fleet fought back vigorously, they were clearly at a disadvantage in firepower. The shields of their ships gradually depleted under the continuous attacks, and some had already started to show cracks.

The Sages of the Alfonso Fleet exchanged battlefield information through the internal communication network.

“Our firepower is superior, continue the suppression!” A Sage’s voice echoed in the network, and his words immediately gained the approval of others.

In this contest of strength, the Alfonso Fleet was determined to crush the opponent in one fell swoop.

The Ark Fleet's Dragon-Snake Class Battleship Cruiser "Iron Will" was at the forefront of the battle line.

Its main cannon, like a deadly scythe, repeatedly harvested the lives of enemy ships. Its captain, a Dominant Bishop who was almost one with the ship's command module on the bridge, comprehended the battlefield situation through countless information directly transmitted to his mind. Simultaneously, countless commands emerged from his mind, transformed into actions to mobilize the ship's various function units with the aid of numerous servo skulls and the Engine Prophets.

The overall strength of the Alliance Fleet still needed to be acknowledged. Eight giant ships, no matter what, were a formidable force to be reckoned with.

However, in the current frontal confrontation, the Ark Fleet, with an absolute advantage in firepower, still quickly suppressed the opponent.

Especially that Emperor-Class Battleship and War Ark, the two were like massive Star War Core Firepower Platforms, one much stronger than three.

Under their cover, "Iron Will" maneuvered effortlessly in the battlefield, destroying multiple Alliance ships. At this moment, it set its sights on a Lunar-Class Cruiser of the Alliance.

The ship's shields had already turned red and were being forced into a dire situation by various barrages, moving within the Alliance Fleet's formation to retreat to the rear in an attempt to buy time to restore its Void Shield.

However, "Iron Will" had no intention of giving it that chance.

The Lunar-Class did not realize it was being targeted, and "Iron Will" needed only to fire a shot from its X-class main cannon, "Destruction Verdict," at this moment to have a good chance of destroying it.

A Lunar-Class was definitely not one of those eight giant ships of the Alliance, but it was by no means insignificant.

Taking down one would decrease the firepower of the Alliance Fleet by a notch.

Victory is accumulated little by little in this manner.

However, right at this moment,

“Iron Will’s” Void Shield suddenly experienced anomalies, the shield surface fluctuating erratically as if torn by some unknown force.

On the bridge, alarms suddenly blared, and the captain immediately gave the order: “Stabilize the Void Shield with all efforts! Adjust the course to avoid the primary firepower zone!”

But it was too late for everything.

In the next instant, Iron Will’s Void Shield completely collapsed.

Immediately, as if anticipated, a series of missiles and beams from the Alliance Fleet hit the unshielded hull.

The battlecruiser’s armor was not a strong suit. Without the Void Shield, the speed advantage couldn’t be fully utilized in this kind of battleship duel environment. The survival ability of the battlecruiser, focused on by concentrated fire, wasn’t much better than that of the Lunar-Class Cruiser they had just targeted.

In the intense barrage, massive explosions tore the once mighty battlecruiser into pieces, debris and flames scattering through space.

This scene was captured by other Alfonso ships, immediately causing a commotion.

The loss of “Iron Will” was a significant blow to the Alfonso Fleet, not just in terms of strength, but also a severe hit to morale.

The Sages quickly adjusted tactics, trying to fill this sudden gap.

“Identify the cause immediately, we can’t let this happen again!” The Sages’ voices spread tensely and swiftly through the communication network.

The battlefield’s situation changed in an instant; due to this unexpected circumstance, the Alfonso Fleet’s offensive seemed slightly disorganized, and the scales of war seemed to start swaying at this moment.

Yet they still possessed powerful firepower and unbreakable will.

The Sages of the Alfonso Fleet knew that victory in this battle was still in their grasp.

However, the loss of a battlecruiser was indeed painful.

Grand as Alfonso may be, such giant battlecruisers numbered only nine in their fleet.

Moreover, the way “Iron Will” perished was rather uncanny.

The cause must be identified, and further, a solution must be found, or the trouble will be enormous.

The cause was quickly confirmed by them: Spiritual Energy.

It was the power of Spiritual Energy that tore apart “Iron Will’s” Void Shield.

Chapter 563, Fleet Decisive Battle_3

“Gu Hang… and the Alliance’s Storm Mage Corps… the spiritual energy they wield is more powerful than mentioned in the intelligence reports.”

Dubo made this judgment.

Boreson spoke up: “Sage Dubo, we cannot let Gu Hang continue like this, otherwise even if we achieve final victory, the losses will become unacceptable. Now, only you have the ability to counter his spiritual energy.”

“You don’t need to tell me.”

Sage Dubo left this line and then left the bridge.

His body, with the aid of mechanical structures, floated at high speed through the corridors inside the ship, reaching a secret chamber.

Here, there was a giant machine. Its surface was covered with complex patterns and symbols, emitting a faint blue glow, as if whispering the oldest secrets of the universe. At the center of the machine was a sphere composed of an energy field, imprisoning a huge and strange creature.

Its appearance was intimidating, resembling a long worm. The body was dark purple, covered with wriggling veins and tendons, looking twisted and disgusting. Its head was exceptionally large, encased in a chitinous shell. Between the gaps in the shell, there were numerous dense eyes, each of them glowing with a faint green light, revealing its spiritual energy. Its tentacles constantly stroked inside the energy field, making an unsettling buzzing sound.

Those with in-depth knowledge of the Void Insect Species could quickly determine that this was a very rare specimen among them: a Neuron Progeny, or one could also call it a Brain Bug Tyrant.

The brain bug might be a newly evolved type of Void Bug Beast, as the sparse historical records with the Void Insect Species from a thousand years ago did not contain such creatures.

The earliest reports occurred a millennium ago. Especially in the last few centuries, they have become more frequent.

Some reports suggest that this is a result of the Void Insect Species successfully deciphering and transforming the genes of certain psychics, or even a powerful psychic race, creating a new war machine.

They are powerful psychics, capable of using the spiritual energy gathered by the hive mind.

These beings have evolved to the extreme. Their shriveled bodies and swollen heads rely entirely on spiritual energy as power. They can only float themselves into the air using spiritual energy, hovering above the battlefield, launching psychic assaults on the enemies below or conveying commands from the hive mind to the smaller Tyranid Bug Race.

And 'Tyrant' is a term for some powerful individuals within the Void Insect Species.

The combination of the two, called the Brain Bug Tyrant of the Neuron Progeny, implies unimaginable power.

And this one, even among those Brain Bug Tyrants recorded in the Empire, had an especially colossal size.

Sage Dubo extended both hands, from his arms, from his back, numerous neural cords probed and linked into the device in front of him.

With his operation, the brain bug's eyes began to flicker more frequently, and its tentacles accelerated their stroking rhythm.

Suddenly, a strong psychic wave was released from the brain bug's body, penetrating the energy field and spreading out into space. It was like a giant net, capturing the spiritual energy that was rampaging in space under Gu Hang's control.

These forces, which originally ran rampant under Gu Hang's manipulation, now encountered an unprecedented adversary.

In the void of space, two streams of spiritual energy began a fierce confrontation.

Spiritual energy was originally shapeless and formless, but when the two collided, they emitted substantive light waves.

The clashes between spiritual energy storms released a deafening roar — a sound that was not transmitted through vibrating soundwaves but instead seemed to resonate directly in the minds of every living creature.

Visible light waves intertwined with the storms, sometimes the brain bug's psychic wave dominating, suppressing the storm; sometimes the storm counterattacked, tearing the light wave apart.

This silent battle played out among the stars, like two invisible titans struggling, each collision causing the surrounding space to warp, directly affecting all the starships present.

Inter-ship communication, even within the starships themselves, was greatly disrupted. Even with interference suppression equipment maxed out, it could not be completely shielded.

The decisive battle between both sides' ships had thus become chaotic and undisciplined.

Gu Hang, on his own bridge, had eyes radiating a sapphire brilliance more dazzling than ever.

Countless psychics of the Storm Mage Corps had their power intertwined with his. Yet, in the recent confrontation, several Storm Mages could not withstand it.

In better condition, they were bleeding from their noses and mouths, looking languid, barely able to disconnect from the psychic link and crawl aside to rest.

In worse condition, their brains directly exploded into a mist of blood.

Gu Hang's brow furrowed tightly.

The spiritual energy that had suddenly appeared on the battlefield was a strength he hadn't anticipated.

Gu Hang wouldn't naively think that Alfonso's Ark Fleet, with such a vast scale, wouldn't have means to counter spiritual energy.

But generally speaking, the Mechanical Sect wasn't a force adept at utilizing spiritual energy. They might possess some peculiar technology to ensure defense, but to actively use spiritual energy for something was uncommon.

Yet, the current situation exceeded his estimation.

If it were said that Alfonso also had powerful psychics, it wasn't impossible.

However, the scale of psychic strength present on the battlefield seemed a bit excessive.

This was absolutely at the level of an Alpha-class Psychic.

Which meant, this was not a power mortals could wield.

Where did Alfonso manage to find a stable Alpha-class to serve them?

Even stranger, Gu Hang could sense that the spiritual energy opposing him had a very peculiar… flavor.

It didn't resemble a human psychic, nor did it seem like the spiritual energy used by the Abyssal Demons he had encountered many times.

What in the world is this?

Chapter 564, Original Spiritual Energy

Gu Hang quickly understood the power with which he was engaged in spiritual energy confrontation, and what made it particularly strange.

The manifestation in subspace was different.

Human psychics are essentially souls that become a link between the real universe and subspace. Demons that come to the real world are nothing more than projections of subspace power into the real world.

The difference in power between the two lies in that the former, as a human soul, can filter and shape the raw power of subspace after training, manifesting relatively safe, controllable, and precise energy, according to the psychic's own traits and thoughts.

The latter, on the other hand, strongly expresses the characteristics of a demon as a singular subspace demon, an extreme and polluted power.

Scholars distinguish between the two; the former is called spiritual energy, while the latter is called demonic energy.

But essentially, both are expressions of the infinite and omnipotent power within subspace; the expression methods are just different.

This current situation is the same.

The difference lies in its method of expression… which made Gu Hang find it very strange.

Under its motivation, the power of subspace wasn't simply applied but was more like… stolen, suppressed, and forcefully utilized.

This surprised Gu Hang a lot.

He wasn't able to determine what this power originated from.

Was it some specific technology possessed by the Alfonso Sect?

Quite impressive.

The powers of both sides collided in space. The strange subspace power mastered by the Alfonso Sect mainly 'worked' continuously to prevent Gu Hang from using his own spiritual energy to directly affect their ships.

Gu Hang was indeed tangled up and quite annoyed, with no time to easily tear apart the enemy ship's void shields.

Whenever he tried to break free, this tamed subspace power would quickly snap back on him.

Its power didn't attempt to attack the Alliance ships.

This behavior also confirmed one of Gu Hang's suspicions.

After realizing the special nature of the spiritual energy opposing him, Gu Hang felt that this relatively primitive method of using spiritual energy wasn't suitable for striking void shields.

Raw subspace power can only crudely and directly impact vehicle shields and void shields with energy surges.

It's not infeasible, not completely ineffective, but very limited, yielding little effect for the effort.

Gu Hang intentionally held back, pretending that his spiritual energy was slightly overpowered, and temporarily extinguished his own spiritual energy.

The spiritual energy of the Brain Bug Tyrant, controlled by Sage Dubo, hesitated in space for a moment, unable to find its defensive target.

A thought flashed through his mind: Is that all Gu Hang's got?

The intensity was quite high, but the endurance seemed lacking.

Could there be some conspiracy?

But he couldn't care too much. The spiritual energy of the Brain Bug Tyrant had already been projected out, and he couldn't retract it just because he couldn't sense Gu Hang's movements.

Thus, he tried to urge the power, just as Gu Hang had torn apart the 'Iron Will,' projecting the Brain Bug Tyrant's strength onto the Alliance ships.

He targeted a cruiser, and the subspace power surged up, but after a long while, it couldn't pierce the shield. It took two shots from the accompanying heavy cannons to turn the moon-class void shield red.

It was a bit awkward.

Gu Hang realized that while this 'taming' and 'enslavement' of subspace power could control powerful energy, it had almost no skills and could not spawn necessary changes.

Ripping apart a void shield isn't as simple as just surging energy against it—this strange power was doing just that. But if done this way, it equates to using spiritual energy like a cannonball, transforming it into specific energy in the real world to bombard the void shield.

But in that case, why bother with spiritual energy? Just use Colossal Cannons or light spears to bombard it.

Of course, even if it's such a primitive and straightforward use of spiritual energy, it's quite threatening. After all, there's no need to worry about accuracy with spiritual energy; give it some more time, and it could achieve decent results.

However, after achieving what he wanted, Gu Hang no longer hesitated and took action immediately.

Seizing the opportunity while the Brain Bug Tyrant was contending with the moon-class void shield of the Alliance, Gu Hang materialized his spiritual energy again, targeting a cruiser and two escort ships of the Ark Fleet. His spiritual energy, with a special oscillating frequency, directly affected their void shields

and energy shields internally, disrupting their efficiency and quickly tearing apart the void and energy shields.

Yelisia's coordination with Gu Hang had become quite seamless. When she received Gu Hang's notice, she coordinated several battleships, readying them; once the void shield was broken, firepower immediately followed up, quickly turning them into space debris.

Simultaneously, Gu Hang locked onto his next target: the second-largest ship among the enemies, the 'Ascension Machine Spirit' emperor-class battleship.

By this time, the spiritual energy of the Brain Bug Tyrant controlled by Dubo turned back around to entangle with Gu Hang's spiritual energy once again.

This demonstrated once more the differences in flexibility and technicality of the spiritual energy mastered by the Alfonso Sect.

Of course, Dubo wasn't realizing just now; he had noticed as soon as Gu Hang's spiritual energy reappeared on the battlefield, attempting to redirect his power to counter it.

He knew that the efficiency with which he handled the Alliance ship shields was no match to Gu Hang; exchanging blows this way would surely mean his side would be at a loss. But if it were a direct collision of spiritual energies, technique and flexibility did play a role, but Dubo could rely on brute strength to entangle with Gu Hang.

Causing chaos wasn't possible, but ruining plans was still manageable.

On the contrary, Gu Hang was absolutely unwilling to engage in a spiritual energy confrontation and entanglement with this inexplicable power.

It was very intense, and during confrontation, it was inevitable that Storm Mages would be sacrificed.

Sacrifices could happen, and whether Gu Hang could win in a head-on collision…whether he could win or not, it was certainly labor-intensive and time-consuming.

Even without spiritual energy support, the Alfonso fleet inherently held a strength advantage; but the Alliance Fleet, clearly at a disadvantage in conventional fleet strength, had victory hinging on Gu Hang's potential… or rather, his spiritual power.

If just limited like this, then the Alliance Fleet truly came seeking death.

But, since Gu Hang didn't give the order to retreat after discovering something was amiss, and continued the battle, it naturally meant that he had found a way to crack it.

"Let me see what exactly you are… Alright, found it."

Located on the War Ark 'Alfonso II,' Gu Hang saw Sage Dubo, and also saw a huge Brain Bug Tyrant imprisoned inside a machine.

Chapter 565, Brain Bug Tyrant

Gu Hang certainly knew what a Brain Bug was.

Although, until now, the Alliance had not encountered the Void Insect Species, but quite a bit of research information has already been widespread about these latest formidable foes encountered by the Empire.

It must be noted that in this universe, all sorts of intelligent races and civilizations emerge one after another.

However, the vast majority that the Empire encounters are negligible. The worst are those that haven't even ventured into space, still developing on their home planets; the stronger ones are just active across a few star systems, at most multiple Star Sectors.

People refer to civilizations of this level as 'pocket empires.'

Compared to the enormously massive Human Empire, these civilizations indeed resemble 'pockets.'

In the Imperial historical records, there have been encounters with alien civilizations much more powerful than pocket empires. But the vast majority of them were annihilated in the founding war personally led by the Emperor while he was still alive on Terra.

Nowadays, the alien civilizations that can be encountered are all 'pockets' to the Empire and can be exterminated with little effort. When expanding territories, encountering such entities at most counts as a minor issue.

By the way, during the Solar Expedition, most of the Sun Lord's targets for expansion were actually such enemies.

However, among the numerous new enemies discovered by the Human Empire, the Void Insect Species alone is the most terrifying.

No one knows where they come from; they are the locusts of the universe, devouring one lively planet after another.

They are the ultimate predators, with human records of them always revolving around words like "plunder," "devour," and "evolve." They can not only tear enemies apart with their claws but also use biochemical firearms for ranged attacks, having biochemical artillery and biochemical Terra bugs. The biological warship clusters rampaging through space are the doom of the Imperial Navy.

And they are not solely enemies of humans. Other space forces have all suffered from the ferocious and merciless attacks of these creatures.

The Void Insect Species represents the pinnacle of biological evolution, existing for one simple purpose: reproduction, unending reproduction. By digesting and absorbing the organics of entire planets, these creatures proliferate more and more, continuously assimilating genes to remodel themselves into even more lethal killing machines.

Only fools would mistake the Tyranid Bug Race's bloodthirsty savagery as a sign of their lack of intelligence. The Hive Will exercises cold and precise control over all activities of the insect race clusters to ensure the survival of the entire species.

The Hive Will is an abstract existence without an actual entity, a super-information conceptual aggregate formed by the convergence of insect race swarms in the real world and subspace, possessing extremely powerful energy.

As a high-dimensional lifeform, the Hive Will's operational commands are transmitted through nodes and can even interfere with the brains of nearby organisms, causing them fear and unease and amplifying the fear of psychics.

In Gu Hang's view, the 'Swarm Shadow' or 'Subspace Shadow' that accompanies the arrival of the swarm is a kind of reverse influence of real-world organisms on subspace.

Subspace is a non-material world, an ocean of souls.

The Void Insect Species may seem like soulless, emotionless monsters. However, they do exist in the real universe, and although individual bugs may not possess personal will, the Hive Will formed by the merged insect race swarms is immense. It naturally mirrors in subspace, becoming a ruthless subspace monster.

When the swarm passes through, a portion of the Hive Will descends with it, 'suppressing' the subspace in the corresponding area.

Or rather, it is the cold trait of the swarm. The Hive Will is cold, emotionless, with only survival, plunder, devour, and reproduction. Once it dominates subspace, all spiritual activities in the area are naturally suppressed.

Human psychics fare a little better, only suffering headaches, and can just sever their connection to subspace. Demons and Chaos Cultists are more affected. In the few times the Empire has observed wars between the Void Insect Species and Chaos Demons, the latter rarely gained any advantage.

Furthermore, when the Void Insect Species devours certain races adept at using spiritual energy, such as the Space Spirit Race or Chaos Demons, they not only gain more proficiency in using subspace shadows to suppress spiritual reactions but also evolve Brain Bugs within their swarms.

The Neuron Progeny, the monarch among Brain Bugs, is an extremely advanced psychic control unit.

It is generally believed the Neuron Progeny possesses the strength of an Alpha-class Psychic.

The Alfonso Sect is truly audacious.

To attempt to enslave such a level of entity?

The key is… did they actually succeed?

However, the huge hidden dangers involved certainly still exist.

When Gu Hang learned that the Northern Front of the Spiderweb Domain, under the joint leadership of the Infinite Corps, Bat Corps, and Extraplanar Tribunal, had been blocked by the Void Insect Species, he had strong suspicions that the Iron Armor Battle Group might have some unclear relations with the insect race.

Otherwise, it was too coincidental that a swarm broke out on the advance route just when the Iron Armor was unable to hold the Northern Front.

Therefore, Gu Hang specifically conducted research on the psychological energy of the Void Insect Species as a precaution to avoid being helpless when encountering such enemies.

The current opponent didn't seem to match the expectations, but some of the methods Gu Hang prepared could still be used.

But before using those methods, Gu Hang thought there might be a simpler, more direct, and more destructive way to try first.

Since this spiritual energy wasn't of the Alfonso Sect themselves, then… could it be made to lose control?

If a Neuron Progeny with Alpha-class spiritual energy lost control and ran rampant inside the enemy's War Ark, what would be the result?

Could the few Principal Sages on that ship suppress it?

Gu Hang wasn't sure.

The Sect of Mechanics also had abilities and shouldn't be underestimated.

But even if they could, the massive chaos within the ship was inevitable.

This would almost render the strongest War Ark among the enemy forces useless.

As Gu Hang pondered this, his actions never ceased.

His psychic energy continued to entangle with the Neuron Progeny's spiritual energy, though very… nonchalantly.

Dubo felt that Gu Hang's spiritual energy became easier to deal with.

Despite his doubts, it was good news.

After all, he had given up on the idea of using the Neuron Progeny's spiritual energy to strike the Alliance ships.

As long as Gu Hang's spiritual energy couldn't damage their own ships, the firepower of the Mechanical Sect Fleet would be enough to destroy the Alliance Fleet.

Dubo had no doubts about this.

But in the next moment, Gu Hang's spiritual energy suddenly gathered into a highly resilient and extremely penetrative force, piercing a large hole through the Neuron Progeny's subspace primal energy mass.

Chapter 567

Dubo wasn't a psychic, but it didn't hinder him from using machines to clearly 'see' from a higher-dimensional perspective that the power of the neuron progeny he controlled was being penetrated.

Honestly, seeing the psionic mass he represented as being in control pierced through, leading directly to the "Alfonso II" he was aboard, made his mechanical heart tremble fiercely.

The more one studies psionic energy, the more one feels reverence for it. It has too many capabilities and is too terrifying.

In an instant, he issued a series of commands.

The ship's void shields needed to be ready for impact; the maintenance team had to be on standby at all times; the secondary backup void shields had to be ready to activate immediately if the current void shield system failed…

This series of orders were all made out of fear that any danger might occur, causing issues with the fleet's most important core vessel.

However, everything he worried about did not happen.

The void shield of the Alfonso II was perfectly fine, not feeling any pressure at all.

The computing unit in his mind rapidly analyzed the situation, intercepting information from the psionic clash between both sides, trying to figure out what Gu Hang was up to.

Gu Hang's attack was not aimed at the void shield.

Then, where was it aimed at…

“Boom!”

Just as his calculations were about to conclude, an explosion sounded.

His calculations were rendered meaningless.

The consequence had already occurred.

“We have been invaded!”

An information report came through.

Dubo didn’t issue any special orders. The ship had a complete set of mature response mechanisms for combating boarding and enemy invasions.

He needed to see with his own eyes what the situation was like.

Then, he was a bit dumbfounded.

The enemy… they were indeed enemies, but the type of enemy genuinely surprised him.

Even something he had never encountered before.

They had light blue, semi-transparent forms, each resembling a person in various military uniforms, such as regular soldiers’ plastic-steel combat armor and some power armor. However, these outfits should only be ’appearance’, having no real significance in actual combat. Their essence was still entities composed of energy.

In this nature, they were somewhat similar to chaos demons: both were entities condensed by subspace energy in the real world.

For a moment, Dubo thought he was dealing with some kind of chaos cultist power.

Even you, Gu Hang, with your thick eyebrows and big eyes, became a traitor? Just with a different allegiance?

But soon, he felt the difference.

Those… spirits displayed power that wasn't as extreme as the abyss demons.

This wasn't to say their power wasn't strong. In fact, the power these spirits used wasn't diverse, revolving around storms, gales, and thunder.

But in another aspect, they didn't have overly extreme emotional expressions like those abyss demons.

Which had its pros and cons.

Based on the Alphonso Sect's past experiences with abyss demons, they were truly troublesome opponents. If demons invaded a ship, even machines could become possessed by the subspace forces represented by these extreme emotions.

Machines can become possessed too.

But these spirits didn't have these traits.

They seemed rational, almost like living people—or rather, they seemed to possess a living person's soul.

No matter what, them not having the ability to possess machines was good news; they were far more disciplined compared to the typical chaos abyss demons, which was bad news for the ship's defenders.

Dubo felt utterly frustrated.

"…When the war ends, I must expose Gu Hang's wrongdoings!"

"Calling us traitors? He's a traitor too!! He can even summon demons!"

Even though Dubo knew these spirits were not the same as demons, they were still creatures formed by pure subspace energy, not a power humans should normally wield, not even the most powerful spiritual master could.

Even if it wasn't relying on the power of the most powerful four evil gods in subspace, it was finding strength in the lesser subspace evil gods.

Still a taboo.

But he quickly realized he needed to lead his fleet to survive first.

Otherwise, if everyone on this ship perished in space, there wouldn't be a chance to criticize Gu Hang later.

On the War Ark, the elite Protection Army had already taken action.

The appearing spirits were being swiftly eliminated.

These spirits were formidable, very elite. But according to the information sent back by Sage Boreson, who led the Protection Army, their combat power was roughly equivalent to the top warriors of the Imperial Star Realm Army.

Strong? Certainly, that's formidable combat strength.

However, the troops stationed as the Protection Army on the "Alfonso II" were undoubtedly the absolute elite of the sect's armed forces.

The large Knight Mecha was not suited for combat operations within the ship, but some of its smaller units were very troublesome adversaries.

Not just things like Sentinel Mechas, but more like some squire-level Knight Mechas.

They were much smaller than the standard Ranger-class Knight Mechas, but still slightly larger than Sentinel Mechas. Their firepower didn't surpass Sentinel Mechas by much, given their size limited the heavy firepower they'd carry. However, their agility, armor, and a small shield generator made their actual combat ability far surpass that of Sentinel Mechas.

Besides the squire knights from various Knight Orders, the ships' automated warriors were even more robust.

To those who didn't know the detailed differences, these automated warriors might resemble Intelligent Iron Men, but their actual cores were completely different.

Intelligent Iron Men were purely machines with no soul or flesh brain whatsoever, solely relying on one or more core machine chips working together to drive the machine bodies to fight.

But the automatic warriors of the Mechanical Protective Forces were different.

Although termed 'automatic,' in essence, these things are still… people?

Or rather, serf-machines.

Individuals who underwent organ-cutting surgery, with a part of their brains removed, boosted their hardware configurations to the maximum during body modifications, thus becoming the automatic warriors.

They were an important force in the Protection Army. Some had extremely comprehensive configurations, with superior ones handcrafted by high-ranking members of the Sect of Mechanics, being absurdly elite.

When both the Protection Army and the Knight Order were mobilized, the spirits invading the ship were naturally eradicated.

No one was much weaker than the other, but the spirits simultaneously appearing at the same location within the ship were still at a disadvantage.

However, before Sage Boreson, responsible for ship security, could breathe a sigh of relief, new reports surfaced: large numbers of spirits appeared in another dozen areas of the ship!

Boreson and several other summoned, team-leading sages formed a command structure together, orchestrating teams to extinguish ’fires’ all over the ship.

The spirits seemed endless.

After eliminating all stationed spirits in one area, spirits continued to emerge from subspace rifts; after praying to the God of All Machines and using blessed machines to close the subspace rifts, two new areas opened subspace cracks and needed firefighting again.

The Alfonso II was enormous, akin to a nest capital in space, boasting a structure larger than a Retribution-class Battleship and stretching 40 kilometers in length, with hundreds of layers of sections.

Even with over 1.5 million Sect of Mechanics units operating inside, covering every spot proved challenging.

Overall, the Sect of Mechanics guarded the entire ship quite well. The key areas were given priority protection and had remained issue-free constantly.

But one had to append qualifiers to this ’issue-free’: temporarily and in important areas.

In some non-crucial areas, the protection level wasn’t as adequate.

For instance, a subspace rift emerging in the lower deck cabin zone.

There were originally few Sect of Mechanics units active in this area, which wasn’t critical, merely the slave quarters.

The appearing spirits quickly slaughtered the few slave units active here and cut off information transmission to the outside.

While the upper areas were in chaos, they quietly expanded the subspace rift larger, leading more and more spirits to walk out from the rift, from within the Storm God Kingdom.

Very soon, here, under the radar of the sect, a division, then another division, organized by these spirits, stood in formation.

Until the number of spirits assembled here topped 160,000, structured into four major infantry divisions according to Alliance military formation, they needed to continuously expand occupied zones to accommodate the growing numbers.

It was at this point that a patrol squad they annihilated managed to relay the information due to their strong blockade being breached, sending the message out.

Discovery was already a fact, so they ceased hiding.

Under the leadership of ’commanders’ and ’officers,’ these spirits, who had sacrificed themselves for the Alliance on countless battlefields and now resided in Gu Hang’s Divine Realm, awakened once more to fight for the Alliance.

They actually enjoyed it very much.

They had long been eager to do so.

The frenzied spirits rushed out, swiftly scattering the Protection Army who hadn’t expected such significant disturbance in the lower deck area.

From the ship’s perspective, the Protection Army undoubtedly held an absolute numerical advantage, but locally, the Protection Army, unable to mobilize in time, instead became the numerically inferior party in the fight.

Furthermore, there appeared to be some issues in their command.

Due to underestimating the number of spirits, they were too eager to eliminate them. They erroneously launched repeated proactive offensives, and the Protection Army units drawn from neighboring areas often charged into the most intense battles following the signals and requests for support from their frontline comrades, without regrouping with other allied units.

This resulted in piecemeal reinforcement tactics.

Chapter 567, Everyone Arrives

In the lower deck area, the tactics of the ethereal entities were rather sinister.

They deliberately spared a batch of Protection Army soldiers, letting them continuously transmit messages, saying they were holding strong, saying they were about to fail.

Then, the reinforcements continuously sent by the Protection Army were relentlessly added in. They couldn’t even reach the inner sector where the previous position was held, as they would be ambushed and raided by ethereal forces far outnumbering them on the way, and swiftly annihilated.

After destroying a considerable number of Protectorate forces here, almost clearing the surrounding areas, the ethereal entities did not continue with this tactic of besieging to aid reinforcements. Instead, they decisively wiped out the remaining enemies at the original position and then advanced boldly.

The ethereal entities did not forget the order from the Alliance Governor they worshiped.

The aim of striking the enemy's living forces was to conquer the mission target.

Otherwise, truly wanting to kill all the fifteen million Protection Army troops on board would be extremely difficult.

Gu Hang supporting so many ethereal entities in constant battle also required power consumption, not to mention in space, during the battle formation between the ships, his Spiritual Energy was still entangled with that Neuron Progeny's power.

The most crucial thing is, even if Gu Hang did this, wanting to rely solely on ethereal entities to kill all fifteen million Elite Protectorate Army troops on board, it would take an indefinite amount of time.

It's simply impossible to kill them all.

It's still necessary to go to the place where Dubo had imprisoned and was controlling that Neuron Progeny.

Fighting from the lower deck area to there is quite far.

However, after the already scarce defending forces around were cleared by the ethereal entities using the besiege tactic, a considerable distance became smooth to pass through.

At one point, they even reached a place just fifteen kilometers away in a straight line from Dubo.

Even though they still needed to climb over ten floors upwards and navigate the complicated internal routes of the ship, this nonetheless made Dubo feel somewhat anxious.

He connected with Boreson, who was in charge of the Starship's internal defense, and scolded him fiercely.

With Boreson scolded into a sorry state, he personally led a team to block the breach.

The previous reinforcement tactic was no longer executed; he initially planned to let these ethereal entities rush further in, simultaneously mobilizing more abundant forces before making a move.

But now, with Dubo's scolding, he had to block earlier.

The forces were somewhat insufficient, so what to do?

Rely on enough elite troops then.

Being a fully modified Sage himself, need not say much; at the same time, he also brought along a combat group solely consisting of the most elite top-level automaton soldiers.

Once he led his team to the scene, the effect was immediate.

The momentum of the ethereal entities' continued assault was quickly blocked.

They attempted to find other pathways to expand the scope and depth of the battlefield. On a multi-story, ten-kilometer-wide multidimensional battlefield within the ship, due to the ship's unique terrain, it was divided into small, localized, but interlinked and mutually influencing battlefields.

This brought great pressure to Boreson.

But at the same time, it also stimulated the abilities of this Sage.

The computational units in his mind managed the complex situation of the entire battlefield, deploying one unit after another to the most needed places, firmly blocking the ethereal entities' assault with relatively scarce troops.

And, as time passed, the issue of insufficient forces was rapidly being alleviated.

After all, the manpower on Alfonso II was still very abundant.

The continuously gathered forces alleviated the force scarcity problem every moment.

Even though those ethereal entities, after occupying the lower deck area, opened larger Subspace rifts, with more ethereal entities emerging, the Protection Army still gradually leveled the numbers on the battlefield, even slightly exceeding them.

Here, both sides formed a major battlefield, with the unfolding battle resembling a brutal street fight aimed at a small-scale Nest Capital on the surface.

Moreover, it was a street fight where neither side could use heavy weaponry.

In comparison, although some Subspace rifts would open elsewhere in the ship, with other Sages filling gaps and the large reserve forces left behind, they were still able to extinguish any ethereal entities before they could establish a presence in a Subspace rift or open a second battlefield.

Dubo continuously contacted several Sages, while also 'watching' scene after scene of the ship's internal warfare through the information flow input, roughly grasping the overall situation.

For now, things seemed relatively stable. Although the entire interior of the Starship appeared to be boiling, with battles erupting everywhere, so far, none of the ship's critical areas were at risk of being conquered.

At the same time, he could also feel that the Spiritual Energy from Gu Hang, which had been contending with him in space, had weakened significantly.

Although this could be Gu Hang pretending, considering he had previously done so, faking dispersal and then conducting a sneak attack.

But this time, Dubo judged it to be genuine.

Seizing the opportunity while he is weak, he intensified the encirclement of Gu Hang's Spiritual Energy.

The goal was to exert greater pressure on Gu Hang, not only preventing him from attacking their Starship again but also drawing more of Gu Hang's focus away, thereby reducing the input of ethereal entities inside the War Ark.

Chapter 567, All Members Arrive_2

…

Dubo's strategy was correct.

Gu Hang indeed felt considerable pressure now.

This was the strongest opponent Gu Hang had faced since the Unclean One Gowaga.

The difference was that the battle with Gowaga took place within the Storm God Kingdom, his home turf, where his power could be greatly amplified.

Currently, although he was much stronger than when he had fought Gowaga, he lacked the home advantage and had to fight on the opponent's turf, supporting so many Heroic Spirit Warriors simultaneously.

The pressure was indeed immense.

The most direct manifestation was that nearly a thousand out of tens of thousands of psychics in the Alliance's Storm Mage Corps had been lost by now.

A seven percent casualty rate had already made a significant impact. Although not everyone died—only three to four hundred were shot in the head—the remaining six hundred suffered injuries that could heal in the future.

But this was still painful to bear.

The Storm Mage Corps wasn't cheap either; it's one of the family assets that Gu Hang painstakingly accumulated over the years. Quite a portion of the personnel were cultivated by Gu Hang using Gift Points.

One psychic costs a hundred Gift Points—enough to get a Genetic Seed!

Of course, the major investment in cultivating an Interstellar Warrior is in the preliminary selection and later training. The cultivation of a Psychic Mage is pretty much a one-time deal, and subsequent upgrades generally don't cost Gu Hang any more Gift Points.

Regardless, the loss of over three hundred lives meant thirty thousand Gift Points were gone. Not to mention, people with psychic talent are rare, requiring a large population base and a long time to screen to assemble this ten-thousand strong mage corps; it's not easy.

Moreover, personnel losses wouldn't affect the overall strength significantly. After all, the core provider of power in the psychic confrontation is Gu Hang. However, the pressure and consumption during the confrontation require a myriad of psychics to share the burden with him.

As the number of his Storm Mage Corps reduced, the time Gu Hang could support so many Heroic units fighting within enemy ships while withstanding the power of the Neuron Progeny in space would be shortened.

Currently, it's not obvious, but once the mage corps is reduced by 20%, 30%, the pressure on each remaining Storm Mage would significantly increase to an unbearable point. This could trigger a chain reaction, potentially causing the whole situation to collapse.

Without the entire mage corps as a backup, Gu Hang's sustainability would be sharply reduced. At that point, it would almost be equivalent to Gu Hang's failure.

By then, he would likely have to think about how to retreat with his ships rather than how to defeat Alfonso's Mechanical Fleet.

Of course, it's not that dire yet.

Though the Heroic Spirits manifested within the enemy ships were locked in a stalemate, it didn't mean Gu Hang had exhausted all his means.

What would break the deadlock?

Naturally, it wasn't possible to directly teleport a Skyburn Torpedo over.

If he could, Gu Hang certainly would want to do so. Forget the Skyburn Torpedo; even sending in dozens of missiles like the Scorching East Wind would have devastating effects when detonated within the ship.

Unfortunately, psychic teleportation couldn't achieve that.

Currently, the Heroic Spirits fighting within enemy ships were essentially all manifestations of Gu Hang's spiritual power, a reflection of subspace energy from the Storm God Kingdom. They appeared to wield firearms and wear power armor, but in reality, these things were just "appearances."

Whether it's bullets fired or slashes from power swords, essentially all were exhibitions of Storm Divine Power. The Heroic Spirits were just visual manifestations, a way to present the concept of Storm Divine Power in the physical universe.

They weren't material.

Unless he personally boarded the enemy ship, spending a few days establishing a stable exit, like those secret research institutes he built on Rage Owl Star for transferring black box creations.

But that's clearly impossible.

A temporarily torn subspace rift couldn't transfer physical matter.

And the capability of psychic teleportation?

Also won't work.

Essentially, psychic teleportation involves a soul resonance with the target to send the soul and the life form it represents to the desired location.

This means that psychic teleportation only allows living beings with souls to pass through.

Each living being's personal equipment and weapons are fundamentally responsibilities of the individual, relatively limited in weight but emphasizing the binding of the "machine soul" with the life form.

As transcendent life forms, Interstellar Warriors possess extremely strong life force in both soul and body, allowing them to carry more, stronger, and larger equipment. However, transporting a Dreadnought Mech with full combat munitions almost maxes out the capacity.

However, any highly destructive weapon, like a Scorching East Wind missile, has a larger and heavier warhead, lacking the "machine soul" of armor or firearms, and the long-term binding effect with the user, making it impossible to be transmitted together.

While Gu Hang couldn't directly teleport bombs inside the enemy ships, he still had Interstellar Warriors who could be teleported.

Boarding actions by Interstellar Warriors were an excellent method for resolving such issues.

The carefully nurtured Phoenix Battle Group was meant to play a crucial role at such moments.

Currently, Gu Hang had another option: the Blood Sharks.

As a parsimonious warlord, if he could avoid sacrificing his forces and let the Blood Sharks, not yet part of his battle group, undertake difficult tasks, it seemed like quite a favorable situation.

Especially since the Blood Sharks were highly capable in combat.

However, after careful consideration, Gu Hang decided against it.

Firstly, the extent to which the Blood Sharks were willing to commit their forces was uncertain. Would they really throw their entire battle group into an enemy ship at Gu Hang's command?

The Phoenix could.

Secondly, the Heroic Spirits fighting within the enemy ships were sensitive. It's hard to predict how the Blood Sharks would react if they witnessed them.

Thirdly, and most importantly, while the Blood Sharks were strong and adept at rapid assault, they still weren't as capable in battle as the Phoenix, who Gu Hang personally nurtured.

After all, he had elevated one-third of the Phoenix to be championship-level squads, with the remaining two-thirds all of Sergeant Major grade elites. This disparity in individual soldier quality was something no regular battle group could make up for.

The conditions for psychic teleportation had already been met. But Gu Hang considered the defensive forces on the top battleship Alfonso II must be formidable, so he didn't immediately deploy the Interstellar Warriors, instead waiting for the right moment.

At present, Gu Hang believed the time had come.

Before initiating the teleportation, Gu Hang sent a query to Matins:

“Are you ready?”

“No problem.”

“Alright, then go!”

…

A flash of light crossed, revealing a distorted and surreal scene constantly twisting before Salas Martins’ eyes. At the same time, he felt a violent tugging, as if his body was being torn apart.

But these feelings had become somewhat familiar. Even though for some reason it was more intense this time, it was still within tolerable limits.

These sensations seemed to last long, but it was merely an illusion during psychic teleportation. In reality, everything was completed in an instant.

After feeling a push from behind, he took a step forward. The next moment, the Battle Group Leader, clad in expertly crafted Iron Mount-type Terminator armor, placed a heavy step on the steel floor.

With a ’thud’, he completed the teleportation.

And the sound of power boots contacting the floor followed in rapid succession.

Without orders from Matins, the Sergeant Majors of each squad and tactical group began headcounts.

Moments later, captains reported: All eight companies of the Phoenix Battle Group have arrived!

Chapter 568, Action Inside the Ship

During the assembly process, Matins scanned his surroundings, analyzing the environment he was in.

The location they were in seemed like a dining area, and at this moment, there were certainly no enemies here.

Beside him, many spiritual bodies formed by Storm Divine Power were 'wearing' Alliance Army uniforms, looking at him with reverence. When his gaze swept past, many Heroic Spirits would spontaneously salute him with the Alliance salute.

Feeling somewhat uncomfortable, he nodded in response.

A Heroic Spirit Officer came up and reported that the estimated straight-line distance to the mission target was 11 kilometers.

Of course, this is a straight-line distance, calculated by Gu Hang after using Spiritual Energy to observe the location of the Neuron Progeny. In between, they might have to ascend seven levels, and the path would wind through uncertain distances.

Gu Hang provided the Phoenix a specific route through the Heroic Spirit Officer. However, it would only serve as a reference, as Gu Hang couldn't manage to obtain a complete internal structure map of the Alfonso II with all the pressures at hand.

Not to mention that it also involved the enemy's troop composition.

The enemy's troop deployment was constantly changing with the frontline battle situation.

The following matters had to be resolved by the eight companies of the Phoenix Battle Group on their own.

But there was a piece of good news, Heroic Spirit Officer Edward Leveille assured Matins that his squad would accompany the Interstellar Warriors in their actions.

Of course, this action was not referring to combat engagements.

Understandably, with eight hundred Interstellar Warriors here, any combat wouldn't really require assistance from just a dozen Heroic Spirits.

Their main task was to serve as information relays, providing intelligence support.

This intelligence wasn't solely reliant on themselves.

In reality, Gu Hang would allocate some of his Spiritual Energy to handle these tasks.

These Heroic Spirits were essentially manifestations of Gu Hang's Spiritual Energy, equivalent to small Spiritual Energy nodes. The power extended through them could use these Heroic Spirits to scout a relatively large area, providing real-time map drawing, navigation, and enemy unit detection for the Interstellar Warriors.

However, most of Gu Hang's power was still confronting the Neuron Progeny and supporting hundreds of thousands of Heroic Spirits in the main battlefield on the ship, entangled with the Protection Army. He didn't have adequate energy to finely manage battlefield perception.

Moreover, allocating too much power might easily be detected by Sage Dubo.

Therefore, the intelligence support that Gu Hang could provide was not very extensive, with limited scouting range and constrained enemy foresight capabilities.

But Matins expressed that this was already very surprising.

Eight hundred Interstellar Warriors formally commenced their operation.

They split into many independent action groups, which were also tightly interconnected, advancing swiftly towards the target in the complex terrain of the ship.

Matins felt a very familiar sensation returning.

Throughout his past military career, especially during the century-long crusade of atonement, they had handled similar situations countless times.

Plunging deep alone, raiding key targets… isn't this what they have done most often?

Moreover, they weren't truly isolated in their advance this time.

Heroic Spirit Officer Leveille's voice often resonated, guiding their actions; as they moved, the surrounding situation became increasingly clear and comprehensible.

This was not a focal battlefield, and it was a certain distance from the core areas heavily guarded by the Protection Army. As long as they didn't stray onto the routes where enemy reinforcements moved to the frontline, they wouldn't encounter large enemy forces.

The worst case would be encountering small patrol teams.

If they could be avoided, they would be remitted.

If avoidance was impossible, action would be taken.

The think tanks and technical sergeants within the battle group would be the first to act.

With Spiritual Energy or the interference devices carried by the technical sergeants, they would temporarily block the communication facilities of the patrol squads.

Simultaneously, the fiery Angels would charge out from behind, the sides, or even corners that were visual blind spots, in an unstoppable manner.

Often, these patrol squads couldn't even fire a shot before the Phoenixes were upon them.

In these moments, power swords and combat blades became weapons of absolute lethality.

With numerical advantage, conducting a close-range raid, the attacked Protection Army patrol squads truly couldn't even send out messages before being wiped out.

Any attempts to send alerts to other team members would be intercepted by the battle group think tanks or technical sergeants through various means.

Overall, the action progress of the Interstellar Warriors was very rapid.

With Gu Hang sparing time for navigation amidst his overwhelming tasks, they didn't take any detours and advanced a considerable distance in a short time.

Of course, it couldn't be all smooth sailing along the way.

To not mention anything else, the disappearance of a large number of patrol teams was itself an extremely dangerous signal that couldn't be overlooked casually.

In this regard, Gu Hang also made some preparations.

The coordinates left in that officer dining area were not wasted. Gu Hang's Spiritual Energy emanated from there, deploying a group of Heroic Spirit Warriors.

After the Interstellar Warriors of the Phoenix left this area, they began acting, deliberately exposing themselves to the patrol teams, making it appear as though the previously missing patrol teams were all killed by these newly emerged Heroic Spirits opening another battlefield.

The Protection Army on the ship quickly reacted, starting to eradicate the heroic spirits here.

They certainly couldn't hold on for long, but when Alfonso's Protection Army set their sights on them and took action, their goal was actually already achieved.

However, the commanders of the Protection Army were no fools. They would soon realize that the heroic spirits they eradicated were insufficient in combat strength and numbers to annihilate those patrols, not allowing a single survivor or any information to be transmitted.

Furthermore, the Phoenix's actions hadn't stopped, and in areas far from here, there were still patrols that needed resolving. Their disappearance would further alert the enemy.

The Protection Army would sooner or later become suspicious and speculate that a formidable force had arrived, using the increased area of patrol disappearance to roughly judge what this force intended to do.

However, they couldn't stop acting just because the enemy would eventually find out.

Any delay in discovery was worthwhile.

And in fact, the Protection Army's commander wouldn't solve the problem of patrol disappearance before the Phoenix were discovered.

Before that, the Phoenix faced a problem that required them to reveal themselves.

The Heroic Spirit Officer Leveille reported to Matins that the staircase in front of them was the only road to the next level. To reach the floor named 'Protozoa Room,' which was their mission's target, this way was the fastest.

If they didn't take this route, detouring would take a long time with unknown risks.

After all, they were getting increasingly closer to the ’Protozoa Room.’

This was a massive and grand staircase, about forty meters wide. It stood over thirty meters high, adorned with numerous sculptures, and at its end had three arched gates with various reliefs, very imposing.

This place was an important node crossing multiple areas, and on the ship likely had a religious, ceremonial significance. Recesses in the stone of the archway held braziers; both sides of the stairway had steel columns about a meter high, also with braziers.

These braziers seemed to burn some type of special incense, with an oily smell.

Ordinary people wouldn’t find it pleasant, but those who like machinery probably would.

Here, the enemy had heavily stationed troops. No matter what happened in other areas, the guards at this archway were not redeployed.

The numbers stationed weren’t particularly large. Behind the archway, on the stairs, and the small plaza before the stairs seemed expansive but was ultimately a singular area, with about two hundred guards.

But all of them were elite mecha soldiers.

Each stood over two and a half meters tall, painted in the traditional Alfonso Sect black and red colors.

These so-called ’Deadslave Mecha Soldiers’ should not be underestimated. According to design standards, their automated machinery strength was developed to match the Interstellar Warrior Powered Armor.

Although mass production might not reach the original level, and inside they were controlled by only half-brained spine cyber servants, they indeed functioned similarly to Interstellar Warriors, driving machines by mind and instinct.

At the very least, they possessed the equivalent strength of the Alliance Army's Glory Guard Corps.

This was not something to be treated lightly.

Moreover, among the Deadslave Mecha Soldiers were some big players.

For example, upgraded versions of Deadslave Mecha, 'Iron Male Mecha' designed against the Terminator Power Armor;

The four-meter tall, slender 'Dragon Cavalry,' whose operators were elite Protection Army warriors wielding laser lances powerful enough to shatter Power Armor with a single blow;

Most outrageous were the twenty 'Serpent Mecha Soldiers,' with skull-like mechanical heads and their bodies resembling giant steel serpents half raised. Each of the seven or eight arms emanating from the torso was equipped with different weapons.

The first platoon to arrive didn't act rashly, hiding around a distant corridor corner, awaiting the arrival of a platoon personally led by Matins.

Seeing the situation through Leveille, Matins decided there was no need to wait further.

Gathering more forces would take time, and even with more troops, the battlefield environment was limited, making deployment difficult.

So they moved directly.

First up were the Intelligence and Technical Sergeants.

They attempted information blockade.

But this time, they failed.

Behind those three arched gates seemed to have a high-powered signal device. When the Phoenix acted, it was disrupted, unstable but enough to alert the guards.

Several Mechanical Priests immediately began repairs, reporting the situation outside. Meanwhile, the entire guard unit became vigilant.

The Phoenix's Intelligence Director, Henrik Larson, somewhat embarrassingly reported to Matins that they needed at most one minute to cut off communication with the outside.

But Matins decided not to wait even this minute.

It was meaningless.

The enemy was already on alert, and had even reported the abnormal situation, waiting longer would likely invite enemy reinforcements.

Strike early.

With an order, the Phoenix charged from their hidden corner.

Of course, not all two hundred charged at once. In a narrow environment, a dense assault would be inviting disaster.

The first wave consisted only of twelve Iron Cavalry Terminators.

They charged in pairs, spaced over six meters apart, with the first three rows equipped not only with mini shield generators but also carrying two-meter-high heavy giant shields.

A hole was left in the upper right of the shields for the muzzle of an explosive gun; an observation window allowed them to see the situation ahead while protecting their heads.

Six Terminator Warriors charged with giant shields, drawing the guards' attention and coming under concentrated fire.

The enemy's firepower was fierce, particularly the beams from the Dragon Cavalry's laser lances and lightning shots from the Serpent Mecha, posing great threats.

Not to mention, the Deadslave Mecha's explosive guns weren't weak.

Without cover, unable to dodge, they relied on giant shields and energy shields to withstand.

Such intense concentrated fire, even the most heavily armored Interstellar Warriors with the heaviest shields and energy shields couldn't withstand.

Three heavy shield warriors fell in quick succession.

But during this time, the three rows behind, Phoenix Warriors shouldering rocket pods, fired all their rocket reserves, aiming not for hit rates but coverage, enveloping the enemy.

The rocket cover wasn't enough to eliminate the enemy, not even injure particularly many. But it slightly disrupted the enemy's concentrated fire, allowing the remaining three heavy shield warriors to crash into the enemy ranks.

The heavy shield warriors threw down their explosive guns, wielded a one-handed powered warhammer, and smashed forward.

Under their cover, the six Terminators who dropped their rocket pods joined the melee with powered swords.

Then the next moment,

Chapter 569, Right in Front of You

Matins, as a Battle Group Leader, is not the type who commands from the back. At crucial moments, he naturally leads by example, charging to the front lines, even undertaking the most arduous offensive tasks.

At present, he is one of the dozen or so Terminators transported into the enemy lines.

The sword light, glowing with a green hue, flickers amidst the enemy ranks.

No unit of the Sect of Mechanics could withstand even a single clash against him.

As a Battle Group Leader who had already reached the level of a Battle Group Champion, Matins had further enhanced his prowess after experiencing a life-and-death duel with the Rageflame Battalion Commander, Erso.

Moreover, not only is his personal skill level formidable, but his equipment has also been elevated to the extreme, utilizing almost all of the Alliance's cutting-edge technologies.

He sidestepped and dodged a point-blank laser lance critical hit from a Dragoon, swiped his green-glow greatsword horizontally, severing the Dragoon's long legs at the knees, and stomped down, killing the operator on the ground.

In the process, his phase sword moved incessantly, clashing several times with the chainsaw axe and power sword held in multiple arms by a Serpent Mecha Soldier, manufactured to high standards by the Alfonso Mechanical Cult alike, and quickly severed these weapons.

He also incidentally cut off the barrels of two guns that the opponent attempted to aim at his face, and then forcefully plunged his sword into the Serpent Mecha Soldier's head.

The Serpent twitched a few times before going completely down without movement.

Without a doubt, Matins himself is the most efficient one among these Phoenix killing machines.

He possesses not only unparalleled strength and experience in the group, but also his phase sword, gleaming with a green light, plays an indispensable role.

Phase weapons, among many technologies capable of making melee weapons extracted by Gu Hang, are the most advanced. Its origin could possibly be outside human technology.

Since Gu Hang extracted such weapon technology, the Alliance has not succeeded in mass-producing such equipment; they can only depend on complete blackboxes for very slow production.

Furthermore, the energy and material required are unexpectedly high.

To date, the Alliance has only managed less than fifty pieces of phase weapons.

Most are equipped within the Phoenix Battle Group.

The effect it displays in the hands of a champion expert like Matins is amazing.

This isn't the first time Matins has used this weapon, but it is his first time applying it in actual combat.

Its usability is beyond expectations.

With such a lethal weapon in hand, his killing intent becomes irrepressible.

Sword after sword, he slaughters every enemy before him.

When both armies are entangled in close combat melee, there is no need for command itself.

The best Matins can do is to showcase his strength as much as possible, killing off enemies quickly and abundantly.

By the time he killed the twenty-fourth enemy, the battle was over.

The elite of the Protection Army guarding the triple arch has been completely wiped out.

Even the enemies who tried to flee in the end were hunted and destroyed by the Phoenix.

Yet, the Phoenix paid a considerable price for this.

Among the two hundred warriors participating in battle, over twenty were casualties.

This number is not insignificant.

To date, no one can hope that the road ahead will be smooth sailing. Their whereabouts should have been discovered, and they will undoubtedly be blocked by the Protection Army assembling fully ahead.

They can hardly even choose a more stable combat strategy, otherwise, they might reduce casualties in a single battle, but the offensive pressure is evident; if there's any delay in time, the number of opponents they'll face later could increase several-fold, hindering the entire action plan and possibly leading to complete failure.

This forces the Phoenix to inevitably opt for a high-risk quick-assault strategy, ensuring subsequent casualties will undoubtedly occur.

But if they continue fighting at such a rate, with a loss of twenty men in one battle, how many battles will they fight ahead?

Can they endure such casualties?

How many will successfully reach the mission destination?

This is the shadow looming over Matins's heart.

But things could also be seen from a positive angle.

First, these casualties of over twenty for the Phoenix are not all deaths, and not all lost action ability either.

The Interstellar Warriors' ability to withstand damage is far superior to that of mortals.

The same deep chest or abdominal puncture wounds, or even important organ punctures, would certainly be lethal to normal mortals. Even if not immediately fatal, they require medical intervention.

But for Interstellar Warriors, not only do they not lose action capability, but following simple treatment by a Pharmacist, they can catch up with the unit and continue to fight, with only slight combat power compromises.

Such individuals account for half of the casualty ratio.

The remaining half, about ten, are genuine losses. Six dead, five severely injured and unable to move.

However, even with such a casualty rate, it's uncertain how things will unfold towards the end.

For the severely wounded, neither the Alliance nor Phoenix has the habit of executing severely injured teammates.

To alleviate pain and reduce the burden on the team, especially in such an independent assault operation by Phoenix, they should not be carrying dead weight.

Yet they still brought them along.

At least, Matins judged that the situation hasn't deteriorated to that extent.

Among their ranks, a Pharmacist can swiftly address and stabilize injuries; there's equipment for dragging and carrying severely injured immobilized personnel. A small team is arranged specifically for this task.

The facts seemed to corroborate Matins's judgment.

The Protection Army that had just defended the triple arch was already among their elite. Whether it's the smallest Deadslave Mecha Soldier or the most expensive Serpent Mecha Soldier, numbers overall are still limited.

Though the path of Phoenix has been discovered, and enemies begin appearing continuously to block them, those mobilized in haste can only come from the nearest, not the strongest.

Even Phoenix's assault speed greatly exceeded expectations.

Many temporarily dispatched garrison forces couldn't even construct positions in time, often directly confronting Phoenix assaults in narrow corridors or spacious compartments.

No cover, no vehicles, lacking heavy firepower… Such defense is tantamount to being non-existent for Interstellar Warriors.

They move smoothly like level ground, using multiple Terminator Squads as penetrating arrowheads, piercing through the enemy lines.

Matins always fights on the front line; the strength he demonstrates is one of the biggest reasons Phoenix can advance unwaveringly.

The number of various Protection Army elites slain by Matins's phase sword is countless.

Leading the team, they have successfully fought their way to the mission target destination.

The Zijder chamber is right in front!

Chapter 570, Death at 1000 Meters

“We are still… still… one thousand meters… straight distance from the Neuron Chamber…”

Leveille, who had been following Matins, spoke with a halting voice.

Just withdrawn from the front line of battle, Matins stared at this Heroic Spirit Officer.

Faced with his gaze, a hint of anxiety appeared on Leveille’s face.

“We… we… are being… interfered with. The Governor’s… communication must… act swiftly.”

At this moment, he convulsed as if electrified.

A few seconds later, he returned to normal and gave Matins a bitter smile, “Disconnected, unable to receive information anymore, sorry.”

“I understand.” Matins nodded slightly.

His gaze turned back to the front.

His battle brothers had just slaughtered another group of enemies that actively attacked them.

And this had become a long-standing routine.

The number of enemies the battle group had wiped out on the way was countless, but the enemies came in tides, impossible to kill them all, and they only grew in number.

And they were becoming increasingly elite.

After passing through the three arches, the initial blockers were merely elite Protection Army and modified machine servant units. But as they got closer to the Neuron Chamber, the forces blocking the Phoenix grew in both number and elite ratio.

Up to the most recent wave, the quality of the forces not only matched the level of the battle at the three arches but also were much more numerous, with a lot of regular units coordinated, making it quite arduous for the Phoenix.

So far, out of the eight hundred warriors who participated, fewer than six hundred remained.

And among them, there were nearly a hundred who were severely wounded and unable to move.

This was not a small burden, but they still persisted. Fifty fighting brothers were specially assigned to protect and transport the severely wounded through the flying bullets using small, automatic troop carriers.

But no matter what, they had reached the mission location.

The Neuron Chamber was only a thousand meters away in a straight line, and they were on the same level.

They could even see that tightly sealed steel door from afar.

However, standing in their way was also a most elite unit.

Sage Dubo, as the leader of the entire Ark Fleet, was undoubtedly meticulous about his own safety.

Not to mention, this compartment housing the Neuron Progeny was a critical part of the ship.

Both factors combined meant the Protection Army on the ship would inevitably do their utmost to defend this place.

The site was not large enough to pack tens of thousands, tens of thousands of troops.

When numbers couldn't be piled up, quality was.

Here, even the Serpent Mecha Soldier was a fragile small role. The most conspicuous were more than a dozen Colossus Mechas arranged around the Neuron Chamber. Each of them was roughly as large as an Interstellar Warrior's Dreadnought Mech, wielding a thunder hammer and a large shield, their combat abilities not to be underestimated.

Under such powerful mechanical strength, even the terminator heavy shield warriors of the Interstellar Warriors might not withstand a heavy strike from a Colossus.

And these Colossus Mechas were only prominent because of their size.

In this defensive cluster, the most formidable were instead those smaller in size.

Combat Priests, Lightning Priests, hand-crafted ultra-elite Iron Hero Mechas…

Upon arriving at this place, led by Matins, the enemies launched an attack on them.

No probing, no doubts or hesitation, they went in with absolute power, in a hard clash.

Fancy tactics didn't work at this time, the space was narrow, the mission urgent, it was a strategic issue; no matter how powerful and fierce the weaponry carried by the Interstellar Warriors was, it couldn't surpass that top-of-the-line equipment of those grease monkeys, in a long-range duel they would certainly lose.

Only by enduring the casualties first and closing the combat distance to hand-to-hand range could the desired effect be achieved.

The Phoenix hoped to use Spiritual Energy teleportation, just as in the battle at the three arches earlier, to send the most elite terminators directly into the enemy formation.

But this time, the Spiritual Energy teleportation failed.

It was not unexpected.

The Spiritual Energy communication between Heroic Spirit Officer Leveille and Gu Hang had been blocked, so the interference with Spiritual Energy teleportation was only natural.

They had no choice but to force their way in.

The price was grievous.

Even Matins himself only made it to the enemy formation after his small Shield Generator was shattered.

However, once the distance was closed, the battle finally tipped in favor of the Interstellar Warriors.

The collective charge of several hundred Interstellar Warriors, especially the absolute elites among them, still disrupted the defenders' positions.

Most of the ranged firepower couldn't be effective.

Those mass-produced Iron Hero Mechas were just for show and were thrashed in a real fight; the finely crafted ones at best could contend with regular terminator Interstellar Warriors.

But what they were up against were by no means ordinary Interstellar Warriors.

The entirely elite Phoenix slaughtered these Iron Hero Mechas with remarkable speed.

And the Colossus Mechas that could pose a threat of absolute destruction to the Phoenix could not shake off the inherent lack of flexibility.

On the battlefield, multiple Colossus Mechas were already lying on the ground.

The ones that fell the fastest were those targeted by the Phoenix wielding phase swords.

Their incredibly heavy armor was like nothing under the phase swords.

Only the Combat Priests were more troublesome.

Combat Priests were mechanical sect high-level members at least above Mechanical Priests and even at the level of Engine Sages, who through all their technical prowess, had transformed their bodies completely towards combat direction.

This group of genuine grease monkeys, none of them was mass-produced, not even existing in template form, each extremely personalized with abilities that varied widely.

Some have modified their bodies to full firepower, recklessly bombarding at close range without concern for their safety or friendly fire;

Some have turned themselves nearly into a pure energy entity, high-energy arcs flashing fiercely;

Some have transformed themselves into super close-combat killing machines, compensating for lack of skill with technology, their eight legs allowing flexible movement in any direction; surrounded by multiple cutting and hammering weapons, requiring no skills, just getting close enough to inflict damage.

Some even possess multiple abilities simultaneously…

It just so happens that energy shields in close combat do not provide much effect, otherwise, they wouldn't lack it either.

To be honest, these things were indeed the biggest hassle.

The Phoenix were in a bitter fight.

But Matins, the Battle Group Leader, couldn't care about the overall battle situation anymore.

A small elite team, led by him, charged directly toward the steel door.

Chapter 570, Slaying the Bishop

The enemy was both elite and numerous, with reinforcements arriving continuously. It was unrealistic to kill all the gatekeepers and then attempt to enter the Progeny Chamber.

Matins decided that while the battle brothers engaged the enemy, he would personally lead the most elite squad straight inside to complete the mission.

It wasn't that no one noticed the actions of this squad.

However, once numerous Interstellar Warriors had infiltrated, there were not many who could come to stop them.

Not to mention, the squad personally led by Matins was incredibly powerful.

It wasn't just him; the Warband's Intelligence Director Larson and Chaplain Priest Rizzo were also present.

Additionally, the remaining personnel were all at the level of company champions.

When they charged, they were truly unstoppable.

With several phase swords swinging continuously, all who tried to block them perished.

Not until two colossus machines blocked their path did any disturbances arise.

In themselves, they weren't much; the hammers they wielded seemed as slow as snails to the top experts of the Interstellar Warriors; those large shields couldn't stop their swords; their heavy armor would be easily sliced open.

Previously, colossi had also tried to block the way, only to be personally dealt with by Matins.

Yet, at this moment, an orange-red beam shot out from behind the two colossi.

A company champion was caught off guard and hit.

The Shield Generator instantly overloaded, and the thick shoulder armor of the Iron Cavalry Terminator was melted with a hole, leaving the arm of the Phoenix entirely disabled.

The power of this shot was enough to draw even Matins's attention.

But this was only the beginning.

A barrage of fire furiously erupted from behind them. While not every shot was as powerful, the precise and plentiful barrage still sought to suppress the advance of the Interstellar Warriors.

Amidst the barrage, Matins saw an ostentatious, massive figure. It was draped in the red and black robes symbolic of the Alfonso Sect, styled like a Dominant Bishop.

This rank already counted as a high-ranking figure within the Sect of Mechanics.

A step higher would be the Sage.

To have a Dominant Bishop personally guarding the gate… indeed, it was quite formidable.

But this was still just a minor setback.

On Matins's left and right, two senior warband members also began exerting their powers.

Priest Rizzo raised his staff, and a surging force erupted from it.

The Gravity Scepter spread out a force field not too large, but enough to cover the entire front of their group.

Barrages entering the field, even energy beams, were twisted and deflected.

The gravity field's power was released from Rizzo's staff, which according to logic, was just an equipment ability. But relying solely on equipment abilities couldn't possibly intercept the entire firepower of a combat-oriented Dominant Bishop.

In terms of equipment value, how could this old staff used for an unknown number of years compare with the equipment a Dominant Bishop could fit onto his modified body, utilizing all resources at his disposal within the sect?

Probably not even a single hair's worth.

Yet in Rizzo's hands, he made it happen.

According to the priests, this was the 'Power of Faith,' the 'Divine Emperor's Blessing.'

No matter how unscientific, that was the reality.

And on Matins's other side, Henrik Larson was also using his powers.

The Psionic Staff in his hand, custom-made from the Mingyang Sect, had its precious gem at the tip glow with a brilliant blue light.

A blue light formed in the void, piercing through the ceiling, and struck the Dominant Bishop like a bolt of lightning.

Henrik Larson could almost be considered the first new blood cultivated by the Phoenix upon joining the Alliance, discovered by Governor Gu in the process of building a psychic team.

In the warband, like him, there were about a dozen individuals with psychic abilities. Together, they formed the Phoenix's Intelligence Team.

Initially, the position of Intelligence Director was vacant within the Phoenix, and there was competition among the intelligence members.

As the most senior, Larson became the natural choice to fill the Intelligence Director position after he became the first, and only, member to ascend to an A-level psychic purely through his psychic power, becoming the leader of the intelligence members.

As an A-level psychic, crucially also being an Interstellar Warrior, his physical and spiritual fortitude far surpassed ordinary humans, significantly enhancing his psychic power.

Under the interference of the Neuron Progeny, he couldn't accurately perform psychic teleportation. Forcing it might result in losing half the team in a failed teleport, which was too costly to bear.

But if it was solely using psychic power for attack, as an A-level Psychic Interstellar Warrior, he wasn't suppressed to the point where he couldn't manifest any psychic power at all.

This lightning strike charred the Dominant Bishop inside and out.

It didn't kill him on the spot, but multiple weapons on him were damaged, causing neural signal transmission disruption.

His internal self-repair mechanisms were urgently operating, likely completing preliminary repairs in seconds.

But Matins wouldn't give him that chance.

Knowing that the burst guns in his hands were ineffective against an enemy of the Dominant Bishop's caliber, Matins simply abandoned his ranged weapon. He wielded his phase sword, springing forward the instant the lightning struck, charging straight at the Dominant Bishop.

The two colossus machine soldiers, serving as bodyguards like guardians, reacted immediately.

One stood in front of the Dominant Bishop, raising its large shield. The other swung its massive hammer in a sweeping blow at Matins.

Wearing the heavy Iron Cavalry Terminator armor, Matins nevertheless managed to dodge the hammer with an almost nimble leap. With a sweep of his phase sword, he severed the hammer-wielding hand of the colossus cleanly at the wrist.

Without pausing his steps, he leaped high, surpassing the colossus's height by half a stature, evading the shield and vertically driving the phase sword through its head.

Using his momentum, he knocked the lifeless colossus back, stood upright, withdrew his sword, and locked gaze with the now-recovered Dominant Bishop.

Those emotionless red mechanical eyes likely belied his panic.

Multiple weapons on him glowed, ready to unleash a barrage to engulf Matins.

But before that scene could unfold, the ghostly green phase sword slashed diagonally, bisecting the entire form of the Dominant Bishop.

Through the bifurcated body, Matins finally faced the steel gate.

Four company champions turned around and, along with Rizzo and Larson, formed a small defensive line, preventing other enemies from approaching.

Another technical sergeant of the warband quickly stepped forward.

For such a heavy pure alloy gate ahead, a special method was necessary.

They had come prepared.

“Prepare for detonation!”

“Open!”