Chapter 61 - Chapter 61: Chapter 61, Let Them Come

Chapter 61: Chapter 61, Let Them Come

Wu Jiarong was a treasure.

She could make Gu Hang's black box technology explainable—actually, the black box technologies he had extracted were also low-end goods. It wasn't inconceivable for a technical officer or even a mechanic to come up with such things.

Furthermore, she could bring more technological products to Gu Hang's command, besides the black box technologies.

Climbing the technological tree couldn't rely solely on black technology from the system.

Of course, the so-called technological tree wasn't just military technology.

Further development of civilian industrial factory technology was also necessary.

Wu Jiarong wasn't capable of remodeling the production lines of alloy plastic steel made by the black box technology that was already very mature. However, technologies such as the thermocline electric generator sets, textile machines in textile factories, cement plants, brick factories... many of which were imported from other places on Rage Owl Star, still had a lot of room for improvement in her eyes.

However, Wu Jiarong wasn't omnipotent. If all these research and development tasks were scheduled, her workload for a long time to come would be fully packed.

This female technician also felt quite regretful, as if she couldn't wait to help the governor complete the technological upgrade of the entire camp in a very short time.

This made Gu Hang sigh in his heart. Indeed, to bring out their value, humans' initiative was the most important. Merely relying on duties or enslavement resulted in weak production efficiency and capacity. Once people truly wanted to do something, viewing it as a way to realize their own value and goals, they tended to unleash tremendous energy.

This energy was the core that changed the world.

And after Wu Jiarong's allegiance and her genuinely positive attitude, new changes appeared on Gu Hang's system panel.

While checking the "Hero" interface, he found Wu Jiarong's name among the activatable heroes.

This was within his expectations.

After figuring out that the "Hero" feature would present new activation options as people grew, and after talking with Wu Jiarong and observing her subsequent performances, Gu Hang was able to guess that this person definitely had potential.

In fact, she herself was a talented person. Ten years ago, when she was younger, she was already able to challenge the position of a mechanic. At just over twenty years old, a female technician without any background reaching that stage was impossible without hard work and talent.

If things had gone smoothly, her becoming a main pastor in her lifetime would have been wildly optimistic, but becoming a technical priest or even an Engine Spirit Priest wouldn't be a problem. It's just that her life hadn't gone smoothly, which meant she couldn't develop to such an extreme and wasted ten years on the Quintet.

Now, she had found a different path with Gu Hang, gaining further opportunities—though unorthodox, they were enough to invigorate her to strive for upward movement.

It was normal for such a person to be recognized by the system as having potential.

Gu Hang carelessly allocated the remaining ten points of grace to Wu Jiarong.

[Activated Hero: Wu Jiarong (N)]

[Level: lv2]

[Physique 6, Spirituality 8, Command 5, Politics 3, Technology 11]

[Trait:]

[Once a Technical Genius: She was once a technical genius, but time has worn down her talent. She may continue to sink, or she could rise again and recover her lost spirituality. Technology +1]

...

The just-activated Wu Jiarong was at LV2.

Presumably, this was because her past accumulation as a technical officer made her recognized by the system as a ‘hero’ of level 2. As for the activation cost, it was still a fixed 10 points. It was unknown if activating higher-level individuals as ‘heroes’ would require more grace points.

One difference was that, compared to Osenia, Wu Jiarong had an additional type of attribute point: Technology.

As the name suggested, it should represent her level of technical expertise.

This guy has a political score of just 3, which is a big cut below normal, no wonder he couldn’t make it in a place full of infighting like the Sect of Mechanics, and it’s no surprise that he was so devoid of guile when he directly inquired about the secret factory’s information, without knowing how to conceal his anxiety.

But it doesn’t matter, Gu Hang didn’t turn her into a hero to have her deal with political work. As long as her technical score is sufficient and she can develop and improve more technologies for him, that’s all that counts.

After activating Wu Jiarong, Gu Hang now has only 8 grace points left.

Looking at Yan Fangxu and Perbov who still await activation in the hero interface...

Next time for sure!

...

With part of the workload from the research side lifted from his mind, Gu Hang’s attention shifted back to the construction of the camp’s productive forces.

And he found that Osenia was doing quite well.

In a camp with a population nearing ten thousand, with dozens to hundreds of people being added daily, manpower lacking everywhere, and all affairs needing attention, she was still able to arrange matters quite efficiently.

Very good indeed.

Pointing to that girl as a hero, letting her shoulder a greater burden, he certainly hadn’t made the wrong choice.

Zhang Chao didn’t seem to have much ambition; now with Osenia’s help, Gu Hang specifically observed the lad and found that rather than be upset about Osenia sharing power, he seemed happier with the reduced workload.

Gu Hang didn't know whether to be relieved that no signs of infighting had emerged among his subordinates, or to lament that his lackey couldn't be propped up against a wall.

But all in all, Gu Hang was quite satisfied.

With Osenia's help, he could set aside many concerns, freeing up time to do other things instead of spending so much of it on political affairs as he had before.

The energy he saved, he could further invest in his next strategy, which was Revival City.

With the help of Alliance Chairman Hodgson, Gu Hang felt that the plan he had previously devised to control the whole of Revival City could accelerate a bit.

But as he was amending his plans, he received a communication request from Yelisia Fu Fana.

The female captain conveyed to him a message that somewhat surprised him:

"Gu Hang, do you know the Phoenix Battle Group?"

Upon hearing this question, Gu Hang's first reaction was that the "event" he had previously activated had already begun?

How long had it been? The battle group had arrived so quickly.

As for Yelisia's question, Gu Hang thought he should answer cautiously.

Saying he knew or didn't know, both seemed not quite right.

So he counter-asked, "Colonel Yelisia, do you know what's going on with the Phoenix Battle Group?"

Yelisia didn't indulge in roundabout speculations; after a moment of contemplation and showing hesitation, she still gave Gu Hang a word of caution:

"Their situation... is complicated." Yelisia spoke in vague terms, but the gist was conveyed, "A hundred years ago, they were sentenced to a penitent expedition; they were supposed to be extinct, not survive. Now they have held on, and some people will have headaches because of that. You... I won't give you any advice, just treat it with caution."

She paused, then continued, "They request to land on the planet's surface and want to see you. I shouldn't obstruct them, but if you need me, I can try."

After weighing his options, Gu Hang still said, "No need, let them come."

Chapter 62 - Chapter 62: Chapter 62, all very disappointed

Chapter 62: Chapter 62, all very disappointed

Every Starfighter Battle Group is a formidable force. If fully staffed, not only do they have a thousand of the topmost warriors, but they also have a fleet and hundreds of thousands, even millions of well-equipped Mortal Auxiliary Army.

The Empire establishes such battle groups to garrison certain critical worlds and, when necessary, dispatches them to key battlefields within the Star Sea to serve a decisive role.

After having cleared their name, the Phoenix Battle Group should have been supported by the Empire to rebuild. Having one more such battle group might safeguard the stability of one or several Star Sectors.

But the Empire did not do so.

Gu Hang could not concern himself with the higher-level games now, but as Yelisia had warned, the Phoenix Battle Group was definitely in trouble.

What Yelisia meant by saying she could stop them if Gu Hang needed was that intercepting a Starfighter Battle Group—even a remnant one—was not something she was keen to do due to the extensive trouble it could cause.

However, if Gu Hang was willing to “carry the pot” and make the request as the planetary governor, she could take the risk to help him out.

To go to such lengths was already very good. Gu Hang knew she meant well.

Including her help and her warnings.

It seemed that the female starship captain had unconsciously started to treat Gu Hang as an ally.

This was a very good sign.

However, Gu Hang still declined Yelisia’s kind offer.

Why intercept these interstellar warriors? For the time being, Gu Hang had no intention of giving up this active event chain.

He was too tempted by the remnant battle group.

Even if the Phoenix Battle Group was now weakened, it was still a battle group. If he could secure their allegiance, sweeping through Rage Owl Star would become unobstructed.

Starships are awesome, but even the mightiest starships can only bombard from above; Yelisia wouldn't send ground troops. Even for a real ground war, her few land forces were not up to much.

Orbital bombardment is a strategic deterrent akin to nuclear weapons, not used unless absolutely necessary. And if it's just for intimidation... hasn't Gu Hang been doing just that over the past month? Otherwise, the Revival City government would not have been so "obedient," supplying whatever was asked for, and rushing to explain themselves over the Cult investigation when told, even with Hodgson, the head of the Alliance Council, coming over.

How can the title of Governor alone be enough? Previous governors had titles too, and weren't they still doomed when the time came?

Insubordination is a low-level tactic. Deceiving superiors, covert non-compliance, receiving orders but not executing them, hiding the actual information... Without his own forces, eventually, he might be duped and might still feel everything was under control.

Feeling all merry as the native leaders seem quite submissive and diligent in their duties. The collection of the Empire's taxes is also progressing well, and before the tax officer's arrival, it seems that the quota is met in the warehouse. After a few inspections with no issues, suddenly, on the eve of tax delivery: surprise, the amount is short.

Gu Hang doesn't want this to happen, and deterrence alone is not enough.

On the ground, he needs actual force, subordinates who will definitely obey him, and reliable military power. This ensures he cannot be fooled, and those who do not follow orders will be forcefully suppressed—and such suppression cannot be the devastating kind like orbital bombardment.

Rage Owl Star is already in bad shape; if he was to bomb Revival City with ship cannons, then taxes really couldn't be paid.

And the Phoenix represents such conventional force.

With the help of the Starfighters, Gu Hang could ensure that when judgments are made, the culprits would be dealt with without resorting to orbital bombardment that destroys an entire city just to kill a few individuals.

Yet, when he actually saw the Phoenix Battle Group, he was still taken aback.

...

Several hours later, he stood at the landing field, watching as something descended from the sky...

That was the Burn Feather, a ship... well, one couldn't call it a starship, it was merely a vessel.

It was too small.

When he had just learned that the battle group intended to land their ship directly on the planet's surface, Gu Hang was shocked, fearing there would be nowhere to put it. In his mind, even an Escort Ship would have a crew in the thousands and would be a massive presence on the ground.

But now, seeing it: that's it?

It was only slightly bigger than the transport ships used for communication with the ground from the Quintet.

No, are remnants supposed to be so depleted that not even a single starship remains?

The Starfighter Battle Group? Is this it?

Could it be an advance force?

As the hatch opened, Gu Hang first saw a figure far stronger and taller than a normal person, clad in power armor with a bright red body and white edges, holding a bomb gun, walking out from the spaceship's hatch. His heavy footsteps exuded an extremely authoritative air with each step.

His power armor was not shiny or immaculate, showing fine signs of wear and tear in many places. But this served to symbolize even more that he was a battle-hardened veteran soldier, fighting to the death numerous humans, monsters, aliens, and traitors.

Under that bright red helmet, cold eyes stared at Gu Hang.

Gu Hang felt a bone-chilling coldness.

Was this called killing intent?

He wasn't afraid; on the contrary, Gu Hang felt somewhat excited.

Seeing a starfighter in person for the first time, Gu Hang thought they truly lived up to their name, indeed the formidable warriors whose fame spread widely throughout the universe.

He watched as one starfighter after another walked out from the hatch, his satisfaction growing.

Then, the satisfaction in his heart came to an abrupt halt.

Only seven people came out, with emptiness behind them.

Only seven?

No, what kind of battle group is seven people? They can't even form a tactical squad!

He knew it was a dying battle group, but... to be reduced to this state, wasn't that a bit too close to death?

Gu Hang was somewhat disappointed.

...

Matins was somewhat disappointed.

He walked out last in the line, seeing the governor who had come to welcome him.

He knew that was Gu Hang, the man he was here to meet, the bright light that Priest Rizzo had foreseen could possibly save the battle group.

On his way here, he had imagined Rage Owl Star to be a rich planet, or a developed forging world. That the governor here held considerable power and would be friendly to the battle group, willing to help them rebuild...

But... things didn't seem to be as he had expected.

The governor in front of him, didn't he seem too ordinary?

He was neither tall nor strong, and aside from being fairly good-looking, he just looked like an average mortal.

Of course, Matins could sense spiritual energy reactions from this governor, not weak ones at that, but that was only relative to an average mortal. That level of spiritual energy was not threatening to him or any of his battle brothers. Their power armors were equipped with some anti-spiritual energy effects, and their bodies, modified by gene seeds, as well as their robust mental will, were not something an ordinary spiritual energy wielder could shake.

Saying he could kill Gu Hang as if squashing a chick might be an exaggeration, but like a strong man strangling a wild dog should be quite accurate.

Of course, comparing an ordinary mortal to the Death Angel is too harsh. The strength of a planetary governor does not lie in his person.

But...

Look at this planet?

Look at what's in front of him... Matins didn't even know whether to describe it as a small town or a camp.

This is the ruling core of the governor?

Chapter 63 - Chapter 63: Chapter 63, What to Save With?

Chapter 63: Chapter 63, What to Save With?

The first meeting between Gu Hang and Commander Matins was hard to categorize as good or bad.

On one hand, both were disappointed in their hearts.

Yet to call it bad didn't quite fit either, since they simultaneously put aside their disappointment and exchanged words rather smoothly.

The governor always wore a smile, making one feel at ease like basking in the spring sun. Commander Matins and his Starfighters maintained their cold and austere expressions—but that was simply their style; they'd always been that way.

Gu Hang was able to compose himself because he had come to terms with his feelings. The Phoenix Battle Group was more wrecked than he had imagined, which indeed disappointed him; however, even if there were only seven of them, each was an incredibly strong man. He even wondered whether his own forces, now numbering over a thousand soldiers, combined with him as a Spiritual Energy user, could face these seven head-on in battle?

The chances seemed slim.

So what was there to say? These seven Starfighters still represented a decisive force.

Moreover, if this battle group had been less decimated—if they had about a hundred men, one or two great starships, and a crowd of Mortal Auxiliary Army—what would there be

for him to do? He'd probably be put to use by the Phoenix Battalion Leader, lucky to even serve as a logistics manager.

Instead, the opportunity seemed greater now.

In comparison, Gu Hang was more curious about the attitude of this self-proclaimed Phoenix Battalion Leader, Matins.

Their conversation could be put nicely as mutual understanding or, less flatteringly, as rambling about nothing in particular—they touched on many topics, but none of them substantial. So why did the battalion leader, despite keeping a stern face, still engage patiently in this trivial chatter?

Even when Gu Hang delved into their past experiences, he could sense that Commander Matins was resistant from within, seemingly unwilling to answer such questions. However, just when Gu Hang thought his inquiries were perhaps too bold, Commander Matins followed his lead, sharing some of their experiences and battles over the years.

That was quite peculiar.

The Emperor's Death Angels were not usually talkative—not that they couldn't converse, but they often saw themselves as distinct from so-called mortals.

They always saw themselves as descendants of The Emperor, inheritors of his genetic legacy, his Angels, who, though born of humankind, were transcendent. Among them, some were kind to mortals, others cruel, and yet others indifferent—but regardless of their attitude, even if benevolent, it was a condescending benevolence, the grace of Angels upon mortals.

In a normal situation, if Gu Hang broached a topic the battalion leader found displeasing, it wouldn't be surprising for the leader to bristle with rage, or at least frown, refuse to respond, or change the subject.

Reluctantly giving an answer seemed to signal a particular stance from the battalion leader.

Why was that?

I am seeking your help, could it be... you are also seeking mine?

And what are you seeking?

Gu Hang recalled the wording of the event description.

[A Starfighter Battle Group on the brink of extinction, having finished a century of penitential expedition, is approaching Rage Owl Star, which seems to hold the redemption and hope they are seeking.]

On the brink of extinction, seeking redemption and hope...

Oh, you want to rebuild your battle group, and you need my help, is that right?

But why me?

From the way things look around here, poverty-stricken as we are, how could I possibly seem capable of helping you rebuild a battle group?

Is it because of the system's functions? Has the system made you believe that I can help you?

The key is, the system hasn't told me how to help.

Gu Hang kept a smiling, sincere, yet dignified demeanor in his exchange with Commander Matins while internally he was panicking quite a bit.

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However, as they talked, Gu Hang gradually let go of these thoughts and became enchanted with the stories that Matins recounted.

Matins's storytelling was not systematic. He merely narrated snippets of missions they had carried out during the Redemption Expedition.

But...

On the Star Sea Battlefield, amidst relentless artillery fire, undertaking boarding actions and seizing ships; plunging deep into enemy territory, alone, to destroy heavy weaponry positions; penetrating enemy-filled Nest Capitals to eliminate the heretics and traitors lurking within; facing massive alien beasts, cleaving off their heads...

Those exploits sounded too legendary to be true.

Gu Hang let out a long sigh and said, "Commander Matins, your experiences are deeply moving. Regardless of what others may think, I believe you have already atoned for whatever sins you may have committed, no matter how grave. The Emperor certainly won't blame you any longer. You are great heroes and shouldn't wander aimlessly through the Star Sea."

Pausing, Gu Hang continued, "Although the conditions here aren't the best, if you don't mind, I am willing to offer the Phoenix Battalion a place to stay. You are welcome to rest

and resupply here anytime. I know it may sound presumptuous, but if you wish, Rage Owl Star is also ready to become your second home. My doors are always open to you."

With that, Gu Hang had turned around, facing the battalion leader, who was much taller than himself.

In their gaze, he appeared candid, sincere, and enthusiastic.

But Matins hesitated.

As an Angel of the Divine Emperor, he avoided the gaze of a mere mortal.

"I appreciate the Governor's generous offer, but I need to consider it further," he said.

...

Within the camp, Gu Hang had already arranged for a house to be cleared out temporarily for the Phoenix Battalion to stay in.

They were too tall, resembling seven small giants. The houses built for normal human needs seemed somewhat cramped for them.

But that was the best they could do with the available accommodations.

Fortunately, they didn't have many demands regarding their living conditions.

Though in a safe environment, in theory, not one of the seven warriors took off their armor; at most, they just removed their helmets.

They were seated together, when a bald, square-faced warrior with three golden service nails on his forehead spoke in a muffled voice, "Phoenix Battalion Leader Matins, I don't understand why you were so polite to that mortal earlier."

"Brother Schneider, we all fight for the Divine Emperor, we are all His subjects, and we should not be overly proud. We must show the basic respect due to a Planetary Governor," Matins replied.

"But I don't see it that way. Battalion Leader, do you still believe that mortal is our salvation? A mortal, a governor of a shattered world, who can't even control his own planet—what can he possibly do to help us rebuild the entire battalion? We are just wasting time here!" Schneider's attitude was far from respectful.

He touched the service nail on his forehead, a symbol of his pride.

A golden service nail signified one hundred years of service to the battalion. Three nails meant he was a veteran of three hundred years. He always believed himself more suited for the position of battalion leader than the younger Matins.

Yet, when the position became vacant, he had passed over the responsibility to Matins.

He almost wished he had died in battle with the previous leader, rather than live under Matins's command—although, in truth, he found the present uncertainty even more undesirable.

He knew that the Phoenix Battalion currently had no room for power struggles; they needed unity. Even though he did not completely recognize Matins as the battalion leader, he would obey commands unconditionally, as it was his duty as a warrior.

But while matters were still under discussion and no orders had been given, he was not going to mince words. He would ask bluntly and openly what was in his mind.

And he believed this doubt was not his alone; it lingered in the minds of his brothers-in-arms as well.

Chapter 64 - Chapter 64: Chapter 64, Fight for the Newborn

Chapter 64: Chapter 64, Fight for the Newborn

Facing the questioning of his battle brothers, Commander Matins let out a long sigh.

The face of this leader, always meant to be steadfast, nevertheless showed signs of weariness and bewilderment.

"We have no choice," he said.

His words brought down everyone's spirits.

Bald Schneider spoke up, "We've come this far, seen the situation here, and now we should realize, we've come to the wrong place. We shouldn't waste precious time here; we should return to the Star Sea and search for new hope."

Another warrior joined the conversation, "How do we search? Keep wandering? Until the Burn Feather's fuel is completely depleted? We can't even find a single planet willing to supply us normally! Are we to become like those pirate traitors, and start plundering?"

Schneider was taken aback, also recalling the hardships of the past few months. But he quickly retorted, “So what’s the use of staying here? That mortal is willing to help us supply, but he doesn’t even have a bullet for a bomb gun!”

The Phoenixes rarely quarreled like this, understanding that they were each other’s last brothers, last family. Yet, the bleak future still made it impossible to always maintain a positive mindset.

It wasn’t a time for battle, although the current situation was arguably more crucial than a fierce fight, but at such times, they needed the right direction even more.

Commander Matins didn’t stop the brothers from arguing.

He knew that part of the reason for this situation was his insufficient authority, but even he himself felt lost at the moment, unsure whether to accept Governor Gu Hang’s invitation. How could he then talk about ending the argument?

In the end, the one who stood up was the oldest in terms of service in the combat team and also the most special.

Priest Rizzo.

The priest’s power armor was painted differently from the other six battle brothers, not entirely red but primarily black, with only a bright red Phoenix pattern on the shoulders.

The priest, with his helmet removed, had a slightly aged face, half his beard and hair already graying.

Star warriors live incredibly long lives, so much so that none had heard of a Death Angel dying of old age.

But that doesn’t mean star warriors don’t age.

Time is the sharpest blade, always able to cut deep marks on the face, on the body.

The priest spoke, “Stop this pointless argument.”

After he spoke, the battle brothers indeed fell silent. The identity of a priest, and the oldest of the combat team, gave his words even more weight than those of the commander himself.

But after stopping the argument, Rizzo didn’t say much more. He just looked at Commander Matins and said, “Commander, you need to take responsibility for the entire combat team. You should make this decision.”

Commander Matins hesitated.

He understood that Priest Rizzo's intervention was in support of him. Just now, under such controversial circumstances, his inability to make a decision, even to stop the argument from continuing, had worn away at his credibility as a commander.

But understanding all this did not mean he really knew what to do next.

His gaze returned to Priest Rizzo as he inquired, "You said you received a revelation that Governor Gu Hang embodies the hope for rebuilding our battle group. But how exactly can he help us rebuild the battle group?"

Rizzo shook his head and replied, "You should not ask me that question, for the revelation did not provide me with an answer. But the one who has received the revelation is in this town, so why not ask him yourself?"

Matins let out a deep sigh and said, "Alright, I'll go now."

As they watched the commander leave the building, the bald Schneider spoke up, "Our commander is too indecisive."

"Perhaps it's because the responsibility he bears is so great that he must be continuously cautious."

"Even so, that shouldn't be the case," Schneider still seemed somewhat dissatisfied. "I'm not saying we have to leave here, but at the very least we need a firm goal, and then decisive action. We cannot waver here. Those months drifting in the Star Sea were also terrible, I hate this kind of uncertainty. A warrior should not be like this."

...

Facing the question posed by the returning Commander Matins, Gu Hang was somewhat at a loss for words.

How can I help you rebuild the battle group?

You're asking me? Where the hell would I know from?

If I say I can't do anything about it, won't you suddenly get angry and pull out a bomb gun and shoot me?

Inside, I'm panicking like crazy, but my face remains calm and composed.

He said, "Commander Matins, you've caught me off guard with this question. I don't know where to begin..."

Hearing Gu Hang say this, Matins also felt somewhat disappointed.

It’s no wonder, right? Even if he didn’t know how to rebuild the battle group, what answer could he expect from a mortal?

But at this moment, Gu Xing continued, “But, Commander Matins, please forgive my bluntness, but your current confusion is somewhat unwarranted. Rebuilding a battle group is a grand, arduous plan. When you think about how to achieve it all at once and want a definitive answer, of course you’ll feel at a loss, clueless, and the hope slim. These issues will turn into thousands of troubles, standing in your way. Why not break this immense plan down into several achievable small targets and work towards them step by step on solid ground?”

Matins would not sigh in front of Gu Hang, but only said, “I understand these principles, but...”

Gu Hang shook his head, gesturing with his hands to prevent Matins from continuing, trying to take control of the conversation: “Since you’ve come to ask me, why not listen to my thoughts. Commander Matins, in your view, what exactly is needed to rebuild the battle group?”

Matins’ thoughts were redirected as he considered Gu Hang’s ideas for a moment and then responded, “I need sufficient manpower and material resources to build the foundational forces of the battle group. Including logistics and a large number of Mortal Auxiliary Army.”

“Very good,” Gu Hang said with a smile. “That seems like a more specific issue, so let me attempt to answer it. The manpower and material resources you need can be provided by Rage Owl Star in the future. Our Planetary Defense Army can act as an Auxiliary Army for the battle group, and the entire planet can contribute a great deal of manpower and material resources for logistical support. Everything from maintenance of powered armor to replenishing war supplies can be done.”

Matins was puzzled: “Even if I believe you, as far as I know, although you are the planetary governor, you still do not have control over this planet, and the manpower and material resources you can mobilize are limited; the production capacity of the entire planet is also very doubtful, and you can’t even produce a single bomb...”

“Hahaha!” Gu Hang, faced with skepticism, did not feel embarrassed, but instead laughed out loud, “Yes, Commander Matins, you are correct. But I have a plan. In the future, I will make Rage Owl Star into a forging world, able to supply everything the battle group needs. I won’t ask if you believe in my plan, belief is irrelevant. I only ask you...”

“Are you and your battle group willing to fight for the rebirth of the battle group?”

Chapter 65 - Chapter 65: Chapter 65, For the Emperor

Chapter 65: Chapter 65, For the Emperor

Would the Battle Group be willing to fight for its rebirth?

This question didn't even require Matins to think.

It was a matter of course.

But was he so easily swayed by Gu Hang in a few words?

"We will certainly fight for the revival of the Battle Group, even if it costs us our lives. However, I must make sure that our fight is truly for the renewal of the Battle Group, and not for the power of a few," Matins said.

"The two are the same," Gu Hang said, "I will be honest with you on this matter. My actions, of course, will not all be for the Phoenix Battle Group. I was ordered to come to this wasteland planet to develop and strengthen it. But isn't our goal the same?"

"I believe there are three major elements for the Phoenix to rebuild. First, manpower and material resources, requiring a large number of Auxiliary Armies and sufficient logistical support; second, you need a Battle Group Fleet; third, seven Angels hardly count as a Battle Group, you need to regain vitality and recruit enough brothers to fight."

"The third point, I cannot help you with. But for the first and second points, as long as Rage Owl Star grows according to my plan, it will become your solid backing, solving the problems of Mortal Auxiliary Armies, fleets, and logistics supplies."

"I want to develop and strengthen my world, while you need a world that has grown strong to rebuild your Battle Group. Phoenix fights for the future of Rage Owl Star, and Rage Owl Star fights for the revival of the Phoenix. We are naturally meant to work together."

The leader of the Battle Group was indeed not cut out for politics, but interstellar warriors often don't need to think too much. Many of them have always been straightforward: "Why then shouldn't I choose a world that has already developed?"

Gu Hang showed a smile: "If you had a choice, you wouldn't have come to Rage Owl Star."

Matins had to admit, Mr. Gu was right.

The Phoenix Battle Group had been wandering for months, passing through many worlds, big and small. If they had had a choice, they would have settled down long ago.

Their goal had always been to rebuild the Battle Group, but no one really wanted to help them do it.

To take a few interstellar warriors as ‘allies’ or thugs was certainly good;

To rebuild the Battle Group? Forget it.

Maintaining a proper Battle Group almost required an entire planet’s effort. A large number of troops, a lot of logistical manpower, and starships were incredibly expensive commodities.

Not to mention, the particularity of the interstellar warriors meant they were a group of highly independent, exceptionally positioned super-warriors within the Empire.

The Emperor’s Death Angels were not only a description of them but also a title for their special status.

After all the hard work of rebuilding the Battle Group, do you think they will serve you, or will the Battle Group call the shots over the governor?

In the eyes of most interstellar warriors, the planet governor was nothing more than a mortal who provided them with supplies and managed the planet—at best, a steward. To think about commanding interstellar warriors this way and that? Dream on!

Most governors, or the generals who built worlds, didn’t want to spend all their efforts only to end up with a supreme governor over their own heads.

Most of the people Matins had encountered on his journey were like this.

He didn’t think much himself, but he could see through the thoughts of others. Those insincere smiles, those chest-thumping promises, in his view, they were all false. They dangled the carrot of rebuilding to keep them working themselves to death, and once they were of no value, they’d kick them away... But a dying Battle Group would find it hard to resist a powerful governor.

Yet upon arriving at Rage Owl Star, though he was disappointed with the backwardness of the entire world, in some ways it might also be a good thing.

His Battle Group was already in tatters, with only seven warriors remaining. But Rage Owl Star was also a broken world. Mr. Gu, the governor, really needed them. With their assistance, his Excellency the governor would be better able to control the entire planet. And as the governor’s power grew, their side would benefit and grow stronger as well.

They didn't have to worry about Gu Hang deceiving them or acting against them. Given the dire straits Mr. Gu was currently in, even as debilitated as the Phoenix was, with just seven people they had the ability to fight back and make a full retreat if necessary.

They also didn't have to worry about the governor reneging later on, because under the phased fulfillment of their duty to support the Battle Group, the Group would draw nutrients and grow stronger.

As long as the Battle Group could grow in strength alongside the governor's increasing power, by the future, even if the two sides were to fall out after the governor had strengthened his forces, the Battle Group would likely have enough strength already. By then, if they were to go their separate ways, they would have enough power to return to the Star Sea and start anew as a Starship-based Battle Group—what was so difficult about that?

Even in the worst-case scenario, they could ensure to kill...

Oh, wrong, we're a loyal Battle Group; we don't do such things.

Looking at Matins' face, which seemed to betray no thoughts at all, Gu Hang smiled amiably and sincerely, seemingly completely unconcerned about what Matins really thought.

Matins began to speak, "Perhaps we really should grow together, you reviving your world, me reviving my Battle Group. But how can you ensure that you can do it, that your world can truly develop as you plan?"

"You see, my situation might be similar to yours. You are on the brink of extinction, and if I can't achieve something in two years, I too will die. But our difference lies in that I am full of confidence in my future, while you harbor uncertainty; you don't know how to succeed, and I do."

"So, you who are lost, would do well to tie your fate to mine."

"It won't be long, just two years, and we shall see the outcome."

Matins was already swayed by Gu Hang's words.

Why shouldn't the directionless Phoenix hitch a ride on a train that knows the way?

It's merely two years, after all, which for the long-lived interstellar warriors, isn't too much time. They had endured a hundred-year penance expedition; spending two years on Rage Owl Star, watching time pass by, wasn't a big deal.

If Mr. Gu truly failed, then two years later, when the officials from the Empire's Administrative Department decided to execute the governor, he could personally send Mr. Gu on his way.

Matins was leaning towards agreeing to cooperate with Mr. Gu. He had intended to go back and discuss with his brothers in arms before giving a final answer. But at this moment, he remembered Priest Rizzo's words.

You are the Battle Group leader; you must shoulder the responsibilities of the Battle Group.

And so, Matins changed his mind.

He stood up, towering over Mr. Gu, who was much smaller in stature. Although his own body completely covered that of the governor, forcing him to crane his neck to see his face, with an overwhelming sense of oppression, the governor's expression didn't change in the slightest.

In the end, Matins extended his gigantic palm towards Gu Hang:

"I hope our cooperation will be blessed by the Divine Emperor."

The smile on Gu Hang's face grew even more brilliant.

He reached out his hand and clasped it together with that of Matins, disproportionately large:

"For The Emperor!"

Chapter 66 - Chapter 66: Chapter 66, just a little bit of deception

Chapter 66: Chapter 66, just a little bit of deception

Gu Hang deceived Matins.

It wasn't much, just a little bit.

Painting a pie in the sky couldn't be considered deception, if the Starfighters were willing to help him, and Rage Owl Star did indeed develop as he'd planned, then he wouldn't mind supporting a Battle Group.

He had never intended for Phoenix to be entirely, utterly at his service.

The difference was too significant.

Within the Imperial system, a planetary governor and a Starfighter Battle Group commander were completely separate entities; there was no subordination to speak of. However, when it came to status, the latter held much greater esteem than the former.

If it were the heyday of the Phoenix Battle Group, they would dominate their home planet, where the planetary governor would merely act as a mortal housekeeper, handling the menial tasks the Starfighters couldn't be bothered with. His influence would be incredibly strong within the span of a Star Sector, with every governor respectfully welcoming the commander's arrival and praying for their neighbor's aid should their world face threats. Throughout the entire Star Realm, even across countless light-years of distance, the reputation of the Phoenix would be widely known.

Once a large-scale war broke out, and if only one Battle Group were involved, the Battle Group commander would often become the supreme military commander. The Imperial Navy and the Imperial Star Realm Army might not be nominally under the Battle Group, but they would fully respect the commander's wishes, and even follow their commands—unless, of course, there was some highly reputed general present, which could change the situation.

Although the Phoenix was no longer what it had been a hundred years ago, its organizational structure remained, and the commander's identity persisted, so there was no way Gu Hang could make a Battle Group completely obey him.

Not even the head of a Star Sector could achieve that.

But forming an alliance, a mutual benefit, that was enough.

You live in my house, drive my car, eat the food I provide, use the supplies I acquire for you, and I've even promised to rebuild your Battle Group... In such circumstances, it-'s not too much to ask you to fire a couple of shots to help me out in times of trouble, right?

As long as this covenant was maintained, Gu Hang didn't mind, after some time, fulfilling his promise to help them rebuild their Battle Group. Whether it was providing manpower, resources, or finding ways to build or purchase starships for them.

As for where Gu Hang deceived them...

It was what he mentioned earlier, the third point about 'replenishing enough Starfighters.'

Gu Hang actually had a way.

How does one become a Starfighter? It is a very difficult task.

A ‘Genetic Seed’ is needed.

Once chosen, the candidate would undergo intense genetic modification. After enduring one or two years of transformation, allowing the Genetic Seed to completely and meticulously alter their entire body, they would become a new recruit.

Then, after lengthy training, when the Battle Group believed the new recruit met their standards, they would be granted powered armor, thus truly becoming a Starfighter.

It may sound easy, but in reality, the process is extremely tough.

After the Genetic Seed is implanted, enduring the intense modifications is immensely challenging.

Candidates who aspire to become Starfighters are selected from billions of people for their robust physique and resolute will; but even so, most cannot withstand it. Whether their body gives out, or their will falters, failure to endure either would lead to genetic collapse and death.

They made it through, and then came the new recruit training phase. Fortunately, this part was merely harsh, typically not resulting in too high a mortality rate.

In this entire process, the two most important things were high-quality soldier sources and genetic seeds.

Soldier sources were relatively easy to come by, as most battle groups had an entire planet as their recruitment world, their so-called mother planet. They could select soldiers from a planet’s population, choosing the best of the best, generally without worry; even starship-based battle groups could try recruiting on some planets. Inducting on a planetary scale wasn’t too practical, but handpicking a few hundred people to take away for training was hardly ever opposed by any governor.

Even in the sorry state that Phoenix Battle Group was in now, they could randomly go to a world, abduct a few promising seeds, and most planets wouldn’t bother pursuing a group of starfighters over a few people.

But even if they solved the soldier source issue, Phoenix Battle Group still couldn’t solve the latter problem, that of the genetic seeds.

How the Emperor once created the starfighter genetic seeds is no longer known; the technology from tens of thousands of years ago wasn’t preserved. In this era, starfighters mainly relied on ‘giving birth’ to their own kind.

Each starfighter could produce two genetic seeds in their lifetime. The first seed would mature inside them after five years as a starfighter and could be extracted to develop new recruits; the second seed matured ten years later but couldn't be extracted and was only obtainable after their death.

Theoretically, starfighters could duplicate one to two, two to four, four to eight... growing exponentially. But in reality, that was impossible.

Starfighters were always fighting in the most dangerous battles. It was very common to have bodies shattered beyond recovery or no time to collect the corpses, making the second seed difficult to retrieve. Only the first seed was a relatively stable source.

Furthermore, each battle group was required to hand over 10% of their genetic seeds to the Empire within a certain timeframe as a genetic tax. This was to check whether the battle group's genetic seeds were pure, uncontaminated, or had mutations. The collected genetic seeds also formed the seed bank used by the Empire to create new battle groups.

On top of that, the surgery for implanting genetic seeds had a not insignificant failure rate. A failure meant the loss of both person and seed.

With multiple factors stacking up, it was almost impossible for Phoenix Battle Group to go from seven to fourteen to twenty-eight.

What was worse, the seven living members of Phoenix were all veterans over a hundred years old, and their five-year seeds had long been harvested. To harvest again, they would have to die.

Moreover, it seemed they no longer had a Pharmacist specializing in genetic seed implantation surgery; they could only ask Priest Rizzo to do the job. He was capable, but certainly not as reliable as a professional battle group Pharmacist. Less skill meant an even lower chance of the recipient successfully awakening.

Gu Hang said he couldn't help Phoenix with this matter, and Matins didn't doubt it at all, considering it just a fleeting topic of discussion.

No starfighter would expect a mere mortal to be able to provide any help to Phoenix in this regard.

But the truth was, Gu Hang did have the ability.

In the [Event] panel, the [Phoenix on the Verge of Death] event had taken on a new development.

[Phoenix on the Verge of Death: Genetic Seed (Repeatable Event, can be selected indefinitely)]

[The Phoenix Battle Group has come to Rage Owl Star, reaching a preliminary cooperation agreement with you. A governor seeking to grasp and develop a world, and a battle group on the brink of death yet determined to rise again, make a good match.]

[The most important thing for the resurrection of the battle group, the genetic seed, is nowhere to be found. If you had the capacity, how would you choose?]

[Pay 100 points of Grace to receive one genetic seed (Phoenix Battle Group).]

Looking at this system feature, feeling happy was secondary; the biggest feeling for Gu Hang was the cold sweat running down his back.

Chapter 67 - Chapter 67: Chapter 67, The Real or Fake Phoenix?

Chapter 67: Chapter 67, The Real or Fake Phoenix?

100 points of grace, for one seed.

It’s really expensive.

And the seed that comes with 100 points of grace can’t be equated with a Starfighter.

How much is a young, strong, determined, and highly gifted person worth?

How much is it worth after they’ve undergone the implant surgery, survived the transformation, and trained the long and extremely harsh way of the Starfighter?

And how much is that specially designed power armor for Starfighters, which can neuraly connect with them, worth?

Gu Hang still preferred using the grace point system to calculate value.

He had now leveled up twice, to LV3, and his total approximate value was about 70 grace points. Activating at 10 points, 10 points to level up to 2, and 50 points to level up to 3. But when it came to leveling up to 4, it would cost 200 grace points.

He wasn’t a match for any Starfighter right now; he estimated that he would have to wait until level 4 to be on equal footing with an ordinary Starfighter. For veterans like the Phoenix Battle Group, probably level 5 was required for him to stand a chance. And individuals like Matins, Priest Rizzo, and a bald warrior he observed seemed stronger than the other four veterans.

With that in mind, one could say that a Starfighter's value was roughly around 300 grace points, and a veteran's value was about 800 points.

If Gu Hang wanted to use the system to create a Starfighter from scratch, he would probably have to exchange 100 points for a seed first and then perform the implant surgery. If it failed, 100 points would go down the drain, and only if they survived could they proceed to the next step.

A rookie who made it would have the hardware but not the experience or skill. Gu Hang would have to spend at least 111 grace points to train them up to T1-level soldiers, and then figure out a way to acquire a set of power armor. With that, he would be close to having a standard tin can.

Completing this entire process would cost at least over 200 grace points, and assuming the power armor is worth a hundred, it would indeed be close to the 300 points for a tin can he had estimated based on his own combat power.

That's why Gu Hang sighed, "This is really f*cking expensive!"

I've been mixing for a few months now, and I don't even know if I've racked up 300 grace points in total!

However, what stopped Gu Hang, and what gave him a chill when he looked at the repeatable branch event "Phoenix on the Brink of Death" where he could exchange for a genetic seed, was the grave danger he realized this feature entailed.

If he exchanged for a seed and then presented it to Matins saying, "This is my support for you," Matins would absolutely not feel the slightest bit of gratitude. Instead, he would undoubtedly pull out a bomb gun, demand to know how he acquired the genetic seed, and then send him to the Tribunal.

There was no use arguing; this seed was even specifically marked as belonging to the Phoenix Battle Group.

Each Battle Group's genetic seed would be slightly different. It might not be easy to tell for outsiders, but for them, it would be obvious at a glance.

What could Gu Hang say then?

He couldn't explain it at all.

This was a feature he dared not use.

But soon, a bold idea came to Gu Hang:

"Could I possibly... take over their nests?"

When I'm better off, exchange for a bunch of genetic seeds, secretly find people, ensure their loyalty, brainwash them with Spiritual Energy, secretly implant the seeds, and covertly train them. I can also secretly purchase their armor from some forging worlds.

When I've amassed enough power, a grand ambush, signal by smashing a cup, with seven true Phoenix members surrounded by seventy fake ones trained by me, Gu Hang. After killing them off, the true Phoenix will belong to me, Mr. Gu!

"Population replacement plan? Er... that's really not right..."

Gu Hang shook his head and put the thought aside.

Sabotaging allies, am I, Mr. Gu, that kind of person?

Moreover, it's easy to talk about it now, but it would be quite troublesome to actually do it—there are countless details to take care of.

Let's talk about it later.

After all, they can't afford such high-end units now.

...

The Governor's Government of Rage Owl Star and the Phoenix Battle Group henceforth became informal allies.

It was informal because they had not signed any specific agreements, nor put anything in writing. It was simply that the Phoenix Battle Group had agreed to accept task invitations from Mr. Gu whenever he encountered any trouble. They would then decide based on the situation whether to accept and execute the tasks as requested.

Besides the Governor's task invitation, their operations were essentially free, provided that they gave Mr. Gu a heads-up out of respect for his sovereignty over the entire planet.

Mr. Gu was likewise obliged to provide them with a base on the planet, supply them with provisions, and pay for the necessary aid for the battle group's rebuilding efforts within the boundaries of what he could afford.

In fact, this assistance in rebuilding had already begun.

First of all was ammunition supply.

Wu Jiarong received a request from the Governor; she had to initiate the production of bomb-gun bullets.

This was difficult; the industrial base of Rage Owl Star was completely inadequate for production.

Diamond warheads, secondary propulsion, mass reaction fuzes, and characteristics of secondary explosions...

Being both armor-penetrating and explosive, these items had high requirements for technology.

It wasn't impossible to make them, but it would rely on Wu Jiarong to craft each bullet by hand—her mechanically modified arms were capable of this work. Her few junior technicians could probably manage a workbench well enough to help.

The output would be quite touching.

And asking her, the 'technical leader' of the Governor's Camp, to spend substantial time doing manual labor as a bullet-crafter was obviously a waste of talent and would affect the development of Gu Hang's territory.

But all in all, it was a method of supply.

Subsequently, Wu Jiarong also moved some equipment from the Phoenix Battle Group's ship, Burn Feather, to research how to achieve mass production, at least to the point where her junior technicians could take over the task.

Then there was the maintenance of powered armor; currently, only Wu Jiarong was capable of it. As long as the damage wasn't too severe, small repairs and maintenance were within the capability of this technical officer.

Typically, maintenance of the battle group's equipment was the responsibility of technical sergeants. The technical sergeants from Phoenix had been to the Mechanical God Cult's headquarters—Mars—for advanced training. They were more skilled than the average technical Priest.

But what more could be done?

Under these conditions, they had to endure.

Rebuilding wasn't an easy task—it relied on struggle and perseverance!

Nevertheless, Mr. Gu's investment in the battle group's rebuilding efforts was recognized.

An engineering team was formed explicitly. They would construct a Fortress Monastery some distance from the camp.

Starfighters pride themselves as descendants of The Emperor and Death Angels of The Emperor; they always consider themselves the most steadfast believers in the Divine Emperor among the empire. Although they are a military organization, they are also a religious organization. Many Starfighter Battle Groups refer to their headquarters as ‘Fortress Monasteries’.

The construction site that had already started attracted the warriors of Phoenix to visit.

They couldn’t help but recall their battle group’s headquarters on their homeworld.

Compared to what it once was, the current one was world’s apart.

But at least, it was a good start, and the battle group was getting on the right path.

On the next day, the seven warriors of Phoenix left the housing previously arranged by the Governor and moved directly next to the construction site of the Monastery.

They wanted to watch the Monastery being built from the ground up.

Chapter 68 - Chapter 68: Chapter 68, Something Happened

Chapter 68: Chapter 68, Something Happened

The arrival of the interstellar soldiers didn’t have much impact on the Governor’s Camp.

Even the people on the wasteland had heard of The Emperor’s Angels. Before the planet was shattered, their stories were enduringly popular, showing up in texts and visual images. Now, in the post-war era, those things were gone, but ‘stories’ themselves still existed. The older generation told the younger generation, who passed it on to the next, and so on...

This made people under the Governor curious when they saw the interstellar soldiers, and they couldn’t help but look over repeatedly.

But, as characteristic of wastelanders, they were sensitive and timid toward danger.

They only dared to watch from afar, not daring to be too bold or direct with their gazes, to avoid angering these giants who could crush them with a mere slap.

And the interstellar soldiers... honestly, were already incredibly used to this kind of attention.

As for the impact on the camp's development...

Honestly, there was a bit.

In Gu Hang's case, there had always been a significant labor shortage for production development. Now, setting aside other supply needs, they even had to allocate an engineering team to build houses for the interstellar soldiers.

Key was the fact that these interstellar soldiers took the matter very seriously, living right next door and supervising directly, not daring to cut corners at all.

Lots of produced alloy steel, cement, and bricks had to be transported over for their use. The materials provided were already the best, yet the soldiers were still not quite satisfied until they were assured that they truly were the highest quality items available from the Governor's Camp.

However, overall, this impact remained within the range that Gu Hang could accept.

It was like hiring seven strong men; you just had to think of it as paying their wages.

Beyond attracting attention, slightly slowing the development speed of the Governor's Camp, and using some labor and resources, their presence was otherwise quite low-key. Every day, aside from inspecting the construction site, they were praying and training, living like monks.

Later, perhaps feeling a bit sheepish about having nothing to do all day—after all, they were supposed to assist in combat—they began entering the alien forest in groups to fight the mutant monsters.

Definitely for the defense of the Governor's enterprise, and not because they were bored after not seeing blood for a while!

Only, the monsters in the forest couldn't satisfy the interstellar soldiers.

Previously, although there weren't any high-level monsters in the alien forest, there were still a good number of them. However, after the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect's ambush plan against Gu Hang, when a catalyst was triggered that caused a large number of hatching nests to emerge prematurely and a vast number of monsters to be killed, the number of monsters in the alien forest had drastically reduced, even the nests were scarce.

This made it difficult for the interstellar soldiers to get in some practice and find that feeling of slaughter they were craving.

But soon, their opportunity to wield their weapons appeared.

...

While the Phoenixes had nothing to do, Gu Hang returned to the task of worrying about the camp's development.

The total population of the camp had officially surpassed ten thousand these days.

With production plans and population distribution, Osenia might not have arranged everything perfectly, but she at least had things well organized, leaving Gu Hang little room to step in directly.

Having a political officer with a rating of 9, the camp of ten thousand was being managed quite well.

After just a brief focus, not needing to worry much, he saw his camp's monthly income steadily increasing, reaching 61 points at present.

He hoped that by next month's 'payday,' it would break a hundred!

Also, during this period, he had selected and conscripted over a hundred soldiers from the new refugees, who alongside the five hundred troops previously brought by Lambert from the Hodgson Family—whose command and ownership had been completely transferred to the Governor—formed two additional infantry battalions.

That would be the 5th and 6th battalions.

These six hundred soldiers had also undergone training enhancements through Gu Hang's system function, which meant Gu Hang used 6 points of Grace, but also meant that his forces now exceeded 1700 people.

Out of caution, Gu Hang made substantial changes to the officers of these two battalions and redeployed them. A significant number of soldiers were also reorganized with the previous 2nd, 3rd, and 4th battalions.

The mixed forces had been disentangled as much as possible from their former command systems. After the reorganization, even if Lambert harbored ulterior motives, it wouldn't be of much use; it was unlikely he could incite the troops to defect in the middle of a fight.

Of course, based on interactions over this period, Gu Hang tentatively believed that the two members of the Hodgson Family, old and young, were truly cooperative. Still, even so, it was wise to guard against others. It was only right for Gu Hang to take precautionary measures.

Lambert had no objections to this. He even had no qualms about losing military power and being assigned to assist young Osenia, which earned him praise from her for his diligent work.

He understood that his identity could cause misunderstandings and precautions from the Governor. But he had resolved to prove his loyalty through his attitude and everything he did over the upcoming lengthy period.

Gu Hang was pleased with this.

The young man was proving his worth.

His grandfather was doing so as well.

Population growth within the camp would have been difficult to achieve without help from Revival City.

Moreover, most of the goods from the Governor's Camp, besides internal consumption, sold very well in Revival City on the foreign market. Purchasing food, minerals, and other consumer goods also went smoothly.

During this time, Dennison Henry even felt that business was too easy.

But today, Lambert came to Gu Hang somewhat flustered, bearing some unsettling news.

"I can't contact my grandfather."

Gu Hang frowned, "Be more specific."

"This morning, I made a routine check with Revival City, but couldn't get through. It's not that no one was picking up, but the line was completely dead. I realized something wasn't right, tried to connect to other wireless communication lines of our family, but the situation was similar; I also contacted some people who have a good relationship with our family. Nobody knew what had happened, but they told me that Revival City is under lockdown, preventing the poor from the outer city from entering..."

Gu Hang narrowed his eyes.

"This is really bad news... It sounds like Mr. Hodgson might have run into trouble."

"I implore you to save him!"

Chapter 69 - Chapter 69: 69th Chapter, The Daughter of The Emperor

Chapter 69: 69th Chapter, The Daughter of The Emperor

Gu Hang patted Lambert on the shoulder and said, “I know you’re anxious, but impatience will only make things worse right now. Calm down; you need to mobilize all your connections and hidden forces in Revival City as much as possible and figure out what exactly happened.”

After a pause, Gu Hang continued, “Besides, I’ll make preparations. When necessary, I will enter the city.”

“You’re going into Revival City?”

“A governor must always return to his post,” Gu Hang said, “Moreover, President of the Council Hodgson is now working for me. If he has been put in jeopardy because of this and is alive, I will do my best to save him; if... I mean if, the worst comes to pass, I will avenge him.”

“Thank you, Governor!”

“Go on, attend to your matters.”

Watching Lambert leave, Gu Hang sat back down in his seat.

Revenge was certainly something Gu Hang took seriously. Hodgson had been sitting pretty for many years without a solid foundation to become President of the Council. He’d survived so many trials and tribulations without incident, but after he had made clear his support for Gu Hang, he suffered this misfortune... It wouldn’t do if Gu Hang, as the governor, did nothing.

And apart from that reason, Gu Hang had another stronger, more pressing reason for making his decision:

Someone had declared war on him.

Although the situation was still unclear, the fact that someone had dared to take action against him in Revival City after Hodgson had made his support clear was undoubtedly a declaration of war.

Whether it was the Heretic Cultists who followed the Primordial Wrath Owl or the conservative factions within the Alliance Government who had declared war on him, Gu Hang must respond.

Actually, his current preparations were insufficient.

In his previous plans, he himself would enter Revival City in about two to three months. By then, the economy and productive capacity of his territory would be able to support an army at least three times larger than the present one for a short period of military action.

By that time, with the orbital cannon of the Quintet as the biggest deterrent and his troops, which had undergone systematic training, as the conventional means, he would return to Revival City and take complete control of the city.

With that, he would gain a population of nearly a million. The production potential provided by the technology panel would be greatly realized; politically, he could genuinely exercise the governor's powers, use military force as a guarantee, and swiftly sweep all surrounding settlements into his production system.

Now, it seemed his plan had to be accelerated.

Since it was war, there was no such thing as 'being prepared.' He couldn't expect others to wait until he was ready before they fought.

But there was also good news.

Gu Hang's strength hadn't fully accumulated, but now he had the support of interstellar warriors, an unexpected boost in his plans.

The help provided by the 7 Phoenix Veterans was probably more valuable than the military power Gu Hang could expand over the next two months.

"If it's war, then let it be war."

"Having the plan pushed forward might not be a bad thing after all."

It's a real shame about old Hodgson... I hope he's all right.

...

The troops under Gu Hang's direct command quickly assembled, leaving the Mech Servant Battalion to hold down the fort while the remaining five battalions formed an infantry regiment, awaiting further orders;

The mission request was sent to the Phoenix Battle Group, which responded positively;

Gu Hang personally communicated with Yelisia for about half an hour. Yelisia stated that from now on, the entire starship would enter a state of combat readiness and that an orbital cannon strike could be launched at any target specified by the governor within twenty minutes if needed; starting tomorrow, the starship would complete its combat readiness tasks, entering a wartime state, which meant that the response time for orbital cannon strikes could be reduced to within ten minutes.

At the same time, given that the combat target was likely to include Heretic Cultists, Gu Hang's combat mission would receive support from the National Church Team aboard the starship.

A Battle Nun Squad would arrive on the surface six hours later.

That was another delightful surprise!

Only now did Gu Hang learn that there was actually a squad of Battle Nuns on the Quintet? He had no idea about this during the trip to Rage Owl Star!

Battle Nuns are a group steeped in legend.

They are the only overt armed force of the Imperial State Religion. After the Theocratic Wars, the Church was no longer allowed to have any armed men. However, they fostered the Sisterhood by exploiting this rule, establishing the Battle Nun regiments.

These sisters, blessed by the National Church and with unwavering faith, were called ‘The Emperor’s Daughters’. They might not be as formidable as the genetically-modified Interstellar warriors, but with The Emperor’s blessing, they could attain extraordinary power.

They also wore specially made power armors. Unlike the Interstellar warriors, they could not connect directly to modified spinal cords for neural linking with the armor, but they could activate their armor with the power of sacred spells. And their blessed armor, though not as heavy as that of the Interstellar warriors, was still a formidable weapon.

Initially, Gu Hang found it odd that there was a squad of Battle Nuns permanently stationed on the Quintet, but after searching his memory, he had an epiphany.

The Sisterhood had many branches. Apart from the main ones, there were also second-tier, third-tier sub-orders. They naturally needed places to station, usually alongside significant institutions of the National Church. On Korolya III of the Nest Capital planet in the Tianma Star Sector, there stood a great cathedral of the Imperial State Religion, not only the most crucial division in this Star Sector but also a faith hub for several surrounding Star Sectors.

And there, the ‘Sainte-Lys Nun Association’ was stationed.

On a large starship like the Quintet, a chapel was essential. Normally, priests and nuns needed to comfort the crewmembers’ spirits on the battleship; in wartime, they would resist corruption from evil.

In this context, if the Star Sector Government had relatively close military cooperation with the National Church, then aside from the standard shipboard chapels, it was not impossible to additionally equip a Battle Nun Squad.

Like Interstellar warriors, Battle Nuns were not exactly subordinates directly under the command of Yelisia, the captain. But, being on the same ship, it was normal for them to comply if requested.

Moreover, it wasn't Yelisia who made the request this time. It was when the news of the Cult on Rage Owl Star made its way to these 'Emperor's Daughters' that they volunteered to join the battle.

Zealous Battle Nuns would not tolerate the existence of Heretic Cultists.

And with the help of these sisters, who might be weaker than Interstellar warriors but not by much, Gu Hang's operation gained an even more powerful boost.

Moreover, compared to the warriors, these Battle Nuns were more specialized anti-cult experts. If the shadow of the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect loomed in this affair, the Emperor's Daughters would give them a huge surprise.

Chapter 70 - Chapter 70: Chapter 70, I'll Go

Chapter 70: Chapter 70, I'll Go

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Under the circumstances of Gu Hang assembling all the help he could get, news from Revival City kept pouring in.

Lambert became an intelligence officer.

He had already activated his own contacts as well as his family's to obtain intelligence from Revival City by all possible means.

Meanwhile, Dennison Henry, although he was in Rubbish Town when he received the message, had quite a number of partners in Revival City. He was also actively mobilizing his contacts to help collect information.

The situation inside Revival City was becoming increasingly worrisome.

The person who initiated martial law was General Mondok. As the supreme commander of Revival City's military power, this meant that the military might have already taken a stand against the governor.

Old Hodgson was still without news to this day, his life and death unknown. But what was even more troubling was that various hints indicated that several key members of the Hodgson Family were also missing, including Lambert's father.

Rumors had it that the bodies of the Hodgson Family's servants had been discovered.

The Hodgson Family manor was locked down by the authorities. Armed soldiers stood guard around it, and no one could get close.

These were all extremely bad pieces of information.

The inquiries sent to Revival City in the name of Governor Gu Hang, although replied to, were insincere.

The authorities claimed that they too had discovered the disappearance of President of the Council Hodgson and suspected cult involvement. The martial law and the lockdown of the manor were deemed necessary steps in order to investigate the matter. They promised to inform the governor immediately if any findings were made.

Gu Hang didn't believe any of it for a moment.

If that was true, why hadn't the authorities in Revival City reported Hodgson's disappearance to him immediately? It was only when Lambert tried to contact his grandfather as usual that they found out.

And even more absurd was the second message from Revival City officials, inviting the governor back to "take charge" of Revival City, but with the difficult stipulation of not being able to provide supplies and accommodations, they "requested" the governor not bring more than a hundred followers.

At this point, Gu Hang had confirmed that the situation in Revival City had completely spiraled out of control.

To this second message, Gu Hang returned only four words.

"I will go."

...

"Will he come?" industrial tycoon Norris cautiously asked, "Are you sure?"

"If he said he will come, he definitely will," Bradford replied, "But our esteemed governor doesn't seem like someone who will surrender without a fight. He will come, but it's unlikely he'll bring only a hundred people."

Norris continued to probe, "The people we planted with him are reporting that recently, seven individuals suspected to be interstellar warriors arrived at his camp. If that's true, what do we do?"

"This..."

Bradford was stumped.

His gaze involuntarily turned to Mondok beside him, laced with a hint of reproach.

“`

Norris was already very dissatisfied,

“I said earlier, we should not rush things. If Mr. Gu really is capable of enlisting the aid of intergalactic warriors, what do we do now to resolve this situation?”

Mondok sneered,

“Now that things have come to this, what’s the use of being afraid? Norris, have you lost your edge?”

Norris argued,

“What does this have to do with edge? Even if you’re sharp, would you go head-to-head with an intergalactic warrior?”

“Don’t worry too much,” Bradford interjected, trying to smooth things over. “This might not even be true. How could such legendary figures as the intergalactic warriors be summoned at someone’s beck and call? It’s very likely a ruse by the governor to blind us, we must not lose our composure.”

Despite his words, Bradford’s expression betrayed an undeniable panic.

Most likely it’s not true, but what if it is?

Mondok, witnessing the ambivalence of both men, displayed an even more pronounced look of disdain. However, he knew he still needed their support, so he had to instill some confidence in them.

“First off, Bradford is right, this whole thing is probably not true, just a façade created by our governor.”

“Secondly, even if it were true, what’s there to fear? Reports from several sources say that there are a total of seven intergalactic warriors. Just seven. We have an army of ten thousand! We have seventy Challenger tanks! We have one hundred artillery guns of various models! Are we supposed to fear seven intergalactic warriors? Have you been reading too many pre-war stories and really believe these warriors are gods descended from the heavens? I’ve never believed such exaggerated fabrications. They’re all just flesh and blood with a single head and two hands. Can they tear apart tanks with their bare hands? That’s laughable!”

Pausing for a moment, Mondok continued, “The governor’s forces amount to barely a thousand men with hardly any heavy weaponry. Stop worrying about this all the time. Instead, you could spend the time helping me with some actual work.”

Reassured by Mondok’s words brimming with confidence, Norris and Bradford felt somewhat more at ease.

Upon further reflection, it really did make sense.

Even if there really were intergalactic warriors, what could seven people achieve? Could they really massacre a thousand, decimating the entire Revival City’s forces?

But at this moment, Norris, the cautious one, raised another issue, “Have you considered the problem of the orbital strike?”

Mentioning this, Mondok fell silent for a moment.

In comparison to the uncertain issue of intergalactic warriors, the real headache was the Quintet hovering in the sky above.

The starship was undoubtedly real, with its formidable presence floating in the sky, so noticeable that its lights could be observed with the naked eye on clear nights.

The main cannon of the Quintet might not be able to obliterate the entirety of Revival City in a single shot, but a few more rounds should do the job. Spending half a day or a full day meticulously bombarding a city-sized target would ensure no inch of ground was left untouched.

Revival City had underground air-raid shelters left from the war era; hiding there might offer a chance to survive an orbital assault. But firstly, not many could take refuge in them, and secondly... even if people survived, what good would it do if the city was destroyed?

Could General Mondok conjure up food and ammunition out of thin air to sustain his army? Could Norris, the industrial magnate, continue his manufacturing operations underground and keep production high? Could Bradford, the business tycoon, find anywhere to trade and amass his wealth?

They were too attached.

They usually looked down upon the several hundred thousand refugees outside the city and even the ordinary citizens within the city walls. Yet these people were the true source of their wealth. The death of a few was trivial, but if the city were cleansed and the populace eradicated, it would spell the end for them too.

And yet, the problem of the starship was insoluble.

In the end, all Mondok could say was, “Gu Hang wouldn’t do that. If Revival City is destroyed, he’ll surely die within two years!”