Governor 771

Chapter 771: The Battle to End War

In his childhood, Gu Jing might have been bewildered by things like demons, cunning, Great Demons, and Subspace. But now, in his twenties, he fully understands what kind of crisis he encountered back then.

That was a Subspace Great Demon, a Magic Lord of Thousand Changes!

Such an existence is enough to spark a terrifying chaos sweeping across an entire Star Domain. They always manage to hide in the shadows, beguiling hearts, creating all sorts of coincidences, and with their plots and schemes, they can cause tremendous destruction without even showing themselves.

Let alone targeting a mere infant.

Yet because of this, he also fully understood the terrifying aspect of his father.

Such an incredibly dangerous demon, no matter how carefully it hid, was eventually caught.

Gu Jing saw in his dreams how the demon was electrocuted into a twist by his father.

"If you like to accompany in reading, then accompany for the rest of your life."

Gu Jing still remembers this sentence from his father.

After that, he got a little 'Magic Lord of Thousand Changes', entirely composed of lightning, by his side. In his childhood, it accompanied him in reading, analyzing knowledge and learning quickly. When he grew up, it became his assistant, aiding in work.

It no longer has self-will; the demon's soul has been obliterated by lightning. Now, it's merely reconstructed using its Subspace essence within the Storm God Kingdom, sharing the same nature as

the many Heroic Spirits in the Storm God Kingdom, only retaining a bit more of the Sorcerer Demon's traits in knowledge and wisdom.

Its behavior is quite rigid, lacking initiative, much like an intelligent assistant.

But as a tool, it's very useful.

This was deliberately done by his father.

A Jianqi Great Demon, leaving it even a little bit of intellect shouldn't be done; who knows what trouble it could cause, so it's entirely obliterated to ensure it doesn't affect Gu Jing's decisions. Now, this Magic Lord of Thousand Changes version of Heroic Spirit is utilized merely like a calculator, computer, or analysis machine.

During the previous meeting between Gu Jing and Yang Shiwei, he managed to swiftly read, analyze, and comprehend the thousands of pages of documents because of this Magic Lord of Thousand Changes' assistance.

The add-on given by his dad is really handy!

As for the 'slight' physical altercation afterward, the Spiritual Power Gu Jing used was indeed his own.

As Gu Hang's son, he is naturally endowed with psychic talent, and quite a good one. Among his childhood learning subjects, Spiritual Energy training was clearly listed. Tutors from the Psychic Cultivator's Association specifically taught him, and sometimes when Gu Hang was available, he personally trained him.

After the Magic Lord of Thousand Changes became his 'add-on', his strength in Spiritual Energy rose even higher.

Among the four types of Subspace Demons, Sorcerer Demons are the most adept in Spiritual Energy. As the pinnacle of Sorcerer Demons, the Magic Lord of Thousand Changes' Spiritual Energy is even more exaggerated.

Humans with psychic abilities couldn’t possibly contend with the Magic Lord of Thousand Changes.

Uh... except for Gu Hang, he doesn’t count as human.

With this Magic Lord of Thousand Changes aiding him, now at only 23 years old, Gu Jing can easily exert A+ level Spiritual Energy, and his psychic strength is rapidly increasing. Reaching an S+ level in the future is a certainty.

As for Alpha-class... he has received strict warnings from his father not to summon such a level of power. Gu Hang personally sealed the related upper limits.

Whether or not Gu Jing can reach the Alpha level is not the question. Once he grows a bit more, he can effortlessly achieve it. But the biggest issue with this level of Spiritual Energy is control.

And human limits just stop here, it’s impossible to control.

Unless Gu Jing also stops ’being human’ and finds a way to master a piece of Subspace essence.

That’s extremely difficult. Gu Hang just happened to encounter a weak yet primitive, but indeed a Subspace Inferior God’s existence. With the help of a system, he merged to obtain this Subspace essence.

Reproducing this process, the easy part is finding a piece of Subspace essence.

While not every planet, like the petite one, has a thin reality veil conducive to birthing indigenous deities, the Universe is vast enough that searching will eventually yield results.

Within the Alliance, there are similar things, indigenous religions, Cults, none believe in Subspace Demons or the Emperor, yet they have nurtured some strange entities.

Such things are usually not strong, far from reaching the level of Great Demons, at most approximating a high-level demon. However, due to their method of formation, they truly possess a piece of Subspace essence.

The Alliance generally adopts an attacking attitude towards this, striking against Cults in the Real Universe and destroying any faith that's not the National Church or the Sect of Mechanics; in Subspace... those primitive Inferior Gods have basically all been consumed by Gu Hang.

Having consumed so many, leaving one for his son is actually not a big deal.

But the key is, how can a mortal integrate a piece of Subspace essence?

It's impossible, even Gu Hang can't do it.

Being a Divine Chosen doesn't count; if he wanted, he could manage that in minutes now, without needing Subspace essence.

But being a Divine Chosen doesn't grant immortality.

Unless Gu Hang strengthens himself a bit more, to concoct something akin to the Four Gods usage to achieve Ascension or elevate someone to a Demon Prince.

But in that case, one would lose their humanity, and the soul would be completely reshaped, so the person might not be the same as before.

It was still a bit of a headache.

But there's no need to rush.

Gu Jing is still very young, with plenty of time in the future to consider how to continue on the path of Spiritual Energy. Maintaining an S+ level might not be a bad route.

At least, there is some guarantee of safety.

If all else fails, this Magic Lord of Thousand Changes version of the Heroic Spirit will still provide Gu Jing with close protection.

Although it's slightly weaker compared to when it was 'alive', it hasn't dropped a level, still maintaining the standard of a Great Demon with many diverse means, unlike the Bloodthirsty Demon who knows only how to hack and slash.

Moreover, at this moment, it played a good supporting role.

It can quickly embellish the report Gu Jing previously narrated into an appropriate formal document and then quickly send it through Subspace back to the hands of high officials in the Alliance.

After finishing this task, all Gu Jing could do was wait for the reply from Rage Owl Star.

He wasn't arrogant enough to decide such a crucial matter on his own.

As for the specific course of action, it still depends on the overall decision of the Alliance Government.

After the decision is made, whether he needs to execute it is another matter.

However, he is certainly not idle.

As a Tax Emissary, he still has to perform his primary job.

It's just that this matter, for him, holds no challenge.

Even without the assistance of the Magic Lord of Thousand Changes, with his abilities, it would be very easy to handle this matter well.

One of his two responsibilities as a Tax Emissary is communication with the Imperial Taxation Department, which is no longer an issue. He now has Yang Shiwei completely under control, and until the Imperial Taxation Department replaces their head, Gu Jing is confident that in the taxation work on Lingze Star, he will have an immense say.

And for the other responsibility, supervising the Alliance's Imperial Tax Working Group, there's not much to say. He just needs to be stationed here, and the specific matters are naturally handled by the elite working group he brought along, composed of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Anti-Corruption Bureau, and the Financial Department's audit team.

Generally, there won't be any issues; the Imperial Tax Working Group has undergone many rounds of cleansing and inspection.

Yet, even if it's boring and dull, Gu Jing will meticulously complete his work.

He has made a good start, and not ending it well would be disappointing to himself.

…

Gu Hang quickly received the report.

The report from his son was directed to his direct supervisor, namely the Minister of Finance, as well as the Alliance Foreign Affairs Department that directly manages foreign relations.

However, neither of them dared to make autonomous decisions on such a significant matter.

They sent Gu Jing's suggestions, along with their own views, to Gu Hang's desk.

After reading it, Gu Hang gave a wry smile.

The young man still has quite a few ideas.

However, there was no need for Gu Jing to propose this matter.

Salihoovich has a whole set of preemptive plans, which simply haven't been necessary to activate until now.

If possible, the Alliance doesn't want the current situation to change at all.

The past fifteen years have been exceptionally fast-growing for the Alliance. The 16 trillion war costs have been mostly offset, with the Alliance paying just 1 trillion in actual taxes per year before that, the rest being the Empire's dues for the Iron Armor War expenses owed to the Alliance.

The Empire has already benefited greatly from this.

The 16 trillion, where the Alliance didn't even get the interest, was split over fifteen years by the Central Empire. What more could they want?

And that was that. Now that the war payments have been settled, the Alliance has returned to a normal tax quota of 2.1 trillion, without any pressure, or at least without affecting the Alliance's development. In such circumstances, maintaining the status quo is naturally the best.

For the past fifteen years, the growth rate of the Alliance's GDP has always remained high. Recently, it has entered deeper waters, especially with the Dragonhawk Star Domain as the leader, where the current per capita annual production has reached 11 tax units. Although still growing, it's not as fast as in previous years.

But it doesn't matter, as when the Dragonhawk Star Domain's growth stalls, other Star Domains still offer substantial growth space.

Even if the growth rate slows, at the current size, which is four or five times the previous total output value, the absolute annual growth rate is still enormous.

Gu Hang indeed has no intention of opposing the Central Empire; if the Alliance can maintain this relatively peaceful development trend for a longer time, it would be best.

But absolutely no intention to raise taxes.

According to the version of the memorandum Yang Shiwei attempted to deceive Gu Jing into signing, Xu Fuzhen, or rather the Central Empire, wasn't that severe regarding raising taxes for the Alliance, merely increasing from 2.1 trillion to 2.5 trillion in tax revenue, an addition of only 400 billion.

The Alliance can afford it.

But 400 billion is not a small amount; it's the entirety of the tax revenue the Empire can collect from ordinary Cosmos Domains, and that needs to be in areas where the Empire has relatively strong control and can reduce tax collection costs; in some poor or extremely chaotic Cosmos Domains, collecting even 100 billion after removing all costs would be considered good.

Moreover, compared to the Alliance's previous 2.1 trillion tax revenue, it increased by almost 20%.

The Alliance can afford it but shouldn't pay it.

You can't start this trend.

If it starts once, what about another increase in a few years?

Moreover, if they cross the line and decide to inspect the development level across the entire Alliance and strictly collect taxes at 10% of total output, raising the Imperial Tax to over 5 trillion, what then?

The so-called "Alliance Plan" would no longer exist in name only by that time.

Further, seeing how bountiful the Alliance is, so easy to manipulate, wouldn't greedy bigwigs want to meddle in the Alliance's various industries and share in the profits?

Once a bottom line is broken, it will continually be breached.

Can taxes be increased?

Yes, if it comes down to choosing between raising taxes or civil war, then the 400 billion, pinching your nose, would be paid.

However, between raising taxes and civil war, there's a vast gray area, ample time, and space to negotiate with the Central Empire.

The Alliance has plenty of bargaining chips.

Take your time.

Even if, in the end, it gets to the point of paying that 400 billion, the Central Empire must pay a sufficient price, so they feel the pain, thus delaying their next encroachment as much as possible.

Gathering his thoughts, for now, Gu Jing's trip can be seen as his first time managing a segment independently.

The results produced, from Gu Hang's perspective, were both expected and had unexpected elements.

The expectation lay in the fact that the Great Demon, which dared to lay hands on his son back then and was caught, changed its purpose at his whim and indeed proved enormously effective.

Originally, Gu Hang intended to devour the Subspace essence of the Magic Lord of Thousand Changes. Although he no longer experienced leaps in enhancement from consuming a Great Demon or a Neuron Worm as he did in the past, a Great Demon remains extremely nourishing.

Going into Subspace to actively hunt Great Demons is dangerous and likely to attract their master's attention. But it would be a shame not to consume one that came to you.

But… so be it, for the sake of his son.

Now, it has turned out effective. A bodyguard providing wisdom enhancement and intelligent assistance, all in one, its function has been manifested.

With this configuration, even at 23, despite lacking experience, Gu Jing can independently handle tasks, achieving accomplishments is not surprising.

And the so-called unexpected was that the result of Gu Jing's completed task turned out quite well.

More importantly, it allowed Gu Hang to acquire information that could spur him to make a decision.

The issue of tax increases at the Central Empire has moved beyond merely being a trend of public opinion. The attempt by Yang Shiwei to discuss this issue with Gu Jing, the Alliance's Tax Emissary, marks tax increases as an official policy the Central Empire is pursuing.

Therefore, political peace is already an illusion.

This war without smoke has inevitably begun.

Of course, war is merely a metaphor. In reality, all efforts are for peace, aiming to avoid a real war.

Chapter 772: Army Development

The various countermeasure plans from Salihoovich can be deployed.

The information on Yang Shiwei's corruption and insider trading is the result of years of investigation and serves as a part of their strategy.

On top of that, the diplomatic memo obtained by the young man, signed by Yang Shiwei as the Empire's representative, is an unexpected delight that will play a role in subsequent countermeasures.

Gu Hang's orders have been explicitly issued to the Alliance Foreign Affairs Department.

This part of the work will be led by Salihoovich.

However, the executors will definitely not be limited to just the Foreign Affairs Department.

The entire Alliance machinery, ready to be deployed, has roared into action.

From the administrative department to the economic department, the military department, the legal department, and the intelligence department, everyone must take action.

Yet, the process from execution, through fermentation and explosion, to final feedback results, requires time to solidify. Since the specific executors have already been determined, Gu Hang won't personally oversee the matter but will await reports.

Currently, what he must personally handle is yet another Alliance Government Work Report Conference.

This conference is held almost annually, and Gu Hang naturally has to attend.

For some years, the conference's importance is average, while in other years, it is very critical.

Foremost was fifteen years ago when Gu Hang returned from Holy Terra with the signed "Alliance Plan".

That conference report essentially established the Alliance's subsequent development direction.

And now, it's again a very significant moment.

On the one hand, consecutive development plans have been successfully realized, and the war expenses owed by the Central Empire to the Alliance have been fully deducted. The most crucial development phase for the Alliance has ended, and it's time to review how well the overall development has fared over these fifteen years.

On the other hand, the Alliance has observed changes in the Empire's political scene, and the external political environment for the Alliance is deteriorating. It is now like being at a crossroads, requiring a crucial comprehensive meeting to unify thoughts, define directions, and clarify future actions.

The first half of the conference focuses on the government report.

The intelligence held by the Empire about the Alliance is indeed 'correct'.

The Alliance's annual GDP indeed reached fifty trillion.

It is precisely because of this data that they produced a flawed document, proposing an annual tax of five trillion to the Alliance.

However, the reason the word 'correct' is quoted is that the fifty trillion figure is just one of several estimates by Holy Terra's intelligence department, and it's the highest one.

The widely accepted figure is between thirty and thirty-five trillion.

This is already a quite high number, nearly three times that of similar Cosmos Domains.

The Empire still maintains inertia from common sense.

They cannot conceive how a vast economy with twelve trillion people could sustain fifteen years of ultra-high-speed growth, increasing its GDP fivefold.

It is indeed something that challenges common sense.

In fact, even thirty trillion is already quite challenging.

They always believed the Alliance's strength primarily lies in its efficient political system, which results in outstanding tax collection efficiency.

Based on this, the Central Empire formulated the number Yang Shiwei later mentioned, which he truly seeks to execute—namely, a 2.5 trillion tax levy.

To the Central Empire, this already considers a concession of 500 billion to the Alliance, without precisely imposing the 10% Empire Tax rate. Combined with the Alliance's excellent tax collection efficiency and system advantages, the Alliance should still earn a lot. This already fully considers the Alliance's strong power and respects Gu Hang as a High Lord. Gu Hang and his Alliance should be grateful.

This is the cognitive gap between both sides.

Away from the Empire, the Alliance's substantial general budget revenue and state enterprise earnings combined actually reach around ten trillion annually.

Just as the Central Empire considered, the Alliance system is very efficient in extracting surplus value from labor.

But this is not the end.

The trade with the North, South, and Lingze Star all involve commerce groups profiting. Among them, the taxable part is included in the tax revenue, but the associated commerce groups within the Alliance also earn a significant amount.

Especially on Lingze Star.

All earnings from these sectors, post-taxation, must also be submitted to the Alliance's hands. This alone adds around one trillion annually.

In total, in the 11 trillion in fiscal revenue, aside from the part submitted as the Imperial Tax, the rest will not be reserved by the Alliance but reinvested in Alliance construction, primarily focusing on economic development.

Currently, the rapid, fervent, and economically oriented construction cycle is also about to conclude.

It does not mean economic construction will not be pursued. On the contrary, economic development will still be the government's primary task.

However, at this moment, with potential shifts in future circumstances, the Alliance will have to invest significantly more resources in other areas.

Chapter 772: Army Development (Part 2)

In fact, even the extreme preparations that need to be made should be well prepared.

Speaking of extreme situations, the Alliance has something called wartime law.

In the past fifteen years, wartime laws seem to have become something of a memory unknown to the new generation of the Alliance. However, in the history of the Alliance of over fifty years, the activation of wartime laws accounts for more than half of the time.

The current citizens of the Alliance have always maintained a relatively high standard of living. Of course, the specific standard of living depends on the development conditions of each star domain. Among them, the Dragonhawk Star Domain definitely has the highest living standards, with even the per capita annual consumption reaching nearly 7 tax coins. Even if a lot of this is in the public service sector, the overall standard is high, and life is quite comfortable.

If the Alliance were to activate wartime laws, start restricting various consumer products, and convert civilian factories into military ones or towards other directions needed by the Alliance, it could extract an additional ten trillion in finance for war purposes.

Of course, this is not currently needed.

We only adjusted the current financial expenditures.

A very important part of this is military construction.

In the past fifteen years, although the Alliance has been disarming and reducing military spending, the construction of the army has not halted.

The limited resources have been used on the cutting edge: updating and upgrading existing equipment, forming more combat-ready model units and experimental troops.

The accumulated experience from these will be evident. When the Alliance needs to expand its military power, just pouring money and resources, the last fifteen years of military advancements can be realized swiftly.

This applies to both the Army and the Navy.

Regarding the Army, the changes are relatively fewer. Mainly, different levels of divisions, corps, and army groups have been constructed.

These are divided into four levels: A, B, C, and D.

The D-level is the standard for the Planetary Defense Force. But every planet's Defense Force needs to have a certain proportion of C and B level divisions and armies, depending on the planet's economic situation, jointly determined by the Alliance Government and the Alliance Military.

The C-level is modeled after the Alliance standards during the Iron Armor War, creating a unit at the division level. A C-level corps is composed entirely of C-class divisions, generally consisting of 26 divisions under standard organization, including 20 Big Infantry Divisions, 5 Armored Composite Brigades, and 1 Skeleton Division.

The cost of a Big Infantry Division is about 1.35 million tax coins; an Armored Composite Brigade costs 5 million tax coins; a Skeleton Division costs 10 million tax coins.

The main units of a C-class Big Infantry Division are frontline combat infantry, but not equipped with full motorized equipment, relying on running for tactical mobility. For strategic mobility covering several hundred to thousands of kilometers within a planet, other vehicles are needed. Basically, this relies on equipment like armored tracked trains belonging to the corps or army group.

In addition to 12 frontline combat infantry regiments, the division is generally equipped with 8 artillery battalions for key firepower; logistics, engineering, communication also have 8 battalions; additionally equipped with an air defense regiment and one air squadron.

Including the division headquarters, the total is 44,000 personnel.

Such a Big Infantry Division actually matches the combat ability of a standard Star Realm Army Division. In fact, it can be slightly more effective than the average Star Realm Army.

The so-called effectiveness is not only due to stronger firepower and additional air defense and aviation units but also in the quality of personnel.

C-class divisions can ensure a coverage of over 60% T5 level soldiers.

The C-class Armored Composite Brigade has far fewer personnel, about 14,000 people. It has around 1,000 armored vehicles of all kinds, from infantry fighting vehicles to armored personnel carriers to anti-air vehicles to wheeled assault guns to communication command vehicles...everything is included. The main fighting force comes from 320 Lion Tanks and 40 Lion King Tanks.

Without mentioning the logistic companies, engineering units, and these units of the composite and tank battalions, the composite brigade also has air force squadrons and air defense battalions.

These five Armored Composite Brigades are the main offensive force of a C-class corps.

The Skeleton Division, on the other hand, has 60,000 people, with equipment basically combining a Big Infantry Division and an Armored Brigade, mainly capable of independent operations. Infantry have noticeably more explosive machine guns, plasma guns, and thermic sprayers, with a special brigade in charge of the most difficult tasks, even for airborne and special operations.

Combined, this totals to 62 million, and including those directly under the corps, such as several air force groups and strategic firepower, the total cost can reach 75 million.

A C-class Army Group is composed of 20 such corps, with twenty million people, along with more strategic firepower, strategic mobility facilities, engineering teams, and several strategic air commands.

The Alliance's requirement for division-level units is to independently or collaboratively be responsible for single combat area objectives, with a general combat width of no less than 40 kilometers, usually around 70 to 100 kilometers.

This is under normal combat intensity. When necessary, if a large number of troops need stacking to form more batches of combat or to stack more troops for frontal combat, this number might change.

The specific requirements depend on tactical needs.

When engaging enemies with heavy firepower, you surely can't stack recklessly, as that would be sending men to their deaths, like when facing human traitors. However, when dealing with enemies like the Insect Swarm, you need to stack more densely, especially in terms of concentrated firepower; otherwise, you can't stop the seemingly endless frontal assault by the Insect Swarm. Green Skin Orcs are somewhat in between.

The requirement for corps is to lead combat in a divided section of a planet; Army Groups can independently meet the operational needs of an entire planet.

Of course, all this also depends on the intensity of the war.

At the level of apocalypse-level battles, don't even mention divisions; the consumption rate of a corps is calculated by days. An army group may finish in ten days to half a month, possibly concentrating on a few hundred kilometers of width at critical battlefields.

All situations require specific analysis.

If you insist on saying a normal condition, an ideal condition, this is how the classification is made.

A C-class Army Group basically corresponds to a normal Imperial Star Realm Army Group, often much stronger.

By the B-class division, Big Infantry Divisions will start equipping more Exoskeleton Armors, Plasma Cannons, and Thermite Cannons, more Sentinel Mechas, and the level of aircraft in the division's air squadron will be higher, for instance, substituting more Wind Falcons with Qilin Fighters, significantly increasing overall mobility and defensive abilities.

The numbers remain about 44,000, but the total cost will soar to 4.5 million, almost three times that of a C-class division.

The B-class Armored Division will increase the number of Lion King Tanks to 120 and equip 30 Holy Sword tanks — which are larger and stronger than Lion King Tanks. The entire cost will rise to 15 million.

The B-class corps will require at least 50% of its divisions to be B-class. B-class Army Groups also require at least 50% of the corps to be B-class.

These B-class divisions, corps, and army groups are compared to those renowned Star Realm Armies.

They can basically overwhelm normal Star Realm armed forces.

In fact, many wealthy Starfighter Battle Groups' auxiliary armies are also at this level.

When reaching A-class divisions, that truly hits the top. All infantry have Exoskeletons, with quite a few Feedback-Type Power Armors; many Dragon Elephant War Machines among aircraft, their combat abilities being extraordinarily impressive.

And in terms of personnel, the numbers of T4 and T3 level soldiers are also noteworthy.

In armored divisions, more Holy Sword tanks are present, and Titans are equipped.

An A-class corps requires 8 or more A-class divisions, with the rest all B-class.

A-class Army Groups are similar.

The standard for constructing A-class army forces by the Alliance is to form the Empire's strongest mortal troops, surpassing most of the Star Realm Army — including those renowned Star Realm Army Groups.

Chapter 772

"The new era depends on you."

When Mei Zheng said this to Li Ang, she was very serious.

Li Ang crossed his arms, leaned against the wall, and shifted the topic as he looked Mei Zheng up and down: "You don't seem to be in good shape."

Mei Zheng smiled slightly: "As long as I'm not dead, there's no need to worry too much. These injuries were sustained when shielding Xie Lian. When the Divine Bird Building collapsed, we had already retreated some distance through the underground passage we dug previously. Anyway, we survived and came back; with Doctor Yuan here, how could I possibly die?"

She sighed again: "But Ye Lixiao... she's in really bad shape. Her entire body was shattered, and without ecological support, her brain almost perished. Fortunately, we prepared for the worst before the operation and brought temporary cultivation fluid to maintain Ye Lixiao's brain activity. After bringing her back, Doctor Yuan has been working on this and she is still not out of danger."

Li Ang sighed and said: "She'll be fine. As long as her brain remains alive, I've brought her a great gift."

He was referring to the female warrior clone, Xie Lian's sister, Xie An.

As the ultimate result of the Divine Bird Group's 'humanoid weapon' project, Xie An's condition was very similar to Ye Lixiao's. Li Ang and Yuan Yingzhi's abilities were unquestionable, but given the limited time previously, the temporary body made for her and the simulation neural connection for her brain were not perfect. They had no previous experience or technical expertise in this area...

Under such circumstances, being able to create a body for Ye Lixiao that could move, and with decent strength, was already impressive.

However, it could never match the reliability of the 'humanoid weapon' project, which had been worked on for many years with tremendous manpower and resources.

Regardless of whether to crudely attach Ye Lixiao's head on the female warrior Xie An's body... hmm, that's a bit too crude... or to create a custom body for Ye Lixiao using the 'humanoid weapon' project data acquired by Li Ang, both are options.

As for Mei Zheng, she indeed said the truth. Though significantly injured, unlike Ye Lixiao, her body wasn't completely shattered, allowing her to retreat herself, which isn't too bad. With Yuan Yingzhi, an expert in medicine, she shouldn't have a major problem.

Yao Xiaomu was in a similar situation. She overused the energy of the 'Dark Side of Sky Net', which put a tremendous mental and physical strain on her. Fortunately, she is immune to the harm caused by this energy, so her current condition only requires sufficient rest to recover.

For Yao Xiaomu, the greatest burden of overusing the 'Dark Side of Sky Net' power was mental. In such times, she was more susceptible to the negative emotions brought on by this energy.

In the past, this was what Yao Xiaomu feared the most. But now, with Li Ang, she is no longer afraid.

After Li Ang's return, he severed the connection between her and the Dark Side of Sky Net, freeing her from its negative emotional invasion and allowing her to embrace sweet dreams once more.

As for the Rebel Army, they committed significant resources to this operation, most importantly a tunnel boring machine that allowed quiet and efficient digging. Obviously, during the retreat, such a large piece of equipment couldn't be taken back, which was a major loss.

Additionally, besides their main group, many elite fighters from the Rebel Army participated in the operation. During the battle from the depths of the Divine Bird Building upwards, there were casualties; and the largest spike in casualties occurred when the female warrior led the counterattack. Many core members of the Rebel Army were lost in this battle.

The loss of these core members severely weakened the Rebel Army.

However, it was still worth it.

Setting aside the defeat of Xie Lian and capture of Xie An, the collection of all of Wang Su's Magic Artifacts; just infiltrating the Divine Bird Building and collapsing the headquarters of the Divine Bird Group, their symbolic building, alone was of immense value!

Such an achievement greatly shocked all of Era City.

Furthermore, the earlier incident with the Yunlang Group being attacked...

If in the past, all major forces and citizens of Era City perceived the Rebel Army merely as a somewhat uniquely branded opposition or gang, now their perspective had to change.

Perhaps, for most who have never seen the Rebel Army's ways, it may still be hard to believe in their agenda. However, they now undeniably believe in the Rebel Army's strength.

Punching Divine Bird, kicking down Yunlang, is there anyone in Era City more formidable than them?

The government and police stations were in panic, as were major commercial groups, while the emotions among Era City's populace were complex and varied to summarize. But there was one group that, upon learning of these events, quickly aligned themselves with the Rebel Army:

Mercenaries, gangs.

These were groups already opposing the police and Era City's major corporations, and they flocked to join. They hoped to ride on the banner of the Rebel Army in their actions.

Li Ang also reminded Mei Zheng about this.

"Now is a good time to expand the team; we can recruit new members from these people. But we must ensure the team's purity; these individuals have varying qualities, and we mustn't let your team become tainted."

To this caution, Mei Zheng smiled and said: "You don't need to worry; I will definitely do that. I have never forgotten our ideals. We established the Rebel Army, opposing large corporations not for mere expansion of power or territory. Otherwise, how would we be different from those illegal organizations? I'm the last person who wants our team to lose its essence."

After pausing, Mei Zheng continued: "However, we do need more manpower. Now is a good opportunity. Both Yunlang and Divine Bird have suffered heavy blows. We've endured great sacrifices and tough battles. Now it's time to reap the rewards. I will take advantage of the time when Divine Bird and Yunlang's leadership is scattered to seize, commandeer their assets. It's not easy, and we'll be busy for an extended period. Our influence isn't strong enough for us to do so freely, our intimidation factor will be time-bound, and our martial force is far from what outsiders imagine. We need allies, and we can't eliminate all companies and government organizations to establish our order... at least not yet. So, while we've knocked down the two strongest enemies, we can't make everyone our enemies. We need friends to establish an order that aligns with our ideals..."

"I can see that." Li Ang said, "You're clear-headed; you haven't let recent events go to your head, and that puts me at ease."

Mei Zheng shook her head, a bit weary, possibly due to injuries or the many tasks ahead: "I'll be very busy later, but I'm not afraid of hard work. What I need most is your help."

"Just tell me what you need, and I'll help however I can."

"As I said earlier, the new era depends on you."

"Uh..."

"No dodging the issue," Mei Zheng said sternly. "You know what I'm talking about."

"Sigh..." Li Ang sighed, a rare hint of anxiety and worry on his face. "Of course, I know what you mean—Wang Su's Magic Artifacts, we've collected them all... but I still have my doubts about this."

"What doubts?" Mei Zheng asked, puzzled and somewhat anxious, "We've sacrificed so much! Worked so hard for so long! You yourself almost died for this. Now we've finally succeeded, what doubts could you possibly have?"

Li Ang didn't answer, his expression becoming more conflicted.

Mei Zheng looked more anxious, opening her mouth to speak, but then biting back her words.

Taking several deep breaths to suppress her irritation, she slowly began to speak: "I respect your thoughts, and I'm willing to give you space and time to contemplate your concerns. I'll be very busy with lots to do, but I'll always have time reserved for you. Once you've sorted out your thoughts, you can come to me at any time."

She paused, then stepped forward, came very close to Li Ang, and said: "I don't want to pressure you into any choice. I will only say this: our new order needs your strength."

Having said that, Mei Zheng hugged Li Ang and left without looking back.

Chapter 773: Type 3 Divisions

A-class army units, the effect they produce can meet the requirements set during their formation.

Within the Empire, how many units can boast the combat effectiveness of an A-class Division?

Perhaps there are some, such as those like Kashen.

However, the difference lies in that these other units within the Empire, which can reach a similar level of combat effectiveness, are all small-scale units, precious elites to be used as a sharp blade at critical moments.

But where else, like the Alliance, establishes such high-level units as regular forces?

Of course, an A-class Division is extremely expensive. The cost of a single infantry division can rise to 50 million, with the most expensive part being those hundreds of Feedback-Type Power Armors.

But even such an infantry division would cause significant casualties and take a long time for a Star Warrior Trooper Squad to bite through.

If even the Interstellar Warriors have a hard time achieving victory, let alone any ordinary units.

Having such an infantry division stationed at some critical position serves as a line of defense for the front.

On the other hand, the cost of an A-class Armored Division directly soars to 120 million, with the most expensive being 2 Warlord Level Titans, plus 8 Warhound-class Titans. When paired with several hundred tanks, including over a hundred Lion Kings and more than fifty Holy Sword tanks, even if a position is held by a Star Warrior Trooper Squad, an A-class Armored Division can attempt an attack.

Of course, the premise is that the enemy doesn't have too many Terminators or Dreadnought Mechs, nor too many Interstellar Warrior exclusive armored vehicles. Otherwise, there's not much hope in a fight.

However, this is merely one division compared to the extraordinary warriors like the Interstellar Warriors.

In a key battle, the Alliance can deploy eight such A-class Divisions from one A-class Army Group, along with numerous B-class Divisions for coordinated warfare.

Even the Interstellar Warriors can't withstand such an offensive.

Moreover, by that point, the Alliance will inevitably dispatch Interstellar Warriors to follow, or send in the Glory Guards.

There must be equivalent combat; they won't let ordinary warriors die in vain by fighting bloodily against the Interstellar Warriors until the very end.

In the plans of the Military Affairs Department, the future total troop strength of the Alliance Army will be maintained at the scale of 150 Army Group clusters, halved compared to the Iron Armor War period.

Among them, the ratio of A/B/C type Army Groups will be maintained at 1:1:1, with 50 each.

The total troop strength is about 3 billion, with a total cost nearing a trillion.

It seems like a lot, but compared to the area controlled by the Alliance and the potential future wartime needs, it is seriously insufficient.

During the Iron Armor War, the Alliance already had a total troop strength of 50 billion. Nowadays, the actual control area is more than twice the size it was back then, yet the troop strength has drastically decreased. How can it be enough?

Even when accounting for the Planetary Defense Force, which has required numbers of B-class and C-class units, it is for the sake of quickly conscripting troops from the Defense Army to fill the needs of the Alliance Army when necessary. Nevertheless, it is still not enough.

Not to mention, the current 150 Army Group clusters aren't even at full strength, with many units having the designation of Army Groups or Divisions but lacking personnel and equipment. Veterans continue to retire, and while there are many new recruits being conscripted at training centers across the Alliance, few actually make it into the Army, with most transitioning to reserves and returning to civilian life after training.

In the past fifteen years, the Alliance has focused on economic construction, and given the overall peaceful environment, hasn't been able to invest large sums in building the Army. It's thanks to the considerable efforts of institutions like the Army General Staff, Army Organization Department, and Military Affairs Department that they managed to construct the framework for 150 Army Group clusters with a limited budget. It's remarkable and unrealistic to demand more.

However, these frameworks are very meaningful.

As long as the budget is in place, General Yan Fangxu assuredly patted his chest, saying he could prepare half the troops to peak combat effectiveness within three months; in five months, all 150 Army Group clusters could be restored to normal combat effectiveness.

And if needed, the surplus development of a large number of lower and middle-level officers could rapidly form new units. The experienced methods of constructing the three types of divisions can be fully replicated, and they are ready with corresponding preparations.

In response, while Gu Hang expressed his approval, he also set requirements.

The Military Affairs Department, under Tadeusz, must fully cooperate with Yan Fangxu to do a good job in Army construction. The Alliance needs the capability to, within a year, rapidly expand the Army's strength to over 300 Army Group clusters while strictly maintaining the ratio of the three types of divisions, Army Groups, and Army clusters, ensuring the Army's combat effectiveness.

Of course, this is under the premise of sufficient funding. Gu Hang required that the Alliance must possess such a level of mobilization and organizational capability.

It is indeed quite a challenging task, Yan Fangxu smiled wryly after hearing it, and Tadeusz frowned upon hearing it.

The challenge is significant.

However, there is also good news.

In the future, the Army's budget will be increased, with a focus on building this mobilization capability to come into play at critical times.

After a brief discussion with Yan Fangxu, Tadeusz took on this task.

This will be the direction of the Army's efforts for the next one to two years.

In reality, what they have been doing over the past fifteen years is similar: building the Army framework, building organizational mobilization capability, and maintaining Army combat effectiveness under limited funding to ensure rapid Army expansion when needed.

Next, it's just a matter of strengthening these aspects further.

...

When it comes to the Navy, the situation is different.

If the Army has, over the past fifteen years, been like a bear hibernating in dormant mode, maintaining and even expanding its framework while waiting for plentiful food to bulk up...

Then the Navy has been methodically updating its fleet and developing with a long-term perspective.

During these fifteen years, the overall scale of the Navy fleet hasn't actually increased, remaining around two thousand ships.

However, the Navy's core combat effectiveness has placed more emphasis on ship quality relative to the number of ships.

Especially concerning the number of large-caliber cannons on large ships.

In this respect, the Alliance has made progress.

The ability to produce ships quickly is, of course, very important and crucial for the Navy. But shipbuilding always takes time; building a ship, especially one above the Battleship level, often spans three to five years. It's not feasible to do it like the Army, starting construction when the war breaks out and finishing the battleships when who knows how far the war has progressed.

The Navy must maintain a strong fleet, and this expense really can't be spared too much.

Chapter 774: The Mighty Alliance Navy

Due to the unique nature of the long construction cycle and large investment in building a naval fleet, it's not feasible to operate like the army; a sufficiently strong fleet must be maintained at all times. Otherwise, if ships are not built when not needed, there will be none available when they are.

However, it's impossible to freely build ships to expand the size of the Alliance Fleet in a chaotic manner over fifteen years.

No fiscal situation, no matter how good, can withstand such a bottomless pit.

Currently, the shipbuilding industry within the Alliance is already very advanced. A significant portion of the Alliance's considerable investments in the navy is actually reflected in the expansion of shipyards.

The shipbuilding industry also plays an important role in the Alliance's economic development.

As a terminal industry, shipbuilding can drive and integrate the entire upstream and downstream of the manufacturing industry.

From raw material extraction to processing, from industrial infrastructure to arms... in terms of scale and technological content, shipbuilding is the most critical industrial jewel.

If it weren't for the high technological content of ship manufacturing, the slow pace of shipyard expansion, and the high requirements for various comprehensive industries and a solid industrial foundation, the Alliance would want to build shipyards in every place under its jurisdiction.

Even if this hasn't been achieved, there are three major shipbuilding centers in the Dragonhawk Star Domain: Seven Horse Territory, Yunluo Center, and Jindi Star Center.

The former needs no more words, as the shipyards on Rage Owl Star and Flying Wing Star are centrally located in the Alliance's territorial dominion, having always been prioritized for development. Any new technologies or advancements were realized at these two shipyards. Later, to maximize human resource allocation, a large-scale shipyard was built in Korolya, the most populous area of the Tianma Star Sector.

After the three shipyards in the Tianma Star Sector were expanded significantly, related industries continued to spill over. Facilities for building small ships, which have relatively lower technology requirements and minimal industrial clustering needs, were dismantled and towed away by transport and engineering ships from Rage Owl Star and Flying Wing Star to the other six sectors of Seven Horse Territory.

Yunluo Center already had the capability to build civilian ships and was a primary target for Alliance development.

Jindi Star is the Founding World of the Mingyang Sect, which has now become part of the Alliance framework.

It's said that the Sect of Mechanics has a transcendental status within the Empire, which, in both political tradition and clear law, is guaranteed.

However, the reality must be considered.

Jindi Star, being situated within such a powerful Alliance territory, could not possibly retain its independence indefinitely.

Even the stronger Alamita Sect (formerly the Alfonso Sect) has completely submitted to the Alliance.

They are no exception.

Moreover, their submission is quite willing.

Since aligning with the Alliance, they have been thriving.

Originally, they were just an ordinary small sect on the Empire's frontier, with nothing special. During the Iron Armor War, thanks to orders from the Alliance, they enjoyed a very prosperous period; after the war, their cooperation with the Alliance became even smoother. Although, in name, the highest

authority on Jindi Star is still the Council of Sages and the Founding General, in practice, nearly all from lower-level management cadres to core factory managers are Alliance personnel.

The sages of the Mingyang Sect have no objections to this.

The Alliance's administrators have handled matters very well.

As for power?

Indeed, losing power can be quite disheartening and concerning. However, the Alliance provides a sense of security, ensuring their status won't be stripped away. At the same time, the Alliance has given them even greater benefits.

With their development, more abundant resources are available for them to pursue specialized research; the Alliance's demands drive their technologies to be applied on a large scale. Most importantly, the Alliance even offers technological feedback to the Principal Sages, whether from its own technology or interactions with the Alamita Sect, the effects are notable.

Then, there are the black boxes.

Although applying for a new black box is somewhat challenging and everyone must compete, the quality of the black boxes offered by the Alliance is indeed mesmerizingly high.

In conclusion, Jindi Star's industries, not just shipbuilding, are essentially all utilized by the Alliance. In return, the Alliance has given them ample rewards, and the development speed of Jindi Star over these years has been staggering even to themselves.

These three major shipbuilding centers aren't all.

There's also a large shipbuilding center each in the Menghe Star Domain and the Alfonso Star Domain.

In other star domains, shipyards may not be as large, but building some small and civilian ships is definitely feasible.

The strong production capacity

is also the core of the rapid development of the Alliance's commercial fleets over the years.

But even if the Alliance's commercial fleets have a high demand for ships, it's actually impossible to fully accommodate it.

The warships produced, needless to say.

A significant portion of these ships is sold off.

A portion of the sales, half of it flows into the Imperial Tax and falls into the hands of the Imperial Central Government. But in reality, only 2% of the ships are directly handed over as Imperial Tax.

The price there is too unfair; there is a considerable price difference in between, with big figures profiting.

Either as fronts or other forces purchasing ships from the Alliance at prices higher than those set by the Department of Taxation, paying in Alliance currencies or other assets.

Chapter 774: The Mighty Alliance Navy (Part 2)

Then, nearly half of these buyers on Lingze Star sold their ships on the spot to the Imperial Military Department and the Navy Command. They used the budget to purchase the ships and paid the tax coins given to them when the Imperial Taxation Department approved the budget.

These tax coins ended up in the hands of the Alliance, paying the Imperial Tax on behalf of them.

That is to say, half of the ships sold by the Alliance indeed ended up in the hands of the Central Empire. But actually, most of them changed hands from elsewhere, equivalent to being bought by the Empire. This price is often 30% to 150% higher than the Department of Taxation's pricing for each type of ship.

The money in between was jointly profited by the Alliance and intermediaries; the Central Empire essentially paid the same price to buy at most 60% of the warships.

Normally, the Central Empire would never allow such profiteering by intermediaries.

Even if it complies with regulations, it is not acceptable.

To be honest, the Empire is the mightiest. Regardless of whether you comply with the regulations, you all make money but I lose, isn't my power wasted?

However, the so-called 'Empire' is not a living person. What if the people who determine the will of the Central Empire are the bigwigs behind those intermediaries making money?

Then...

Prime Minister Qi Bodu, Prime Minister Xu Fuzhen, Prime Minister Luo Fei, those of the National Church, the Imperial General Chamber of Commerce, and the power families hidden beneath the political scene on Holy Terra...

Who doesn't have a share?

Even for Qi Bodu, there are rules on how the money earned by the Central Empire is spent, and even he cannot decide arbitrarily; decisions are made through meetings.

But the money in one's own hands is different.

Spend it however you like.

Furthermore, at this stage, even if Qi Bodu wants to stop the trade on Lingze Star that significantly harms the Empire's interests, he is powerless.

He is indeed the greatest power figure, but power requires others to believe in you. Those united around him think following him will bring them bigger and more profits, so they stay with him. Those bigwigs making money from this are his ruling foundation.

He could cruelly cut himself once, but he couldn't cut at his ruling base. The chain reaction it might trigger could be unbearable even for him.

Who doesn't know this would nourish the Alliance?

The enlightened people on Holy Terra (mainly those making money from this) cursed the trade on Lingze Star fervently.

But it still operated like this and seemed likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

There's nowhere to argue.

No matter what others do, the Alliance is in it, making loads of money silently through shipbuilding.

The money earned, besides reinvestment in the economic construction, a considerable part was spent on naval upgrades.

The size of over two thousand warships did not expand further, but the number of large ships significantly increased.

Currently, the Alliance Navy possesses 3 Emperor-class Battleships.

Retribution-class Battleships.

Zhuge-class Aircraft Carriers.

Dragonsnake-class and Holy Grail-class Battlecruisers.

In total, just these giant ships have reached the scale of 37 ships.

This already surpasses the Iron Armor Battle Group at the start of the Iron Armor War.

The number of supporting cruisers, destroyers, and escort ships appears somewhat insufficient, making the fleet's small ships seem rather stingy.

But the speed of producing small to medium-sized warships is very fast, unlike these giants, which have huge time costs.

Moreover, if needed, the next batch of warships from the Alliance can directly go to the Navy without taxes or trades. Within two years, the total scale of naval giants can be doubled to over 70 ships if cost is of no object.

Not to mention, another wave of naval power hasn't been counted.

That is the Alliance's 'Six Battle Groups', serving as the battle group fleet of the interstellar warriors.

Strike Cruisers are not counted here; they have continuously produced four combat barges.

Not a single one has been sold, with one given to Phoenix, one to Yellow Springs Seagull, one to Blood Shark, and one to Spear of the Dragon King.

Worth noting, the Emperor-class Battleships and Combat Barges both utilize Apocalypse-level Technology.

These were drawn out by Gu Hang over these fifteen years.

In the past fifteen years, although there were no large scale wars or windfall income, Gu Hang accumulated 5.5 billion Gift Points solely from monthly Gift Points income and some small scale war earnings.

2.6 billion were used for technology lottery draws, with 26 draws of the ten million Gift Points tier, yielding two Apocalypse-level technologies, precisely the Emperor-class Battleship and Combat Barge technology.

As for the remaining 2.9 billion Gift Points, they were basically gradually spent over the 15 years on various types of construction in the Alliance, without detailing further.

The appearance of these two Apocalypse-level shipbuilding technologies greatly advanced the Alliance's shipbuilding industry further.

Apart from these, the Alliance also has a highly confidential class weapon that seldom enters Alliance ports, and every such entry is tightly sealed.

The Glory Queen-class Warship is finally built.

Gu Hang named it: the East.

The Alliance has clear rules for naming ships: for cruiser level and below, aside from the navy number, the names are generally formidable or meaningful, rather casually chosen.

But from battlecruisers and above, they are named after planets within the Alliance. Usually, important planets are chosen, also as a means of united front propaganda there.

Further up should be the names of Star Sectors or Star Domains, but those have never been used—jumping directly to naming by Cosmos Domain.

A bit unusual, but it makes sense on the Glory Queen with not many even in the entire Empire.

The specific name ’East’ is also quite intriguing.

Although the Alliance originated in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, only two out of their entire 14 Star Domains are in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, while the majority lie in the Spiderweb Domain. Gu Hang’s biggest official identity is also being elected as High Lord of the Spiderweb Cosmic Domain Chair.

Logically speaking, naming this Glory Queen the Spiderweb would be more appropriate, wouldn’t it?

No, Gu Hang explicitly wanted to use the name ’East’ for the Alliance’s first Glory Queen.

Undoubtedly, this showcases Gu Hang’s ambition.

This was also discussed following his naval construction suggestions in a subsequent small-scale meeting, relating to the Alliance’s next-phase objective.

The entire Eastern Cosmos Domain.

This is a big deal, requiring some timing.

The Alliance, as it is now, has already provoked considerable vigilance. The Central Empire won’t allow the Alliance to continue expanding.

Some variables are required.

But the Alliance won’t wait idly.

Part of the variables have already been deployed on Holy Terra.

Just wait for it to happen.

Chapter 775

Variables, sometimes require patient waiting, and other times they occur naturally.

When the atmosphere is right, it naturally comes about.

Over in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, there's been a 'change of the heavens'.

A major event occurred on Wuji Star: the Cosmic Domain Chair has rebelled!

...

The current Eastern Cosmos Domain Chair is called Yinbasim.

Four years ago, the former Chair, Zuo Zhaofeng, as he wished, was promoted and became a Deputy Prime Minister of the Military Affairs Department.

Typically, this isn't achieved so quickly.

The Chair before Zuo Zhaofeng in the Eastern Cosmos Domain was only promoted to Deputy Prime Minister after a lifetime of struggling in the local government, and after serving a couple of years, he retired, basically just enjoying a retirement benefit.

The position of Cosmic Domain Chair is significant, even with the eligibility to elect a High Lord, but not everyone can advance to a high position in Central Empire.

The vice Premier of the Central Empire's departments, compared to an ordinary Cosmic Domain Chair, has debatably more power, but there's no question about status; the vice Premier holds a rank higher. Additionally, the allure of entering the power center of Holy Terra...unless someone is set on being a 'local emperor', most Empire politicians would choose to become a vice Premier.

Not to mention the Vice Premier position; there are even Cosmic Domain Chairs transitioning to become Assistant Ministers. This position is just a rank higher than a Deputy Minister, yet within a department, it's among the top seven figures.

Theoretically, including the Executive Council, Legal Department, Military Affairs Department, and Taxation Department, there are only eight vice Premier positions in total, so finding a vacancy is not easy. Even if one opens up, the competition pressure is intense; not only are the Cosmic Domain Chairs eyeing the vacancy, but Assistant Ministers and Deputy Ministers in various departments are also watching closely. It's not something you can just take if desired.

Zuo Zhaofeng, though he served as the Cosmic Domain Chair for over forty years, honestly, his position wasn't particularly solid, as if he had been slightly elevated. His qualifications and achievements were somewhat lacking, theoretically making it unlikely for him to contend for that vice Premier position.

However, there were two aspects of support.

Firstly, Galaraldo, the Military Affairs Department's Prime Minister, exerted effort from above. Zuo Zhaofeng belonged to him, even though he had gradually grasped the situation in the Military Affairs Department over the years, pushing a trustworthy ally to occupy a significant vice Premier position would also be helpful.

His position wasn't stable either, and his good relationship with Gu Hang meant he was never free from criticism, even sneaky moves from Prime Minister Zebert at times.

He was also wary, fearing that if a serious issue arose between the Central Empire and the Alliance, he would be the first to suffer.

Yet he never considered severing ties with the Alliance or with Gu Hang.

It wasn't because of his relationship with Gu Hang.

For a political animal like him, without extraordinary influences, emotions wouldn't replace his thinking.

But from a fundamental interest standpoint, he couldn't abandon or betray the Alliance.

What was his biggest foundation?

Initially, it was siding with the right faction upon the Sun Lord's death, packaging and selling off parts of the political legacy of Solaria and the Sun Lord that he could access at a good price.

Subsequently, following a former High Lord, Minister of Justice Ou Juren, he defeated his then superior, considered the Iron Armor Battle Group's backer in Holy Terra, Military Affairs Department Prime Minister and High Lord Norberto; then, alongside the Prime Minister, he took down Ou Juren.

During this process, he always chose the right side and rose step by step.

But he knew the foundation was extremely unstable. By now, he could be seen as almost a three-family servant, and regardless of what he did next, Zebert wouldn't trust him.

How could anyone trust someone who constantly switches allegiances and even backstabs his former bosses?

Zebert probably already wanted to kick him out for a long time.

They didn't kick him immediately because he recently helped take down Ou Juren —no matter how much they wanted to replace him, it wouldn't be appropriate to oust someone right after granting them benefits and allegiance—they still wanted to maintain some decorum, needed to wait a bit longer.

Adding to this, due to the unexpectedly long duration of the Iron Armor War, it wasn't advisable to have too much upheaval in the Military Affairs Department. Plus, his relationship with Gu Hang, when the West Line was a mess, the North Line had no progress, only the Southern Line was making advances...for many reasons, Galaraldo kept his position.

But continuing like this was not sustainable; without finding a solution, Zebert would eventually target him and remove him from power.

Why hasn’t he been deposed yet?

On one hand, internally at the Military Affairs Department, he gradually grew his influence, no longer just an outsider leader like at the beginning. Over a decade or two, he somewhat managed the internal structure of the Military Affairs Department, not purely displaying a politicking demeanor.

But honestly, this factor alone wasn’t enough to keep him in that position.

A larger factor lies in the very point where he was always criticized: his closeness with Gu Hang, like wearing the same pants, and the Alliance of today being exceptionally powerful.

His good relationship with Gu Hang, who had a ’notorious reputation’ in Central Empire, coupled with him being a three-family servant unloved by Zebert, what’s the reason he hasn’t fallen?

Chapter 775:

Isn’t it because there’s a sufficiently powerful alliance supporting us from the outside?

He’d be foolish to give up his greatest support for the sake of political opinions on Holy Terra. If he really listened to those remarks and cut ties with Gu Hang, standing against the Alliance, those who are earnestly persuading him now would be overjoyed inside, praise him with a few words, and then in a couple of years find an opportunity, or simply create one, to remove him from power.

That is absolutely the case.

To live well, the more criticism from the outside, the more he should assist Gu Hang earnestly. The two are already deeply entwined, and backstabbing Gu Hang cannot bring him any benefit, only ensuring that once he loses his greatest support, he will be settled scores with in the future.

Of course, while tightly clinging to the Alliance’s support, he must also be tough enough himself.

No matter how unstable his position is, he is ultimately the Prime Minister of the Military Affairs Department and High Lord, so managing his fundamental base well is very important.

This would stabilize his position and allow him to do his duty within the Military Affairs Department, helping Gu Hang, achieving two goals at once.

The purpose of promoting Zuo Zhaofeng, someone capable and ambitious, who works earnestly and follows orders in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, is essentially for this reason.

Of course, if Zuo Zhaofeng continued staying in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, it might be even more helpful for the Alliance's future plans.

Galaraldo also knows this.

But... He can't continue staying.

This brings up another reason for Zuo Zhaofeng's exceptional promotion to the Central Empire: he has performed 'too well' in the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

In terms of economic development and in generating more Imperial Tax, he has indeed done an outstanding job. His core path to success has been leading many Star Domains in the Eastern Cosmos Domain towards the Alliance with full dedication.

The trade route between the Alliance's south and the Eastern Cosmos Domain can be described as mutual pursuit and has developed to a remarkably substantial level. The annual trade volume between both sides quickly exceeded one trillion, then came two trillion, three trillion...

The extremely high trade volume has generated substantial profits and has tightly integrated the industries of both parties.

Both parties have started to heavily invest in each other.

There is considerable profit to be made here, especially for the many Planetary Governors and Star Domain Heads in the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

There’s no need to say much about the Alliance’s investment in them. As soon as a large sum is invested, the development status of the planet skyrockets. Even if those industries are partially owned by the Alliance, is the Alliance’s investment merely about the money?

It is indeed about the money; the Alliance is truly wealthy.

But other than the most crucial money and resources, what’s even more precious are the orders, trade agreements, and technological support that follow.

All these are enough to set a planet on the fast track to development.

As for the various dignitaries in the Eastern Cosmos Domain investing in the Alliance, that also represents an incredible opportunity. The Alliance often comes up with projects that are quite attractive, attracting investment, and these projects often make big money.

Some more significant and successful investors, the planetary governors of the Eastern Cosmos Domain, have even gone to live long-term on the Alliance’s side.

The living conditions over there, especially in the core economic zone of the Alliance, are far superior to those planets governed by provincial Planetary Governors.

It’s not that they lack money, but does having money ensure a good life?

Not necessarily.

Money can buy almost everything, but... there must be things available for purchase.

The grand cityscapes, ’Eden’ technology-crafted ecological zones, rich entertainment and leisure products, abundant luxury supplies, high-end social circles... all these things are unattainable, no matter how much money they have, in their own hometowns.

Of course, these things are not exclusive to the Alliance. However, the Planetary Governors of the Eastern Cosmos Domain do not have many other options. In the past, they hesitated to leave their planets unattended to vacation or live elsewhere, primarily because they dared not.

Their foundations may not be particularly stable, and leaving for too long risks losing authority, their subordinates may no longer obey them, nor contribute wealth to support their luxurious lifestyles. Even those with relatively stable authority can easily lose power if gone for long.

Lose power, lose everything.

But the reason why they aren't afraid of this complication when mingling with the Alliance is due to the protection they receive from the Alliance.

The planet's development relies on the Alliance, and after establishing inseparable economic relationships, further personal interest relationships naturally form seamlessly.

Politically and militarily, it works the same way.

They find that hiring government managers directly from excellent graduates of the Alliance's universities is very effective. These individuals are loyal, scientific, strictly focused on their goals, and very skilled at dealing with the Alliance's own trade system.

Moreover, they discovered that training soldiers in the Alliance's manner is also reliable. Indeed, they can opt for the full package: officers, equipment, organization, training methods... all fully handled by the Alliance. They just need to provide funding, and in this way, the Defense Army they build is not only stronger than the previous old-model armies but astonishingly cost-effective.

When officials and military officers are provided by the Alliance, doesn't that render these Planetary Governors as empty shells, isolated from real power?

It does seem a bit that way.

But the core difference lies in that the Alliance's full package is transparently offered.

If you want peace of mind, choose the ’full package deal’; if doubts remain, you can reduce configurations from the full package, such as only importing military equipment, or even just importing weapon production lines to stimulate development; forbidding Alliance personnel from taking managerial roles, maintaining trade contacts only...

However you wish to handle it, it’s entirely up to you.

Even when opting for the ’full package deal,’ the reality remains that officers and administrative personnel work for the Planetary Governors. If they wish to intervene in administration or military affairs, they can do so freely and at any time. They can dismiss personnel, request replacements from the Alliance at will...

In essence, you get a group of individuals who, though not of your own, are highly professional and capable ’workers.’

What’s there to be dissatisfied about?

Not only the Planetary Governors but even those powerful Star Domain Heads, many of them do things in this way.

Indeed, within the Eastern Cosmos Domain, three Star Domains have even signed military outsourcing contracts with the Alliance. They have disbanded their armies completely demilitarizing, and handed over their military safety concerns entirely to the Alliance in exchange for a fee.

Saving money, less pressure, faster development, allowing the dignitaries more income... why not?

These are indeed benefits for them, but from the perspective of the Central Empire, this is utter rebellion!

Doing this, how is it different from handing the Eastern Cosmos Domain over to Gu Hang?

And they could reach this extent largely due to the encouragement from Zuo Zhaofeng, the Cosmic Domain Chair.

Zuo Zhaofeng cannot continue in the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

...

In essence, this brought in a batch of people who, although not their own, are highly professional and competent 'workers.'

What is there to be dissatisfied about?

Not only Planetary Governors, but even some Star Domain Heads with significant power do things this way.

Indeed, in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, three Star Domains have signed military outsourcing contracts with the Alliance. They disbanded all their armies, completely demilitarizing, and turned their military security over to the Alliance in exchange for some fees.

Saving money, reducing pressure, facilitating faster development, and providing more income for the dignitaries... why not?

These are indeed benefits for them, but from the perspective of the Central Empire, this is utter rebellion!

Doing this, what distinguishes it from handing over the Eastern Cosmos Domain to Gu Hang?

And they could reach this extent largely due to the encouragement from Zuo Zhaofeng, the Cosmic Domain Chair.

Zuo Zhaofeng cannot continue in the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

Chapter 776: Damn, What a Loss

The long-term strategy of the Alliance is to peacefully transform the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

Through powerful economic and cultural influence, infiltrate the political and military sectors.

There's no talk of 'winning without fighting,' it's about directly taking over the entire Cosmos Domain.

And Yinbasim is here to change all of that.

However, when he first arrived, he was full of confidence, but after a few years, he became increasingly haggard.

Much more difficult than imagined!

He brought strong troops with him.

Of course, not to clash with the Alliance.

Even if he wanted to, the Central Empire wouldn't allow it.

And they wouldn't win anyway. Who doesn't know the Alliance can fight?

But using them to deal with local forces in the Eastern Cosmos Domain poses no problem.

The troops he brought are here for this purpose, to see who dares to resist.

With military force guaranteed, whatever he plans to do next, wouldn't it be smooth sailing?

As for the possibility of Alliance interference... it is possible, but after analysis, it is unlikely to be military interference.

The Alliance has no reasonable justification for doing this.

A large-scale invasion, directly forming military confrontation in the Eastern Cosmos Domain with the Central Empire, would be too outrageous.

In the following years, the development direction of events was roughly as Yinbasim expected.

The Alliance indeed had no way to carry out direct military intervention, and even political intervention was difficult, they could only strengthen economic trade and enhance the binding effect between the two sides.

However, the problem lies precisely here.

The Alliance and the Eastern Cosmos Domain's elites are too deeply bound in economic interests. The reform that Yinbasim promoted to de-ally is undoubtedly cutting off people's livelihoods.

That's akin to killing their parents.

Unrest is inevitable.

This was within his expectations.

But those elites did not resist openly; instead, they continuously engaged in underhanded maneuvers.

Yinbasim initially tried appeasement, but when that didn't work, he resorted to heavy-handed suppression.

Amid pulling and unrest, even the Imperial Tax of the Eastern Cosmos Domain began to be affected.

The supporters of the Galaraldo faction in the Alliance continually attacked him over the Empire's tax reduction, which became the biggest leverage against him.

He was under significant pressure, but fortunately, he also had supporters, keeping his position temporarily stable and even providing him additional manpower.

In such a situation, he began to suppress more harshly, to the extent of breaking ties and killing to establish authority.

However, he then found it was not so easy to kill people.

Many times, he couldn't kill them at all!

Once he made a move, he found the person missing.

There are two layers to this problem:

How did people get advance notice and then flee?

How did people flee, leaving no trace to be found?

These two problems point to two essentials.

Firstly, his subordinates are likely thoroughly infiltrated, with decisions leaking out immediately once an order is given.

Secondly, the Alliance must have already interfered. Their elite agents probably already entered various core areas of the Eastern Cosmos Domain. With the cooperation of locally infiltrated personnel, they can quickly transfer people away and send them into the Alliance's territory.

On the covert battlefield, the people he brought suffered a complete defeat.

Even when Yinbasim decided to completely abandon local personnel and use only those he brought from Holy Terra, this problem still wasn't resolved well.

Staying in the Eastern Cosmos Domain long enough, even the people from Holy Terra couldn't maintain high loyalty.

After all, this is not elsewhere; they also need to eat, drink, and interact with local people in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, inevitably having contact with the ubiquitous Alliance agents, making infiltration common.

Furthermore, perhaps before they arrived in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, when they set out from Holy Terra, there were already some informants among them.

Even if Yinbasim insists on using his own people, he inevitably has to rely on locals for obtaining intelligence, familiarizing with the local environment, local supplies... all depend on locals.

His personnel is at a disadvantage compared to the Alliance's agents' front line.

Indeed, Yinbasim gradually realized: all this is formed under the Alliance's restraint. If the Alliance stops restraining itself, they might even take his life.

The so-called experts he brought from Holy Terra, whether psychic or dozens of assassins from the Assassin Court, were all useless, unable to save his life.

Frustrated, Yinbasim even considered letting it all go.

The pressure from Holy Terra is immense, and the work in the Eastern Cosmos Domain is not going well. He was criticized from above and below, making the job truly unpleasant.

He thought it might be better to be dismissed, return to Holy Terra to find another opportunity, and leave this mess in the Eastern Cosmos Domain to whoever wants it, he wasn't willing to serve it anymore.

But he couldn't do that.

Recently, someone he couldn't refuse in Holy Terra gave him a clear demand.

With a bitter face, he could only keep working.

Then, the Alliance received a message: Yinbasim, in his capacity as the Cosmic Domain Chair, issued orders prohibiting trade with the Alliance and enforcing a trade ban.

Chapter 776: Damned Big Loss_2

An excuse is certainly needed, something like 'for the overall safety of the Eastern Cosmos Domain', or talk of 'economic construction internal circulation', can all be made up on the fly.

But everyone knows what this embargo is really for.

Along with the embargo, Yinbasim issued orders to detain all currently docked Alliance merchant ships on a total of 18 planets, including the Cosmic Domain Capital - Wuji Star, and arrest all Alliance personnel.

This is tearing things apart!

He's completely betraying the local forces of the Eastern Cosmos Domain, it's stirring up rebellion in the Eastern Cosmos Domain!

In the previous years, no matter how fiercely Yinbasim clashed with the Alliance's agents on the dark front, he never reached this point.

In the shadows, the Alliance lost people, no matter how Yinbasim arranged the evidence, the Alliance could refuse to admit these were theirs; even undeniable evidence was useless, they'd simply harden their stance and accuse it of being falsified.

Of course, most of the time the Alliance succeeded; Yinbasim would say they did it, but the Alliance wouldn't admit it.

Quite normal.

If one day the Alliance actually admitted it, Yinbasim would be in trouble: If you admit it, what can you do?

Better to maintain some tacit agreement like now, isn't that the best?

However, now openly exposing the conflict and directly directing the accusations at the Alliance, that spells trouble.

This is like stepping on the gas towards the abyss in the relationship between the Alliance and the Central Empire.

Regarding the situation analysis, Yinbasim also reported to his superiors.

He has suffered enough from the Alliance in the Eastern Cosmos Domain; theoretically, he should loathe the Alliance. Yet, precisely because of this, he is fully aware of how influential and powerful the Alliance truly is, compared to those on Holy Terra. In fact, he's less optimistic about overturning the table with the Alliance.

But he isn't the one making the decisions; he's just an executor.

Nonetheless, his position isn't too low, so his superiors wouldn't just tell him to shut up and follow orders without any explanation.

They still explained the reason:

"The Alliance refused the Empire’s tax proposal; we must exert some pressure on them in certain areas."

Yinbasim agrees with this decision.

If the Alliance refuses to increase taxes without any consequences, how will negotiations proceed? How will the Empire’s authority be maintained?

From this perspective, the Empire does have to take action, indeed.

It would be better if someone else were to execute the actions.

Yet, he has no room for refusal, so he has to go along with it.

How will things develop next?

To be honest, Yinbasim himself doesn’t know.

He sent several requests to Holy Terra, hoping to get stronger military support.

When departing from Holy Terra, he had a Star Realm Army Group and a fleet along. These were almost enough to suppress the internal disturbances within the Eastern Cosmos Domain. However, facing the Alliance truly, it’s quite flimsy.

The Central Empire agreed but told him not to worry so soon. Troops need time to arrive, given the distance.

Even if the worst-case scenario happens, with such a vast Eastern Cosmos Domain, Yinbasim would possibly integrate forces, plus his available resources, sustaining for two or three years shouldn’t be a problem; surely support would arrive by then.

Yinbasim feels the folks on Holy Terra have gone mad.

What are they thinking?

Integrate what, integrate nonsense! Surely when the Alliance's fleet arrives, local dignitaries, governments, People's Army, each would joyfully welcome them.

The Alliance doesn't even come to fight; they're simply conducting armed marches, directly taking over territories.

The only one who might actually engage the Alliance is himself, personally overseeing Wuji Star.

But probably not even then.

His troops will certainly be like a lonely army, low morale at the lightest. Moreover, outside of fighting intense battles, there are likely waves of uprisings causing chaos on the ground.

His troops would face a strong Alliance externally, and internally be swallowed by a people's war... Win? Hold? Don't even think about it, it'll shatter upon contact.

He is truly scared.

He can only pray to The Emperor, hoping that it doesn't actually spark a war.

Should... it won't happen, right?

It should not happen.

Starting a war remains a very low-probability event.

If war breaks out, there would likely be several steps in between.

...

"Hey brother, where are you from?"

In the prison, Fan Xiaocheng bored out of his mind, called out to the detainee in the other cell: "Hey, buddy, come out and have a chat; it’s so dull."

No response from the other side.

"I know you’re there, I saw them lock you up yesterday."

Still no sound.

Yet Fan Xiaocheng continued speaking to himself: "Ah, wonder when this is going to end... You came in a bit later, got any news? Share with your brother!"

The neighbor finally spoke: "No news, our ship almost departed but was detained in the end."

"Oh! Finally willing to talk."

The neighbor’s voice was rather helpless: "If I don’t speak, I’ll be driven mad by your noise."

"Haha, it’s because it’s too dull! I was worried they beat you up, making you unable to speak."

"Haven’t been beaten, they treat Alliance people quite politely."

"That’s right! We Alliance people have backing! Let me tell you, that knucklehead from Holy Terra will eventually let us go. Arresting us, impose trade embargoes, just putting on a show. Without us, the Alliance, these Eastern Cosmos Domain folks would be stinky beggars!"

Chapter 776: Damn, What a Loss_3

"Ha, you’re this optimistic?"

"You don’t believe it?"

"Maybe Yinbasim will turn against the Alliance and start a war? By then, they might execute all of us."

"Ah, this..." Fan Xiaocheng was stunned for a moment, then continued, "Impossible, right? They still dare to start a war? Looking for death? I’ve been running this trade line North and South for a long time, it’s no exaggeration to say that the Eastern Cosmos Domain relies on us for food; it would be against their own interests, smashing their own rice bowl?"

"Who knows. Even if they’re seeking death, they always have time to shoot us before they go down."

"No, you’re just too pessimistic."

"..."

Hearing no response from the other side, Fan Xiaocheng continued, "Even if that’s the case, the Alliance will definitely send someone to save us."

"Heh."

"What? Why are you sneering? You don’t trust the Alliance?"

"Heh."

"Hey! It seems you really don’t believe it! I come from Rage Owl Star, an old Alliance person, I must tell you this properly!"

Fan Xiaocheng started to passionately describe to the other person the glorious history of the Alliance, to resolutely prove the correctness of the Alliance and its unwavering determination to not abandon its people.

He talked on and on for a long time, and even if the person next door either kept silent or just sneered ’heh’, Fan Xiaocheng didn’t get annoyed at all.

He’s such an energetic chatterbox, has been like this since he was a child.

But Ku Gu Ya next door was getting really fed up, he finally stopped just sneering, and said, "Can you shut up and stop talking? The beneficiaries of this system still bragging about it even in such an environment, when you’re on the execution ground, I wonder if you can still laugh and say the Alliance will save you?"

"What? Dude? From the way you sound, it’s like you’re not part of the Alliance. Where are you from?"

"I... I guess you could say I’m part of the Alliance now."

"What do you mean by ’you could say’? Where exactly are you from?"

"The Ostoria People."

"? Where’s that?"

"... Princess Star Domain."

"Oh, from the Princess Star Domain, a new Alliance person, right? So you’re one of our own in the Alliance, surely the Alliance won’t ignore you, you think it’s like that old Iron Armor of yours?"

"You..." Ku Gu Ya opened his mouth to argue but the words didn’t come out.

If it were thirty years ago, when he was young, having grown up listening to the heroic stories of Iron Armor, he would definitely argue with Fan Xiaocheng until his face turned red.

But now?

What is there to argue about?

Iron Armor has long ceased to exist!

He’s now an Alliance person.

At this moment, Fan Xiaocheng suddenly became more perceptive: "Stop obsessing over that damned Iron Armor, those were just a bunch of ambitious but talentless guys, they messed up your Princess Star Domain to that extent, and couldn’t recover even after more than a decade. Even if they lost, so be it, but in the end, they released so many Insect Swarms, that’s the true heinous crime, they didn’t even see your Princess people as humans, what is there to reminisce about?"

"You..." Ku Gu Ya was blocked again.

He wasn’t a good debater to begin with, at this moment he didn’t even know what to say, could only sullenly say, "What’s so great about the Alliance? They don’t treat common people’s lives as lives either. We’re just pawns to be sacrificed when the big shots go head-to-head."

"Hey! I really don’t believe it, let’s bet, bet that the Alliance will definitely find a way to save us!"

"Bet on what? In this situation, are we betting on who gets executed first?"

Fan Xiaocheng laughed: "Haha, let’s bet on that, if we really get executed, I die before you!"

"Bet it is."

As soon as Ku Gu Ya finished speaking, suddenly there was a loud explosion.

In front of them, the wall on one side of the prison was suddenly blown open.

A team of heavily armed elite in black burst in, well-trained.

Ku Gu Ya was dumbfounded.

Is this for real?

This is Wuji Star’s high-level prison, a place holding important criminals, how can it be this easy to rescue?

How did they just breach the wall?

At this point, all that could be heard was that chatterbox beside him laughing heartily: "I won! Hahaha! What a fast win!"

Ku Gu Ya didn’t know what to think, but the increasing obnoxious shouting next to him finally forced him to retort: "...We didn’t even say what you’d win!"

Fan Xiaocheng’s laughter came to an abrupt halt.

"Damn it! Freaking hell, this is a huge loss!"

Chapter 777: Acting Without Authorization

"Report, sir, the operation at Prison 176 has been successful. A total of 1,126 targets have been rescued, only slightly injured, and no fatalities."

"Good."

Arno Chinko merely nodded slightly and returned his attention to the operation he personally oversaw before him.

After Yinbasim's 'rebellion,' the reaction of the Alliance was swift.

A large number of undercover personnel previously deployed in the Eastern Cosmos Domain were fully mobilized, completing all preparations for the action sign within just eleven days.

Their core operational area was located in the capital of the Eastern Cosmos Domain, Wuji Star.

Prior to this, the special operations conflict between the Alliance and the Yinbasim government was essentially child's play, lacking even a hint of seriousness.

Those battling with Yinbasim were merely agents from the Central Intelligence Bureau, Foreign Affairs Bureau, and Military Intelligence Bureau.

In reality, those arranged to enter Wuji Star were far more than just these few people.

Agents from the three external intelligence organizations were not fully deployed, not to mention there were also the Demon Hunter teams, an army-affiliated special operations brigade, two thousand warriors from the Glory Guards, and even four Star Warrior Trooper Squads!

These four squads came from Yellow Springs Seagull and Blood Shark, two squads from each.

Together, the total number exceeded twenty thousand people.

And considered elite!

Even for direct combat, this was a formidable force, not to mention they were all specialized in special operations.

With so many people and equipment, trying to secretly transport them to a planet undetected is usually very difficult.

But not in Wuji Star.

The local aristocrats were so infuriated with Yinbasim that they could gnash their teeth. The Alliance's network of relationships was very well established here; from the aristocratic class to the civilian class, support for the Alliance was very high. They provided countless conveniences for the Alliance's operations.

Whether during infiltration, lurking, or mobilization, it was the same.

Not only did the twenty thousand people remain completely hidden under Yinbasim's strict vigilance, now they were directly fully mobilized. The commotion was significant, but somehow right under Yinbasim, the Cosmic Domain Chair's nose, he was completely unaware.

Rapid strikes on several prisons holding Alliance convoy members on the periphery were merely a trivial part of the operation, easily executed in groups by special operations brigade warriors. With local forces' help, everything from intelligence to action went smoothly.

Theoretically, Arno was the main person responsible for the rescue of Alliance convoy members, so the operation's results were reported to him.

But truth be told, he didn't care about these minor details at all.

Why worry about things guaranteed to succeed?

What he cared about most was the present.

He was not the overall commander of the entire operation, although he really wanted to be; his qualifications and status were still insufficient. Except for the marginal task of rescuing the convoy which he led, he had another important job, which was to coordinate the Alliance's most major operation team to assault 'Wuji Palace'.

Wuji Palace was Yinbasim's residence, a very large palace city.

After he moved in, everyone in the palace city, whether servants or guards, were all replaced with his own people.

As the political situation he faced grew increasingly unfavorable, his anxiety grew stronger. The number of guards continued to increase, approximately expanding to over ten thousand.

He didn't want more simply because if Wuji Palace added more troops, it would turn into a large military camp.

Yet he still felt insecure, unsatisfied with his sense of security, so he straightforwardly transformed adjacent residential areas and mansions on both east and west sides of Wuji Palace into military zones. From the troops he brought from Holy Terra, which he deemed the most reliable, he meticulously selected thirty thousand soldiers, stationed in these locations.

Wuji Palace did not become a large military camp, but the surrounding areas did become military zones, executing stringent military control, prohibiting proximity of those not trusted.

Only under such circumstances did Yinbasim feel slightly reassured.

With dozens of kilometers around featuring his personnel, surely there would be no issues, right?

But was it truly safe?

Not necessarily.

When Arno was sent to Wuji Star, he contemplated daily about how to infiltrate Wuji Palace.

The challenge mainly was here. Elsewhere didn't need infiltration, moving in and out like a sieve.

Not only did he and his Central Investigation Bureau think this way, but the Military Intelligence Bureau on the Military Department's side also thought so.

And the result... was naturally good!

In addition to the Military Intelligence Bureau and Central Investigation Bureau's competent abilities, external objective factors lie in, the so-called army camp surrounding Wuji Palace said to consist entirely of Yinbasim's personnel, but in reality, not possible.

Can everything be brought from Holy Terra, even food, drink, toiletries?

Someone certainly has to transport supplies in, take garbage out, and even provide various services.

In the eyes of seasoned individuals like Arno, these are all flaws, the so-called stringent precautions were actually riddled with holes, with leaks everywhere.

Only within the interior of Wuji Palace, Yinbasim's personnel indeed guarded more tightly, making infiltration more difficult.

But there was still a way.

However, this required leveraging the Foreign Affairs Bureau's resources.

Chapter 777: Acting Without Authorization (Part 2)

The Foreign Affairs Bureau's work results in the Eastern Cosmos Domain were relatively average. Their main focus was on winning over and assisting the local people of the Eastern Cosmos Domain, with less effort put into infiltration, espionage, and sabotage activities. The Military Intelligence Bureau and the Central Intelligence Bureau tacitly excluded the Foreign Affairs Bureau.

Although together they are known as the Alliance's three major foreign intelligence agencies, each is responsible for slightly different directions, and they report to different superior departments: one is the Foreign Affairs/ Government, another is the Legal Affairs Center, and the last is the Military Department. Most of the time, their cooperation outweighs competition.

But on the same major project, even if their responsibilities differ, they still like to compete to see who contributes more.

If they can avoid asking for help, they naturally try not to.

But unfortunately, for infiltration into Wuji Palace, they had no choice but to seek their assistance.

The main focus of the Foreign Affairs Bureau over the past twenty-odd years was actually Holy Terra, which is also why their initial activities in the Eastern Cosmos Domain didn't fare as well as those of the Central Intelligence Bureau and the Military Intelligence Bureau.

Yet, coincidentally, isn't this Yinbasim exactly from Holy Terra?

Before he gathered his manpower and set out from Holy Terra, the Foreign Affairs Bureau's office there tried every possible means to plant informants.

To infiltrate Wuji Palace, they had no choice but to seek their help.

Otherwise, they would have to resort to a frontal assault.

While not impossible to take down, why bother when there's a faster, steadier, and less costly method? If the Governor found out they didn't use a better method due to departmental rivalry, leading to higher casualties and costs, they'd certainly be in serious trouble.

They should just honestly carry out their duties as they should.

The Foreign Affairs Bureau handed over their resources quite smoothly. After mutual consultation and signature confirmation among the three bureaus at the higher levels, the specific information and contact methods of the informants embedded within Wuji Palace and beside Yinbasim were handed over to Arno.

Contacting the people and arranging the time, Arno personally brought elite subordinates and arrived as agreed.

Following on, Arno collaborated with the Military Intelligence Bureau and the Foreign Affairs Bureau to establish a passage from the outer military camp directly into Wuji Palace.

On the day the operation began and the assault on the prison commenced, Arno calmed his restless heart and patiently waited.

Soon, the awaited message arrived.

The informants transmitted that Chairman Yinbasim greatly valued the issue of the prison being attacked. He dispatched a trusted unit from the nearby military district of Wuji Palace for investigation.

At the same time, he summoned numerous local dignitaries to Wuji Palace to see him. He believed the attack on the prison and the rescue of Alliance individuals were related to these unruly local dignitaries. He needed to call them out and give them a thorough reprimand.

At this point, the timing was ripe.

Among his entourage, an informant of considerable status tampered with the arrangements during the troop movements and security preparations for the meeting, leaving an approximately fifteen-minute gap in the patrol and guard schedules.

In the external military district of Wuji Palace, Arno was confident in securing a route leading directly into Wuji Palace, ensuring unobstructed passage for at least an hour.

Doesn’t that make it foolproof?

Arno sent a message to his superiors indicating readiness to proceed, and then waited there.

If what came before could be considered special operations and confrontations in the shadows, what comes next is an earnest military action.

Who might be in charge of this?

In the darkness, an armor transport convoy painted to resemble the Sun Auxiliary Army advanced slowly towards Arno's current position.

Currently disguised as a captain in the Sun Legion, Arno feigned a salute and stepped forward to examine the documents.

The driver was a Sun Auxiliary Army-painted soldier of the Star Realm Army, which seemed normal. But through the deliberately opened rear observation window, he could see six giants clad in deep gray power armor. The blood drop insignia on their helmets and the crimson sharks on their shoulders unmistakably indicated their identity: Blood Shark Battle Group.

There were twelve such armor transport vehicles, advancing in the guise of a patrol team, summing to over seventy Blood Shark Interstellar Warriors.

Is that sufficient?

Arno harbored some doubts.

Under normal circumstances, it would be enough. But dealing with a high-ranking official from Holy Terra posed some challenges.

Yinbasim also had Interstellar Warriors for protection.

According to intelligence, there were as many as two hundred Interstellar Warriors, all inside Wuji Palace.

Among them, fifty came from five different battle groups active in the Central Territory, with deep ties to the Imperial Central Government. These groups would regularly receive imperial summons to perform various tasks.

Protecting important figures was a routine mission.

Another fifty were from the Ice Wing Snake Ship-Based Battle Group, recruited by Yinbasim. Being ship-based groups, they had to earn their keep. Yinbasim paid them, and the task was legitimate, so it wasn't surprising he could recruit fifty Interstellar Warriors.

The remaining hundred warriors were uniformly from the Light of Dawn Sword group. They were a sub-group of the Infinite Corps, with their home planet in the Eastern Cosmos Domain.

There are four Starfighter Battle Group home planets in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, of which Light of Dawn Sword is one. Among those, they had the most distant relationship with the Alliance over the past decades. After Yinbasim arrived in the Eastern Cosmos Domain, he persistently courted this group, rapidly warming their relations.

Titles of Holy Terra and the Central Empire were still powerful.

Last year, this group agreed to a sustained deployment of a full-strength company to provide security for Yinbasim in shifts.

Arno recognized the Blood Shark Battle Group's formidable strength, having proven themselves in the Iron Armor War.

But seventy-plus against two hundred?

That seemed a bit too challenging.

Weren't four hundred allied Interstellar Warriors supposed to have infiltrated? So why use only about seventy?

He was puzzled, but he was merely in charge of the frontline special operations, not the overall responsibility. He still had superiors. Furthermore, special operations differed from military actions. At the military action level, the proper commander was a Blood Shark Company Captain.

After watching the Blood Shark convoy depart, Arno hesitated briefly before making a decision.

The entire operation didn't have an evacuation plan. Their target wasn't just to eliminate Yinbasim; more importantly, they had to seize the outright political center, Wuji Palace. Subsequently, a provisional Wuji Star government would take over, with an acting Cosmic Domain Chair elected.

Therefore, there wasn't much need to reserve forces for retreat.

Arno could still mobilize about a thousand troops as a maneuver force for the current operation.

These forces were initially planned to create chaos inside the surrounding military district and aid the battle against the Sun Auxiliary Army following the eruption of conflict.

But now, he decided to move these forces towards the core area of Wuji Palace.

Once the internal battle at Wuji Palace commenced, he would lead reinforcements there immediately.

He didn't know if the thousand special operations warriors would effectively impact the confrontation at the Interstellar Warrior battalion level, but having this safety measure was better than none.

However, subsequent events made Arno feel slightly embarrassed.

His autonomous decision wasn't a bad thing. As a frontline operation leader, it fell within his authority scope.

It’s just that he realized he was worrying unnecessarily.

The instant gunfire and explosions erupted within Wuji Palace, he charged in with his men. After about twenty minutes, amidst brief yet intense skirmishes, they reached the core area of Wuji Palace.

And there, he immediately saw the bodies of enemy Interstellar Warriors littering the ground.

More than half were shredded into pieces, dying in grisly states.

Chapter 778

Listening to his brother complain about his bad luck over the voice channel, as the team leader of the combat group, Russell said angrily, "Wicks Jones! You lost focus! If you had concentrated and maintained your focus, the auto-sensing system would have kept operating, allowing you to anticipate crises! This has been repeatedly emphasized in training, have you forgotten it all?"

The hapless Wicks Jones, who had just taken a hit, complained, "I know, I know... but this battle, it’s so hard to stay focused all the time, isn’t it? Can fighting these rebels really be considered a war? We can easily wipe them out; let alone a few stragglers, even if there were hundreds in front of us, the outcome would just be their slaughter by us. This is way easier than our previous training exercises. But somehow, I can still feel that they are each ’people’, just like we were three months ago. The battlefield littered with corpses, personally exterminating lives, made me really uneasy, so I couldn’t help but lose focus just now..."

He explained a lot, but the next words that came over the channel left him speechless:

"Wicks Jones, your training load will double after the battle. I will personally be your training partner."

This voice came from Russell.

Upon hearing this, Jones could only respond with a dejected ’Yes’.

Doubling the training load was bearable; having the Battle Group Leader personally train you was quite another story. What made the young Battle Monk even more ashamed was being called out and criticized by the Battle Group Leader himself, which was very humiliating.

The few laughs that followed from others on the channel only made him feel worse.

Russell's voice sounded again, "I hope you all take this seriously; if what we faced just now were a genuine strong enemy, we would have already lost a fellow Combat Brother."

The laughter immediately stopped, and the channel was filled with responses of "Understood!" shortly after.

...

Russell shook his head slightly; these youngsters were still too inexperienced.

Before the battle began, he divided everyone into three combat teams. Each team had four members, with him leading one. Russell and Alec, who were both given sergeant-level combat experience and theoretically had reached the strength level of official members, also led one each.

During the purging of Cultists on the forward positions, the Interstellar Warriors demonstrated unmatched prowess.

Their Power Armor provided significantly greater defense than the locally manufactured tanks; their Blast Bomb Guns symbolized unstoppable destruction to the Cultists.

With their involvement, the cleanup operations against these rebels scattered into combat teams and squads went incredibly smoothly. The main force, which had been somewhat stalled, resumed its advance.

However, in Russell's eyes, each one's performance was far from satisfactory.

This was not up to the standard of Interstellar Warriors. Russell and Alec were barely passable, but the others were far too lacking.

To be honest, it was the powerful Power Armor and Blast Bomb Guns that allowed them to dominate. Without the overwhelmingly superior equipment, the rookies would have been defeated multiple times over.

Three months of training was still too short.

Although this was expected, he was still a bit disappointed.

"Can’t rush it, just have to take it slow... at least this time they managed to somewhat adapt to the battlefield, which is some gain."

Thinking this, he stopped dwelling on it and instead focused on the newly emerging gray mist prompt:

[Mission Code F.2: Completed, reward points have been distributed]

Chapter 778: Old Classmates

The scene of interstellar warriors lying all over the place in a tragic state of dismemberment stunned Arno Chinko.

These are actual interstellar warriors!

Can they really be hacked down like this?

How long has it been since the battle started!

Just a quick count of the bodies here, and there must be sixty of them?

Among them, the Blood Shark warriors number less than ten.

The disparity in combat power is a bit too great.

However, the battle is not over yet.

Arno can still hear the sounds of gunfire not far away, unending.

The Blood Sharks are still fiercely attacking the core area of the Wuji Palace.

Meanwhile, the sound of artillery bombardment also descended.

This is the Alliance's full-scale assault!

It should be emphasized that the Alliance's goal is not just Yinbasim; they won't be satisfied with merely a decapitation strike. They intend to completely destroy all military forces under Yinbasim to pave the way for a subsequent proxy government to assume power.

Thus, the hundreds of thousands of auxiliary forces surrounding Wuji Palace are an unavoidable target.

The main force tasked with dealing with them is over twenty thousand troops deployed by the Alliance, but it's not just these troops.

A combined army made up of sixteen capital defense divisions will also join the fight. These are officers of the Wuji Star Defense Army who are bound to side with the Alliance.

Of course, these sixteen divisions, totaling more than three hundred thousand troops, are not enough in quantity and cannot be deployed into battle tonight. Most of the forces were not informed in advance that the Alliance would act tonight.

Although Yinbasim is blind and deaf in intelligence, he is still human. He keeps a close watch on the Defense Army near the capital of Wuji Star. A large-scale mobilization beforehand would surely alert him.

At this time, only one division has truly been mobilized to take action tonight.

However, the firepower of this Defense Army division is particularly fierce. Before the battle, they secretly deployed artillery, rocket launchers, and even missile launch bases.

All firing parameters were preset in advance.

When the time came, the firepower covered!

By worldly standards, the solar auxiliary army is definitely considered an elite force.

But no matter how elite they are, at this moment they were in a non-combat state and suffered a ferocious bombardment, heavy losses are inevitable. No matter how elite, it's of no use.

Though deep into the night, there are a considerable number of night patrol teams and guards on duty, but what can they do against fierce firepower launched from tens of kilometers away?

They themselves were even the primary targets of the first wave of strikes!

The first wave of attacks also focused on command posts, radar monitoring areas, and the like.

The second wave of attacks was directed at weapons depots, garages, airports, and such.

For soldiers and troops to exert combat power, they need equipment. Various artillery, reconnaissance, armored vehicles, and aircraft are the core of it all.

In the second wave of fire coverage, these resources suffered considerable losses.

The third wave of firepower then landed on personnel-dense areas.

Most of the solar auxiliary army was still resting at this moment. Suddenly struck by artillery fire, even with barracks, they couldn't protect their lives under such intense firepower.

After three rounds of intensive fire strikes, the Alliance forces and a native quick reaction division that defected from Wuji Star entered the scene.

Their objective was very clear: head straight for the critical parts of the solar auxiliary army.

Still targeting various command centers of the solar auxiliary army, from the army group level to the division level, all fell within their rapid strike range.

In the prior round of fire bombardment, these units wouldn't be completely destroyed. Ensuring they couldn't react and couldn't organize their forces for resistance or counter-attack was most crucial.

The toughest problems were handled by the Alliance's Glory Guard Corps. These elite warriors of the Alliance, fully equipped with Feedback-Type Power Armor, had no problem fulfilling the planned tasks.

In Arno Chinko's communication channel, all he heard was good news.

The solar auxiliary army basically had no way to organize effective resistance under such circumstances.

At least not before daybreak.

And after daybreak, at least fifteen native Defense Army divisions could join the battle; by the day after, the number would rise to thirty-six divisions.

Adding up to six to seven hundred thousand troops.

Even though the number of native units is 50% more than the solar auxiliary army, if it comes to a fight, they would still probably be easily crushed—if not for tonight's night raid.

But considering tonight's raid, who knows how much manpower and technical equipment the solar auxiliary army would lose. It's uncertain how they'll fare against the six hundred to seven hundred thousand afterward.

No matter; even if it's not a clean fight, they will eventually meet their defeat.

What is the ocean of people's war? If these six or seven hundred thousand can't take it, in another month, there might be six or seven million 'rebels' piled up here!

Yinbasim has done too many bad things on Wuji Star, he's practically friendless.

At this point, no one would help him.

Arno considered the battle outside no longer worth paying attention to. His gaze returned to the depths of the Wuji Palace.

He intended to lead his men in continued support.

Although the initial assault by the Blood Shark soldiers seemed very successful, the subsequent situation was still unpredictable.

In any case, now that he's here, he might as well feel involved.

Then, he saw over a dozen Dragon Elephant War Machines approaching from the sky.

The chaotic defense system of the Wuji Palace had no reaction to the approaching aircraft.

Their defense systems had been paralyzed, and as Arno understood, at least thirty Blood Shark warriors had previously attacked those air defense systems.

One after another, interstellar warriors in gradually transitioning paint from dull yellow to dark red jumped off the Dragon Elephant War Machines.

They were warriors from the Phoenix Subgroup .

The Yellow Springs Seagulls recognized that Arno and his men on the ground were allies; they didn’t make any reckless moves but also paid them no mind.

A hundred interstellar warriors formed a tight formation and swiftly charged toward the center of the battle.

Arno, left behind, smiled wryly.

It seemed his efforts were redundant indeed.

The seventy-odd Blood Sharks were certainly not the full force; support troops were already prepared long ago, so they didn’t really need the thousand men he had brought.

...

"If you guys had been any later, you would have only seen the corpses of these scumbags."

Xie Hong, the commander of the ninth company of the Blood Shark Battle Group, said this to Gaspard Marchan, who was approaching swiftly from behind.

Marchan, the commander of the sixth company of Yellow Springs Seagull, muttered, "I came as fast as I could. I knew you wouldn’t stay put. But you should have waited a bit longer for us, so you wouldn’t lose ten warriors in vain."

He was somewhat displeased.

The two were well acquainted, not merely from becoming interstellar warriors. After all, they belonged to different battle groups, and even if they were friendly, they couldn't be too close.

However, before becoming interstellar warriors, they were 'old classmates.'

Both emerged from the Alliance's secret interstellar soldier training base.

As the name implies, that base specialized in training new blood for interstellar warriors, where they would learn, train, and based on their talents and personalities, be assigned to the battle group best suited to them.

The two went their separate ways at the last hurdle.

Chapter 779

After Mei Zheng left, Li Ang sat thinking, motionless. His heart was still conflicted, causing his brow to remain furrowed, never once relaxing.

He sat there quietly for a long time, until the door on his side was knocked again.

Before Li Ang could react, Yuan Yingzhi, who couldn't hide her charm even in a white coat, walked in.

"I hope I'm not disturbing you?"

Li Ang rubbed his temples and said, "It's good to change the way I think; I feel like I've hit a dead end."

"Hmm..." Yuan Yingzhi casually pulled a chair and sat across from him, saying, "I came to talk to you about Ye Lixiao's situation. Her condition has stabilized, and I used the spare parts left from creating her new body last time to make another one for her. Without your help, this new body might not be very fitting, but it should temporarily restore her mobility. The official new body, we'll wait for you."

"I understand, thank you for your hard work."

"Alright, you can tell that this isn't anything particularly urgent. I'm just using this as an excuse to come see you."

Li Ang smiled.

Of course, he understood.

"That's definitely your style."

Yuan Yingzhi also smiled.

After a while, she restrained her expression and seriously said, "Can you tell me about your current confusion? I may not be able to help much, but I can be a listener. Perhaps, after talking, you'll figure out the path you should take?"

Li Ang sighed, thought for a moment, and then slowly opened up, "I might have been deceived by Wang Su."

"Oh?" Yuan Yingzhi showed a surprised expression.

She already knew the context of the ancient immortal legacy and gathering Wang Su's magic artifacts. That's precisely why she was somewhat puzzled.

"How did Wang Su deceive you? Tell me in detail."

"You don't seem worried?"

"What's there to worry about?" Yuan Yingzhi indeed just seemed a bit surprised, without any signs of tension or panic. "You've already realized he might be deceiving you. How could you still be tricked? I believe you're not a fool."

"Hahaha!" Li Ang laughed heartily, "You sure have confidence in me."

A moment later, he collected himself, sighed again, and said, "But I'm not necessarily as confident in myself. That guy, he set up an open plot, making me know he designed a trap for me, yet in the end, I might still have to step into it..."

"What's the matter exactly?"

"You know about my acquisition of the ancient immortal legacy. Under the effects of this legacy, my access to the Heavenly Dao Net is increased, allowing me to more easily master spells, hack into enemy spells, and steal them. But this is far from the limits of the ancient immortal legacy. That ancient immortal, the enemy of the saints, left a legacy to seize control of the entire Sky Net, to bring the Heavenly Dao Net left by the saints and the world's right to use spells and spiritual power all under oneself, to become the master of the Sky Net and thereby become the master of the world."

"To achieve such a feat, relying solely on the 'legacy' is not enough. That ancient immortal, once an enemy of the saints, sacrificed himself to infiltrate the Sky Net to open a backdoor in the originally flawless Sky Net and left a key. This key fell into the hands of the Divine Bird Group and was handed over to Wang Su for decryption. Wang Su succeeded, but he knew that the Divine Bird Group wouldn't let him leave. He didn't have the ancient immortal legacy and couldn't expand his Sky Net permissions like I did."

"So, he transferred the authentication information representing the Sky Net backdoor key from the compass unearthed from ancient ruins onto himself, and then faked his death to escape, transforming himself into a ghost to survive in the Sky Net; while the 'key' transferred onto him fragmented into countless pieces due to his deliberate action upon his death, scattering into the magic artifacts he crafted by his own hands and marked, across various locations."

"I, and Divine Bird, will all strive to collect these fragments and eventually reassemble them into a complete key. It doesn't really matter who wins or loses. If Divine Bird wins, they will seize the legacy within me; if I win, I will gather Wang Su's magic artifacts... But comparatively, Wang Su likely prefers I successfully complete the final collection work. After all, in his conception, dealing with just me is much more manageable than an entire organization as big as Divine Bird."

Listening to this long-winded account, Yuan Yingzhi aptly smiled, "He certainly didn't expect you to single-handedly bring down the Divine Bird Group."

"I can't say that; Mei Zheng and the warriors of the Rebel Army made great sacrifices."

"Yes, I don't deny their sacrifices were important, but the fundamental core is still because of you. Without you, all sacrifices would be meaningless, as merely sacrificing would never achieve ultimate victory."

"Let's not talk about that, let's get back to that guy Wang Su." Li Ang steered the conversation back, "I once had a communication with him after he transformed into a unique spirit residing in the Sky Net, the memory he claimed to be. He vigorously assured me that everything he did was for self-preservation, to have a chance to live again once I collected all the backdoor key fragments. But I dare not completely believe what he says."

"I didn't consider it much before because it wasn't time to; the biggest enemy was Divine Bird, and I was clear about that. But now, this issue must be thought through. Wang Su, definitely a genius, even managed to quickly decrypt the Sky Net backdoor key, which was a compass initially, and could even convert his mind and consciousness to survive in the Sky Net. He even tried to control the Sky Net backdoor with just the key, without relying on the ancient immortal legacy... How can someone like him be underestimated?"

"There must be backup plans left by Wang Su hiding in the Sky Net. Besides the Sky Net key fragments scattered on the magic artifacts he crafted upon his death, there are definitely many other things. When I gather all his magic artifacts, thinking the Sky Net key is complete, and happily go to receive the Sky Net permissions, the trap he arranged might be deadly."

"Having existed as a state of mind consciousness in the Sky Net for quite a while, during this time, who knows how many secret preparations this genius has done? I don't believe he is just struggling to survive, considering he touched the Sky Net backdoor and has a chance to control the entire Sky Net. Who could resist such temptation?"

"Yes... Given the opportunity, who could resist such temptation?" Yuan Yingzhi empathized deeply, then she glanced aside and smilingly asked, "How about you, Mr. Li Ang? Can you resist this temptation?"

"Hahaha!" Li Ang chuckled, "No, I'm going to become the sovereign of the Sky Net, then the sovereign of the world. Not just Era City, but everyone in the world will have to listen to me. I'll be the emperor. Are you scared?"

"Not scared at all. I'm not Mei Zheng, all caught up in noble ideals. All I want is to live peacefully. You can do whatever you want, I'll support you."

"No," Li Ang collected his smile and spoke earnestly, "Becoming World King... Is there any achievement greater than building a better world?"

Chapter 779: Bloodthirsty Sharks

The training mechanism for the Alliance's Interstellar Warriors is actually quite clear.

At the core, is the 'Interstellar Soldier Training Base', also known as the New Blood Base.

The New Blood Base 'selects' young people from various parts of the Alliance to enter and undergo training. The location of the base is actually not fixed, with different locations each term, but

the training generally lasts around one year.

This process is actually Gu Hang using Gift Points to screen and train the candidates.

The trained Interstellar Warriors then undergo different genetic seed implantation surgeries based on their personalities, talents, and preferences — although there are only four options. The most gifted go to Phoenix and Yellow Springs Seagull; the most explosive personalities go to Blood Shark; the most steady go to Spear of the Dragon King; those who are left accept the 'substandard infinite genetic seeds' and go to Furyflame and New World Torch.

The four groups most controlled by the Alliance - Phoenix, Yellow Springs Seagull, New World Torch, and Furyflame - all their new recruits come from the New Blood Base.

Blood Shark and Spear of the Dragon King are a bit different. They each have their own home planet, and while under the Alliance's jurisdiction, the Alliance greatly respects their Battle Group traditions. If they want to recruit locally, they can.

They have tried local recruitment before, and the Alliance did not place any restrictions or obstacles.

However, they quickly gave up.

Humans are inherently lazy, and so are the Emperor's Angels.

Self-recruitment requires a lot of effort, not to mention the massive costs, with no guarantee of surgical success; with great difficulty, even if a few succeed, their quality is nothing to boast about.

Previously, it's understandable that new recruits might be inferior. You can't expect the newly made Interstellar Warriors to have the combat power of veterans. That's unrealistic; even the harshest Battle Groups need to allow for growth time.

However, since accepting the New Blood provided by the Alliance, this 'primitive' way of recruiting new soldiers has become intolerable.

What the Alliance provides has a high surgical success rate, over 95%; the quality is high, almost plug-and-play, even if not at veteran levels, close enough; the probability of breeding elites is high, those exceptionally outstanding quickly stand out in the entire Battle Group, becoming key personnel.

After enjoying these benefits, who can bear to painstakingly recruit New Blood themselves?

Previously, the traditionalists within Spear of the Dragon King and Blood Shark could still voice their opinions, advocating reducing the proportion of New Blood acceptance from the Alliance. But as the concentration of Alliance People in the Battle Groups increased, with now over 40% being Alliance People, the complete Alliance integration of the entire Battle Group could no longer be stopped.

In these two Battle Groups, the upward channels for Alliance People have already been opened.

Xie Hong is one of the outstanding ones among them.

He was among the earlier batch of Alliance People to join the Blood Shark Battle Group, participated in the later stages of the Iron Armor War, and stood out in a very short time.

However, initially, the conservative faction within Blood Shark was still quite large. Xie Hong's promotions within the Battle Group were not smooth, even though he produced impressive combat achievements and displayed cold and fierce command skills befitting of the Blood Shark Battle Group's temperament. Despite this, he couldn't rise very high, only reaching an average sergeant role, leading about ten subordinates.

It wasn't until the ceiling within the Blood Shark Battle Group was removed that he ascended rapidly, directly becoming the commander of the Ninth Company.

In his company, the proportion of Alliance People was as high as 90%.

This time, coming to execute a mission on Wuji Star was his first time leading a team as a company commander, and he was determined to make it sharp and beautiful.

With seventy warriors, they rode to the closest location. The driver opened fire, sweeping nearby enemies before they all rapidly disembarked, charging towards the nearest foes.

The Blast Bomb Gun in their hands roared, and the enemies before them were instantly cleared away.

Then, they collided head-on with a mixed team of Interstellar Warriors.

Both sides had similar numbers and encountered each other suddenly and head-on.

After a brief exchange of gunfire, they plunged into close combat.

The Blood Sharks wielded fierce melee weapons like Power Axes, Chainsaw Axes, and Mjolnirs, silently and ruthlessly initiating a slaughter.

Xie Hong personally led the charge, his jetpack swiftly sending him into the enemy ranks. The explosive projectiles flying all around mostly missed; the most dangerous was a plasma gun's ray, which he observed, and at the critical moment, he dodged, avoiding a lethal shot just before the trigger was pulled.

If it didn't kill me, wait for your death!

He raised his hand, a precise explosive shot hit his hand, destroying the plasma gun — direct shooting might not be fatal either.

The power of the Blast Bomb Gun is ferocious, hitting it on a normal person wouldn't leave a complete limb; using armor-piercing bullets, it could even destroy some light vehicles. However, in the internal war of Interstellar Warriors, the firepower of the Blast Bomb Gun couldn't ensure the enemy's death unless a dense barrage of bullets overwhelmed the armor.

As he rushed forward, Xie Hong didn't need the Blast Bomb Gun anymore.

Within the enemy ranks, he instead used them as cover.

He wielded a well-crafted Chainsaw Axe in one hand and a Power Sword in the other, nearly unstoppable within the enemy group.

No one could withstand even a single clash against him. His brutal attacks always struck a split-second earlier.

By killing the enemy first, wouldn't there be no need to dodge their blades?

It seemed reckless, yet the more intense the fury, the colder and more precise his judgment.

When he killed the seventh enemy, he finally encountered a somewhat challenging opponent.

By then, the scene was mostly cleared. The Blood Sharks excelled at this kind of sudden assault, their merciless and ruthless raid quickly obliterating the enemy.

The main reason is still their opponents, who were really not prepared to face such a harsh challenge and should not have been easily caught off guard in close combat by the Blood Sharks.

Any battle group in this world, under equal numbers, would find it hard to withstand the fierce assault of the Blood Sharks.

Even those new-founded groups wouldn't fare much better.

For those slightly weaker, even with twice the number, they could be overwhelmed.

This current group exemplifies that point.

Finally, standing in front of Xie Hong, seemed to be the Champion Company Commander of a certain group. Knowing the situation was beyond salvaging, in despair and anger, he raised his sword and approached Xie Hong, who was clearly the strongest.

Even if facing death, even if trading life for life, he wanted to take him down with him before dying.

But at that moment, Xie Hong contrary to his previous fierce attitude, fought in a relatively conservative manner.

After exchanging a few moves, that Champion Company Commander suddenly felt a pain in his waist.

It was a precise sniper explosive round, hitting the armor on his waist.

It didn't penetrate the armor, but the pain was inevitable.

He thought it was bad, thinking Xie Hong would take this opportunity to attack, which would truly be difficult to handle.

Yet he saw that troublesome opponent stepping back several paces instead.

He became even more desperate—at this moment, at least thirty blast bomb guns were aimed at him, intermixed with a few plasma beams.

Instinctive sword dance, attempting to deflect the bullets. But no one was there to share the defense, no cover, his swordsmanship no matter how exquisite, couldn't withstand the combined fire of over thirty Interstellar Warriors, unharmed.

He could only grit his teeth through the constant impacts, trying to find an opponent to trade lives with.

However, his plan ultimately turned into nothing under a flank burst of a hot melt gun.

Only then did Xie Hong step forward a few paces, and after confirming the target's death, coldly commanded in the channel to continue forward.

When you can gang up and turn someone into a beehive, why insist on challenging alone?

In this battle, more than sixty opposing Interstellar Warriors were slain, while eleven of their own fell in battle.

Quite a dramatic exchange ratio.

But the subsequent battle was relatively not as easy.

Interstellar Warriors are still strong, their reactions very swift.

The name of the Blood Sharks was also established in the Iron Armor War, everyone knows these bloodthirsty sharks are extremely difficult to deal with.

The more than a hundred remaining Interstellar Warriors quickly built some fortifications around the interior of Wuji Palace, bringing up heavy firepower and adopting a flexible defensive strategy. With the aid of elite Auxiliary Army units, the crossfire was set up meticulously, clearly determined not to engage in close-quarters combat with the Blood Sharks.

Once the Blood Sharks got close, they would decisively let the Sun Guard's elite cover the retreat, taking the main force back to another defensive node.

Through this method, layer upon layer of resistance, Xie Hong's advance was finally obstructed.

In the subsequent battle, they killed about twenty more enemy Interstellar Warriors, while the elite guard of Yinbasim suffered unnumbered casualties. Yet, the Blood Sharks paid the price of twelve casualties.

This casualty ratio was not as exaggerated as before.

If they forcefully attacked, his remaining less than fifty men might be completely spent, yet they could probably win.

But a pyrrhic victory was clearly not the result he wanted.

He could only restrain his restless mindset, waiting for reinforcements.

He was not exactly fighting alone.

This wait eventually brought Marshan.

The two of them, while exchanging a few words, were well aware of each other's capabilities in action as old classmates.

In the training at the New Blood Base, although Xie Hong was excellent back then, in overall assessment, he was not as outstanding as Marshan.

Those generally considered the best among the new blood would go to the Phoenix and Yellow Springs Seagull. The fact that Marshan could quickly rise among them to Company Commander indicates his level.

With a sigh, next, they would see how Marshan would conduct this battle.

But this didn’t mean the Blood Sharks would retreat from the stage.

These fifty men were still a most sharp blade. When the opportunity arose, they could deliver the enemy their most lethal blow.

A moment later, the hundred warriors of the Yellow Springs Seagull had already lined up in formation, launching the attack...

Chapter 780

The two of them walked up the stairs.

When they reached the second floor, Li Ang’s pace gradually slowed down, falling behind Xu Zhong.

Xu Zhong noticed this as well and became nervous, "Why are you walking so slowly? Is something wrong?"

"Not exactly..." Li Ang’s expression was somewhat hesitant, and his steps became slower and slower until he simply stopped, "Why don’t you go up by yourself. When you reach the seventh floor, someone will be at the door; just introduce yourself, and it’s fine. I’ve already informed them, they’re specifically waiting here for you."

"Huh? Aren’t you coming with me?"

"I won’t be coming along. Don’t worry, there’s no danger on these upper floors."

"Why’s that?"

Upon hearing Xu Zhong’s question, a red-haired female figure flashed in Li Ang’s mind, and he suddenly shivered.

"Don’t ask, it’s just a private matter. Anyway, I’m leaving first. If they ask you what I’m doing, just say you don’t know."

"I really don’t know what you’re up to... hey! Wait..."

Before Xu could finish speaking, Li Ang had already vanished.

Left with a stomach full of questions, Xu continued up the stairs by himself.

Before long, he met the person Li Ang was afraid of.

It was a tall woman. She was wearing a jacket, her left hand entirely replaced by a prosthesis, and her long red hair was casually draped, giving off a very dashing vibe. Her features and face shape appeared sharp and full of vigor. Her attire was entirely in a warrior style, with a flat stomach and exposed arms displaying defined muscle contours.

She wasn’t a conventional beauty, but she was unforgettable at first sight.

Especially considering her identity.

Her name was Mei Zheng, and she was a fugitive.

"Hello, Miss Mei, this is our first meeting, but I am already familiar with you. Your wanted poster has my signature on it."

Mei Zheng sat confidently in her seat, and the so-called ’wanted poster’ didn’t cause any change in her expression: "Oh, so that’s how it is, but I don’t mind. Those big companies have been after me for a long time, I believe Officer Xu, you couldn’t help it either."

Xu Zhong said seriously, "No, this was my own decision. I’ve long heard of the Rebel Army’s reputation. I know you are fighting against the big companies. Even though I’m doing something similar, I still can’t agree with your violent actions."

"Hahaha!" Mei Zheng burst into laughter, "So, Officer Xu is a peaceful protester! In that case, why did you come to us?"

Xu Zhong sighed deeply, "Through an introduction, and also because I have nowhere else to go. Right now, I’m like a lonely ghost, wandering in a city that no longer belongs to me, with nowhere to go, nowhere to stay."

"So you want us to take in a lonely ghost?" Mei Zheng shook her head, "Maybe in Officer Xu’s eyes, we’re a group of outlaws who like to use violence, but I need to clarify, we never deny that we use force at times, but we see it as very necessary."

As she spoke, Mei Zheng stood up, her full height on display. Xu Zhong himself wasn’t short, but in front of Mei Zheng, who was probably over 1.85 meters tall, he was still half a head shorter.

The female leader continued, "Look at this Era City, from the Financial Building in the Central District, to the commercial and entertainment plaza in Xiyang District; from the technology park in Gaoyun District, to the factories in He Dao District; from the upscale residences in Minghu District, to the pigeon buildings in Tianxiu District... Where in the entire Era City isn’t under the control of those big companies? Everywhere is their industry, the government is like a puppet on strings, how can peaceful protest ever succeed? Even someone like you, Officer Xu, with status and standing, hasn’t been forced step by step by the big companies to come before me?"

Faced with Mei Zheng’s words, Xu Zhong found himself unable to refute.

Isn’t this the truth?

"Of course, we are not just brutish beings using martial force. We are a disciplined, idealistic, intelligent team. We deeply understand the huge disparity between the rebel force and those major companies. We must skillfully strategize, awaken more of the populace, and strengthen our own power. Furthermore, we can see the internal conflicts within these large companies too. We need to be patient and wait for the right moment."

After her long speech, Mei Zheng once again focused her gaze on Xu Zhong:

"So, after hearing my introduction to the Rebel Army, has your view of us changed?"

"Indeed it has," Xu Zhong replied.

"So, are you willing to join us and fight for our common cause?"

"I am willing," Xu Zhong said, "Not just because of Miss Mei's discourse, but because, in my ten-plus years of experience, I've personally witnessed that peaceful protest only leads to failure in the end. Since that path has failed, I'll spend the rest of my life seeing if another path can succeed."

Mei Zheng smiled broadly, stepped in front of Xu Zhong, and extended her hand, "Then we are comrades from now on!"

Xu Zhong also extended his hand, shaking with Mei Zheng's.

After the handshake, Mei Zheng posed another question, "Then, Comrade Xu Zhong, I have a question that you must answer for me."

"Go ahead."

"Where did Li Ang run off to? Why didn't he come with you to see me this time?"

"Uh... He said he couldn't come due to some personal reasons."

Mei Zheng let out a cold laugh, "Personal reasons? Hehehe!"

Before she finished laughing, someone burst into the room.

"Sister Mei!"

"Where’s Li Ang?"

"Sorry, Sister Mei... we couldn’t keep up, and that guy ran away!"

Mei Zheng slammed her fist down, her expression turning angry, "He got away again!"

Xu Zhong’s expression became bewildered, "Uh... Miss Mei, is there some misunderstanding with Li Ang? I always thought he was your comrade too?"

Mei Zheng replied, "Not ’your’, but ’our’. There’s no misunderstanding between us, just some personal grudges. He’s not our comrade yet, but he will be in the future. I’ll catch him sooner or later and make him marry me!"

"Pfft..." Upon hearing the word ’marry’, Xu Zhong couldn’t hold back and sprayed out the tea he had just sipped.

"What?" He found it hard to reconcile the woman who wanted to force a marriage with him with the fierce leader who had just been discussing the necessity and strategy of violent resistance.

Chapter 780: Total Annihilation

What was the tactical style of the original Yellow Springs Seagull?

Unknown.

In the fragmented records, it seemed to be some kind of splendid three-dimensional offensive?

Unclear.

The current Yellow Springs Seagull doesn't aim to reproduce the style of those ancestors they barely relate to.

They have their own tactics.

Very similar to Phoenix.

They take a straightforward and resilient approach.

After quickly analyzing the situation on the ground, as a Commander, Marshan made a tactical decision swiftly.

Among the hundred Yellow Springs Seagull warriors, one-third served as the main attackers, one-third for flank restraint, and the remaining third as fire support teams.

As for Xie Hong's Blood Shark Soldiers, they served as the spearhead. For Marshan, they were of great use.

After consulting, Xie Hong also agreed with Marshan's tactical plan.

Not only because the two had a relatively close relationship, but more importantly, Marshan's outstanding tactical capabilities, which Xie Hong had witnessed firsthand, were quite trustworthy.

And Marshan did not disappoint.

Under his command, the troops advanced steadily.

The main attacking team went first, utilizing various types of firepower weapons openly and skillfully.

The shield guards moved forward, withstanding firepower and gradually advancing; heavy artillerymen used Heavy Bombs and multi-barrel Thermic Sprayers to ferociously suppress the opponents. With cover, they took advantage of it; without cover, they relied on the shield guards to push forward, adopting a methodical approach, creating a significant sense of pressure for the defending forces.

The fire support team was equipped with several sniper Blast Bomb Guns, along with a half-fixed rapid-fire Heavy Bomb Machine Gun for suppressive fire. It wasn't easy for the defenders to poke their heads up. Let alone the fact that they had shoulder-mounted missile pods operated by several Terminators.

The last third of the tactical support team, with more balanced firepower and armor, wouldn't advance as resolutely as the main attack team. Still, once the enemy was suppressed or attracted by the main attack team, they would quickly advance over a certain distance. The threat they posed would also increase with the closing of engagement distance.

All members participating in the Yellow Springs Seagull battle were veteran-level or above. That alone was remarkable, not to mention some of them even exceeded and reached the Sergeant Major level in ordinary Battle Groups. At this level, they could be part of the regular Battle Group's Glory Guard, often the most elite force accompanying the Battle Group Leader into battle.

Additionally, there were 10 Company Champions, making them even more heavyweight contenders.

In fact, the Blood Shark side had a similar configuration and proportion.

If it weren't for their individual qualities significantly surpassing the opponent Battle Group, how could they achieve the previous roughly 1:6 casualty ratio?

They were all Interstellar Warriors!

And at present, although the Yellow Springs Seagull wasn't as aggressive or as adept at assaults and close-quarters combat as the Blood Shark, with their own offensive, the warriors, who were far superior to their opponents, could also gain a clear advantage in long-range confrontations.

Their bullets were more accurate, and conversely, they could even dodge bullets.

This wasn't to say the Interstellar Warriors were fast enough to outrun a bullet, but the more skilled super warriors could always sense early or judge from experience where the bullets would hit, thus evading beforehand, or using weapons, shields, or even the thickest parts of their Power Armor to block them.

In fact, the opposing Interstellar Warriors could also do this— if their opponents were ordinary Mortal Soldiers.

But facing the generally superior Yellow Springs Seagull, that wasn't possible. The Yellow Springs Seagull's shooting had a deceptive quality, or combined firepower lockdown made it unavoidable, or even a single warrior's firepower could gradually force them into a position where evasion was impossible...

Overall, it's about pressure.

When the pressure is low, many technical maneuvers can be performed superbly; when the pressure is high, even the top experts might appear like clowns to others.

Now, the hundred or so Interstellar Warriors on the other side looked a bit like such clowns.

In the firepower exchange, they were astonished to find their casualty numbers were significantly higher than expected.

They initially intended to execute elastic defense, avoiding close combat and decisive battles that were hard to disengage from, to delay as much as possible. However, in the firefight, before the Yellow Springs Seagull warriors had even advanced to their front lines, they had already suffered over thirty casualties.

In contrast, their achievements in causing casualties only accounted for nine Yellow Springs Seagull warriors.

At this rate, even just the long-range fire exchange would lead to their complete annihilation.

They had to abandon the current position and retreat to another defensive point, attempting to regroup.

At this moment, Xie Hong's Blood Shark Soldiers took action.

They had already moved silently during the earlier advancement of the Yellow Springs Seagull, remaining hidden in the dark areas of the battlefield, keeping silent, and drawing closer to the battlefield. Once the enemy began retreating, they quickly attacked with full power, their jetpacks loaded to maximum capacity, but instead of flying off the ground, they coordinated with their legs to act as boosters, significantly increasing their speed.

They quickly surpassed the Yellow Springs Seagull's main attack team, the shield guards, and the attackers advancing with the shield guards couldn't keep up with their speed.

The rear guard was easily defeated by a charge from the Blood Sharks, and they soon caught up with those mixed Interstellar Warrior formations retreating.

Thus began a massacre!

Even with twice the numbers, these mixed Interstellar Warriors were still getting overwhelmed in their response.

They couldn't even leave behind a force for a sacrificial retreat, with structured teams attempting to retreat often being watched and then intercepted by several Blood Sharks.

Subsequently, their Commander made the most helpless, worst, but possibly their best bet at keeping someone alive—scatter and flee.

But this decision came somewhat late.

Because the Yellow Springs Seagull warriors also caught up.

They didn't hurry to engage in close combat, the support team locked down the surrounding area, eliminating enemies trying to escape dispersedly.

Once the fire support arrived, they could conduct precise close-range fire-point kills. Even a bit of minor cooperation with the Blood Shark Soldiers significantly helped.

The loss rate of those Interstellar Warriors accelerated.

When the slower main attack team arrived, the shield guards and attackers pulled out Power Swords and poleaxes.

These main attackers, though not as fierce as the Blood Sharks, were simply of a different style. They were, after all, heavy armor soldiers specialized in close combat in the company. Their close-combat skills were no less than the Blood Sharks.

The difference between the two was that one was a combination of Berserker and Assassin, the other a combination of Swordsman and Heavy Knight.

Ultimately, the roughly one hundred remaining mixed Interstellar Warriors didn't leave a single person alive.

At this point, the two hundred Interstellar Warrior guards Yinbasim managed to summon were wiped out completely.

And the cost they paid was the combined force of Blood Shark and Yellow Springs Seagull with forty warriors' casualties. Among them, about ten were seriously wounded but could be saved.