Governor 791

Chapter 791

The twisting black mist, from which human faces constantly emerged, was indeed a ’ghost’.

In this era, the most powerful and undefendable aspect of a ghost is its ability to survive within the ubiquitous Sky Net and directly use it to launch all kinds of bizarre and unpredictable attacks, leaving people defenseless.

Even someone as capable as Li Ang suffered considerable losses at the beginning of the attack.

Upon reflection, he thought this ghost might have possessed Wang Su. It could even be that it was originally Wang Su transformed.

While it sounds unbelievable because Wang Su died not long ago, studies have shown that the latent spirituality of a deceased person takes time to transform into a ’ghost’.

However, Li Ang made this judgment because the face occasionally appearing in the black mist bore some resemblance to Wang Su, who lay on the ground.

Earlier, when he intended to examine Wang Su’s corpse, after touching it, this ’ghost’ invaded his internal network.

Subsequently, the ghost launched a fierce attack on him.

Li Ang analyzed that at that time, he suffered at least several forms of attack. The attack on the soul, which caused intense pain with its shrieking sound, was actually secondary.

The most severe was the disconnection from the Sky Net.

This was also why his communication with Mei Zheng was directly cut off.

The broken communication was just a symptom; the scariest part of being disconnected from the Sky Net was losing all means of spellcasting.

In modern times, practitioners, regardless of their sect or status, essentially cast spells by connecting to the Sky Net, activating spells inscribed on magic artifacts. Losing the connection meant losing all magical means. Facing a ghost without magical power, one would certainly be at its mercy.

Assad, this is precisely the most terrifying aspect of a 'ghost'.

Honestly, aside from Li Ang, likely, no one else could have resisted the ghost's possession attack.

Li Ang managed to withstand it due to his unique trait: even without the Sky Net, he didn't lose all spellcasting abilities.

It's not that Li Ang was born extraordinary; after obtaining the Immortal's heritage last time, he became a bug in the Sky Net system, and its permissions could no longer completely restrict his spellcasting.

He gained two main benefits:

Firstly, his use of the Sky Net became smoother and more convenient. This advanced his already top-notch hacking skills in Era City to a terrifying level.

Secondly, now he can cultivate himself like ancient practitioners, taking the path of Qi Cultivation, Foundation Establishment, and Golden Core, eventually achieving transcendence and immortality.

Of course, this is just theoretical. The path to immortality is not easy and not Li Ang's desire.

Simply speaking about the convenience of spellcasting, self-study and cultivation pale in comparison to the fast and easy route using the Sky Net. Moreover, utilizing the Sky Net was Li Ang's forte for decades.

As a pragmatist, he naturally uses whatever is effective.

Of course, maintaining a degree of spellcasting ability without the Sky Net is extremely useful, which a pragmatist like Li Ang couldn't forgo.

Being able to cast emergency spells to save himself after being possessed by a ghost and cut off from the Sky Net was thanks to the Ancient Immortal's heritage.

Having survived the most dangerous wave, things improved significantly now.

The ghost was forced out and manifested in the real world, losing its greatest threat—launching unpredictable and indefensible attacks from the network.

Being forcibly extracted also inflicted severe damage on the ghost. At this moment, it was in chaos, finding it difficult to escape or retaliate.

Nevertheless, one must remain vigilant.

Li Ang would not give the ghost another chance.

He closed his eyes, and seven Heavenly Eye Spells formed phantom eyes, surrounding the 'ghost'.

These phantom eyes were like nodes in an array.

Then, silver-grey micro lights connected them, completely enveloping the ghost, forming an invisible cage.

This 'cage' didn't have a physical form; essentially, it was a network blockade.

Physical entities could easily come and go.

But not the Sky Net signal.

This blockade was not absolute; there's a degree to it. If Li Ang were trapped inside, he could find a way out given some time.

But it was only a ghost trapped in there.

The ghost's ability on the network was formidable. However, in reality, it was already out of its element and weakened, making breaking through the signal blockade set by Li Ang with the Heavenly Eye Spell very difficult.

Realizing the dire situation, it dashed around within the array formed by the Heavenly Eye Spell but couldn't break out. Although it caused the array to tremble, that was the extent of its destruction.

Quietly, Li Ang took out the silver dragon and fired several bullets at the 'ghost' trapped in the array.

[Flame Bullet: Upon contact, it explodes into a large amount of fire, similar to a Molotov cocktail.]

The flames from the exploding flame bullets engulfed the inside of the 'cage'. The ghost, resembling Wang Su, silently howled amidst the roaring flames. The black mist that formed its body shrunk under the heat.

Dissatisfied with its efficiency, Li Ang added a few more incendiary rounds.

The flame intensity increased, and the ghost was completely engulfed and vanished.

He finally and completely destroyed the ghost.

He exhaled deeply, and after confirming the ghost was disintegrated and couldn't come back, he turned his attention back to Wang Su's corpse.

After all the commotion, the corpse had shifted, revealing a small black suitcase previously concealed beneath it.

Chapter 791: The End Draws Near

Economic issues, along with the need for Gu Hang to allocate a portion of the essence from the Storm God Kingdom to suppress the subspace pollution of the ship...

These two points make it difficult for the Alliance to produce a Glory Queen every 15 years.

However, the Alliance currently has one, soon there will be two, and three in fifteen years... This scale is sufficient.

Indeed, when the current ship 'Eastern' was unveiled to the world, it already induced countless astonishment.

Mars, Holy Terra, various Sect of Mechanics factions... countless inquiries came from those who received the news.

The Alliance Foreign Affairs Department had a contingency plan for this, diverting all inquiries.

Still, some inquiries were directed straight to Gu Hang.

For example, Zebert, and Kao'er Sage, who had provided key assistance to Gu Hang in Holy Terra.

People of such high status have contact information for Gu Hang. They bypass the Alliance Foreign Affairs Department directly to inquire of Gu Hang, who certainly couldn't ignore them.

But it's only to the extent of 'handling' them.

The Central Empire proposed that next year's three trillion Imperial Tax be waived in exchange for a Glory Queen, but Gu Hang resolutely refused.

How I pay the Imperial Tax is my business; the amount suffices; don’t concern yourself with the method.

Then, Zebert tried to place an order for a Glory Queen Battleship, offering four trillion, and inquiring of the Alliance how quickly it could be built.

Gu Hang turned the tables and quoted fifteen trillion, requiring 30% upfront, then 10% annually for a total of ten years, with delivery in sixty years.

Zebert actually hesitated.

These two conditions, actually... he could accept.

Fifteen trillion is indeed a substantial amount, almost half the Empire’s annual revenue, or slightly more.

However, to gather fifteen trillion for other purposes wouldn’t work, but to acquire a Glory Queen would; squeezing a bit, it could be possible.

As for the sixty-year construction time, it really is reasonable. Many Founding Worlds take decades to construct a Mechanical Ark or Battleship. Why not sixty years for a ship of Glory Queen’s caliber? He actually found it quite fast, at least he could see it in his lifetime—provided his life-extension surgery succeeded.

But when these two conditions combine, it becomes challenging.

Why should I pay all the money up front for a ship with a sixty-year construction period?

On this matter, Zebert endeavored to haggle with Gu Hang.

Gu Hang was genuinely surprised that Zebert appeared interested in negotiating further. He had initially quoted a price and timeline without sincerity, without even retaining a token final payment. I take all the money after ten years; what if the ship construction fails, won’t you worry?

Such a quoting strategy was meant to scare off Zebert.

Upon realizing negotiation was viable...

Gu Hang indeed became intrigued.

Let the Foreign Affairs Department negotiate with the Central Empire, incorporating it in the clauses of the new tax law being formulated now.

If the Empire can genuinely accept receiving a Glory Queen sixty years later, Gu Hang would be willing to sell.

Five construction durations for one ship in exchange for seven ships worth; it’s not impossible.

As for the Martian Sect, they weren’t after ships; they were inquiring about conducting a technology exchange.

This... Gu Hang could only agree to a limited extent.

The construction of the Glory Queen-class Battleship sees limited contributions from the Alliance’s own shipyards, undertaking only some low-tech tasks. The most crucial components, in essence, rely on the black box extracted by Gu Hang, crafted bit by bit.

This portion is not suitable for viewing by the Martian Sect members.

Viewing wouldn’t benefit them.

However, Gu Hang can allow them to visit and even study the ship itself.

This decision is also in consideration of the help the Great Sage once extended.

After all, they wouldn't possibly derive the technology to construct new Glory Queens merely from studying the finished product.

The Empire doesn't have just the Alliance's sole Glory Queen now. Each major Loyalist Battle Group commands one too. Given the Martian Sect's status, they surely have ample opportunities to study those Glory Queens, but have yielded no noteworthy outcomes, attesting to the reproduction difficulty far exceeding expectations.

Exchanging knowledge here isn't necessarily a bad thing.

With this mindset, Gu Hang generously agreed to the Great Sage's exchange request, without stipulating any conditions for additional profit swaps.

However, what the Great Sage said subsequently surprised Gu Hang further.

"To clarify, the exchange is not in the manner you envision. I will persuade the Founding General to dispatch Mars's top team in large-scale ship construction and the team with the most thorough research of ancient Glory Queen relic information to Eastern."

"The goal of the exchange isn't to learn anything from you. But to harness their prior learning and expertise in building your Glory Queen."

An unexpected boon from the heavens?

From this angle, one could almost say Mars is providing the Alliance with free technical support?

Though technically, it isn't particularly needed by the Alliance; yet this particular group, if indeed as per the Great Sage's claim, comprises talented individuals who, to some extent, may expedite the construction speed of the Glory Queen.

"Accelerating the Alliance’s construction of Glory Queen-class battleships is precisely my objective."

"May I ask... why?"

The Great Sage didn’t mince words, candidly informing Gu Hang of the reason: "The Era of the End approaches. Our time is limited. Since the Alliance already possesses the capability to construct the Glory Queen, any accumulation of power before its arrival can better alter the Empire’s future."

"The Era of the End... approaches? Could you specify? I wish to know exactly what it is, and if there’s a precise timeline."

"I do not know either," the Great Sage said, "but it won’t be much longer."

"...Alright."

...

Gu Hang could not pry further information from the Great Sage.

Yet the urgency within him intensified.

He was genuinely worried about the so-called Era of the End, and the prophecy he had once obtained from the Dark Spirit Race, evolving ultimately into what.

Gu Hang was greatly troubled by such matters.

Any matter preventing him from peacefully farming, growing, and providing a good life for the people bothered him exceedingly.

The issue surrounding the Era of the End might be even more vexatious than the problems brought on by the Central Empire.

Such that, the new crisis, new tax negotiations between the Alliance and the Empire, he lacked considerable interest in focusing on, instead dedicating more time within the Storm God Kingdom, observing subspace shifts.

Empire, humanity, face numerous threats in this universe. But if anything might be worthy of the term 'end,' Gu Hang's first suspicion remains that vast, formidable subspace.

A year and a half later.

When the group of experts from Mars arrived and began their work; when the Empire and Alliance's negotiations broke down for the third time, and the Empire once again resorted to previously used measures, feigning troop mobilization to station near the Alliance's Cosmos Domain, aiming to pressure the Alliance...

Gu Hang witnessed an earth-shattering explosion within subspace.

Chapter 792: The Great Cataclysm

At the very top of the tallest tower in the Storm God Kingdom, Gu Hang sat upon his Thunder Throne, eyes shining, head slightly raised, staring off into the distance at the intense explosion occurring far away.

If one were to describe Subspace as a vast ocean, then this ocean was constantly surging and heaving.

There were both obvious waves and unnoticed but terrifying undercurrents.

This turbulent force, though frightening, had become the norm in Subspace, and Gu Hang, who often observed it, naturally grew accustomed to it.

It was actually normal for some spot in Subspace to suddenly explode, resulting in intense energy fluctuations amidst the waves of Subspace.

In fact, it would be more special if Subspace became calm, requiring a closer look.

However, the explosion Gu Hang saw this time was extraordinarily violent.

So violent that Gu Hang, who had been paying attention to Subspace, had never witnessed anything like it before.

It was like seeing a storm in the ocean, with raging waves and surging undercurrents. But this time, it seemed like a massive underwater volcano had erupted, triggering a series of horrific tsunamis!

This was extremely rare in the entire ocean of Subspace.

After all, even in the sea of Subspace, massive underwater volcanic eruptions weren't constant occurrences.

The hue of the light could not be described using the regular spectrum, resembling a chaotic rainbow forcibly composed from crushing ten thousand conflicting colors. At the core of the explosion surged not typical energy, but the embodied madness of the Universe.

In that moment, Gu Hang saw countless distorted faces multiplying in the Spiritual Tide, nascent cries overlaid by fresh screams, layers of sound waves condensing into a crystallized purple-black downpour.

Gu Hang heard blasphemous echoes, saw the cosmic spiral arms twisted into warped shapes, stars turning into flowing liquid gold within spiral patterns;

A farmer on some distant agricultural planet looked up at the sky, seeing his own intestines hanging in his eyes, a foretell of his own catastrophic future;

As the shockwave of the explosion swiftly crossed the borders of the Storm God Kingdom, the fabric of reality was torn like a piece of wet silk by an invisible giant hand.

In this time-space dislocation, Gu Hang glimpsed a revelation of the future: within the Alliance territory, multiple star domains on the west observed cosmic anomalies. Inside numerous artificial structures along planetary orbits, tar-like substances oozed out, while infrasound vibrations akin to a baby's cry emitted from planetary cores.

The most fatal fracture appeared on the outskirts of the bustling trade of the Lingze Star System, at a reality breach extending 0.25 light-years long, where Subspace turbulence was rapidly eroding the Real Universe, poised to soon engulf Lingze Star.

Yet all of this was merely the aftershock of Subspace's massive quake.

What truly terrified Gu Hang was when he gazed towards the explosion's epicenter, he saw that the rift between reality and illusion had indeed broken!

Gu Hang seemed to see that part of the corresponding Real Universe was torn, twisted, fused together. It was as if it were a funnel leading to the depths of Subspace and a festering wound in the material universe, where all nearby celestial bodies were undergoing a transformation from material to bizarre, twisted states.

Rock and steel turned to flesh, the corruption and animation throughout the entire planetary scale symbolized the fearsome power of Subspace. If those celestial bodies were habitable planets, with life forms, even humans, residing on them, the outcome would be unthinkable for Gu Hang.

Sitting calmly on the divine throne, the lightning between Gu Hang's eyes gradually subsided and dissipated.

The four most powerful Evil Gods in Subspace laughed malevolently amid the waves; he had listened enough. The golden-glowing sun had no further movement, and being this 'Storm,' there was nothing for him to stir either—nor could he manage.

If that golden sun moved, he could at least assist, rallying support. Now, since it didn't move, if Gu Hang showed up, he'd be crushed by the temporary alliance of the four Evil Gods.

Though Gu Hang was very powerful now, compared to those Four Gods, it was still far too different.

Don’t mention those four; even their ordinary Great Demons, Gu Hang could probably crush, just like how those four could crush him; however, faced with Divine Sovereign Demons, a stronger tier, Gu Hang hadn’t yet encountered them. But he reasoned that Gu Hang couldn’t easily contend with them, perhaps could win, but likely at great cost.

Among those Divine Sovereign Demons, there were very renowned ones. For instance, the ’Wyrm Weaver’ was the most famous monster among the Sorcerer Demons, bearing two eagle heads, one narrating the past, the other the future. Past and future together wove the fate of all things in the world.

If Gu Hang truly encountered this creature, it was uncertain whether he could even prevail.

But regardless of the kind of Great Demon, in the presence of those four great beings, they were merely objects to be easily crushed.

This also meant that if Gu Hang were to fall before them, his end wouldn’t be much better.

Gu Hang couldn’t independently stand out.

As for why the sun didn’t prevent such a terrible explosion... Gu Hang had a speculation.

The four great gods of Subspace were the most powerful entities in Subspace. That sun, perhaps, could handle any one of them head-on. But once they united, even the sun would have to temporarily retreat, hiding behind clouds.

Chapter 792: The Cataclysm (Part 2)

However, those four deities would not easily unite.

The conflicts among them are no less than those with the ascended Divine Emperor.

Perhaps even more.

The four Evil Gods have been engaged in an eternal war from ancient times to the present. Each holds profound hatred towards the other three.

Among them, between the Tyrant and Slaanesh, representing honor and degeneration respectively, they are absolute mortal enemies; the feud is intense. Jian Qi represents infinite change, while the Father represents eternal constancy; they are also dire enemies.

They have never truly united, neither in the past, nor now, nor in the future.

The current temporary alliance is fragile and unbalanced, destined to collapse and end soon.

In the manic smiles of those four, there is likely a malicious intent towards each other, ready to turn against one another and stab each other in the back.

Before that happens, one should not act recklessly. Otherwise, attracting the attention of all four together would be even more disastrous.

Even if the explosion in the Subspace will have a terrifying impact on the Real Universe.

Understanding these points, Gu Hang could only sigh deeply.

Returning to the Real Universe, he gathered the high-ranking officials of the Alliance.

The various scenes he had seen, some are happening now, others will occur in the future.

Especially those events around the Alliance that have yet to occur but are soon to be affected by the aftermath of the intense explosion.

Gu Hang demanded that the entire Alliance prepare every plan and make all preparations, so that when disaster strikes, they can quickly respond and unite as one.

At the same time, Gu Hang sent a message and even personally contacted Zebert, warning him of what he had witnessed.

Zebert was skeptical.

Could this be a conspiracy of the Alliance?

But soon, his own spiritual advisor nervously issued him a warning as well.

However, by the time he believed it, the news of the destruction of the great Fortress World - Cartier in the far Imperial Southern Empire Western Border had already arrived.

This was truly the shocking news that stirred immense waves!

Cartier was one of the most renowned Fortress Worlds in the entire Empire.

There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, it was on the Cartier Star that one of the most famous Star Realm Legions of the Empire, the Cadian Assault Army, was born.

The Cadian Assault Army had become the exemplar of the Imperial Star Realm Army, with a significant portion of the Star Realm Army Group across the Empire being established following the Cadian Assault Army's model.

The Cadian Assault Army not only stationed on their home planet. Such a formidable legion was naturally not overlooked by the Empire. Their units were not only stationed on Cartier for long periods but were also frequently deployed to assist in other battlefronts, sometimes serving as instructors, training other Star Realm Army Groups, or participating directly in wars as elite forces.

This further amplified their reputation.

The reason Cartier could cultivate such outstanding Star Realm Armies is closely related to their world's environment.

The natural environment on the planet itself was not particularly harsh, but the external environment, or rather the long-term external threats they faced, were unimaginable elsewhere.

They were right beside the 'Hell's Gate'!

The so-called 'Hell's Gate' is located in the southern side of the Imperial Western Empire Border. There is a special region there, known as the Hell's Gate Star Domain. This star domain has never been under the Empire's control, estimated to comprise over a thousand worlds, the lightest being like the Rage Owl Star of the past, with a particularly thin veil of reality.

That means, under normal circumstances, the Subspace could easily break through the veil of reality, affecting the planet's interior. Creatures on the planet would easily hear strange whispers and, unknowingly, be tempted and corrupted. Even non-sentient creatures were more likely to become carriers of Subspace Demons.

But in truth, there's no need to overthink this, as thousands of years ago, there were no longer any normal humans in this entire star domain.

There were many abnormal living 'people', but their human content was very questionable.

Those 'people' corrupted by the Subspace, in essence or appearance, might barely maintain a human shape.

They established chaotic Evil Demon Kingdoms there and danced with true Subspace Demons in the weakest parts of the veil of reality.

From this perspective, 'Hell's Gate' is aptly named, being the largest intersection between the Subspace, the so-called hell, and the Real Universe.

From there, countless evil demons and traitors launched attacks, ravaging the surrounding Imperial territories, causing great disaster.

Consequently, the Empire had launched several expeditions to Hell's Gate over the years.

There have been more than four large-scale expeditions, all aiming to eradicate all evil there, at great cost.

Smaller operations were countless. Many battle groups sentenced to penance expeditions had their final destinations set at Hell's Gate.

The so-called 'marching into hell' was exactly this.

But Hell's Gate always stood open, and the evil demons continued to launch attacks everywhere, showing the outcomes of those expeditions.

In fact, failure was mild. The large-scale expeditions resulted in sending plenty of talent to the traitors.

Entering hell was incredibly difficult. Apart from facing powerful enemies, one had to deal with pervasive erosion within Hell's Gate. Even well-prepared Human Expeditionary Armies, fortified by the National Church and Sect of Mechanics' rituals, incense, and chants, would eventually succumb to corruption over time.

As for the Interstellar Warriors sent on penance expeditions, they were essentially sent to die. Some sincerely died, while others, wanting to live, would change symbols and repaint, transforming from a battle group into a warband, becoming popular among traitor armies.

After realizing they couldn't eliminate Hell's Gate, the Empire, troubled by the evil raiders' continuous attacks, had no choice but to adopt a defensive stance.

Thus, the Fortress World - Cartier was born.

Cartier was originally one of the major bases for the third Hell's expedition, a launch planet. With the Empire's decision to take a defensive tactic, Cartier became the most crucial hub world on the Hell's Gate defensive line, the line's core. The Cadian Assault Army was established under this context by surviving warriors of the hell expeditions.

The Cartiers held critical pathways for attacks from Hell's Gate, with the most fluid Star Realm Tunnels passing through Cartier. They endured the harshest trials for countless worlds outside.

Of course, solely defending was insufficient. Always having one planet bear all the pressure was unsustainable; the evil demons' fierce assaults would eventually succeed. Additionally, the enemy could easily navigate other Star Realm Tunnels to bypass Cartier and invade the outside.

The Supreme Castle Lord of Cartier, the highest commander of the Hell's Gate defense line, always actively attacked into Hell's Gate, creating some buffer space. These worlds under human control often managed to hold some Star Realm Tunnels, preventing the enemy from circumventing.

This entire defensive line, with Cartier as the hub, was elastic inward towards Hell's Gate and offered second-line defense outward, with Cartier positioned centrally.

This defensive setup had operated effectively over millennia. Though there were many crises, they were ultimately resolved through the efforts of Cartiers and the support from various Imperial regions.

But this time, according to frontline reports, no one could help Cartiers resolve the crisis.

Cartier was completely destroyed.

Chapter 793:

The Yunlang soldiers have already exerted tremendous effort and sacrifice, but all they could do was eliminate just two Water Dragons. The remaining two still inflicted devastating losses upon them.

At least twenty Yunlang soldiers perished in the deluge.

The Water Dragons appeared as dragon-serpent forms, roaring with gaping mouths and ferocious claws, yet in essence, they utilized powerful water currents to create immense impact and sweep people away.

Once hit by a Water Dragon, the defense spells on the Yunlang soldiers shattered like paper. Those struck head-on were smashed like tofu under high-pressure water flow, their whole bodies disintegrated. Blood stained the first part of the Water Dragon, and their bodies turned into shattered flesh, wrapped in torn tactical suits, were swept into the water.

Those not directly hit by the Water Dragon weren't much better off. They were trapped within the bodies of the Water Dragons. Though the impact was lesser, the strong water currents held them motionless. Inside the Water Dragon, they couldn't breathe or control their bodies, continually torn by the terrifying currents. They couldn't even hold their breath to endure, as water rushed into their noses and lungs, rendering them unconscious. Regardless of whether they survived later, in terms of this battle, they were as good as dead.

The sudden loss of twenty men severely undermined the firepower of the Yunlang soldiers.

The remaining two Water Dragons continued to rampage as the five eliminated ones began to reassemble under Li Ang's control at a distance.

One of the characteristics of the Water Dragon Spell was that as long as the practitioner continued to maintain the spell, it would remain effective. Even if the Water Dragons were destroyed, they would quickly reconvene within a short period.

Yunlang's side had been quite successful in responding to Li Ang's Water Dragon Spell attack, destroying most of them in an instant. But the cost was significant, apart from the formidable Yao Cheng himself, the casualties were severe.

Yet, Yao Cheng had new approaches for the two remaining Water Dragons and the five regenerating ones.

He himself seemed quiet, yet behind him, a Dark Giant enveloping his entire body let out a roar.

Countless black spears suddenly shot out from the Dark Giant, piercing towards Li Ang and his Water Dragons.

Li Ang certainly knew the power of these dark spears, having been pierced by one himself previously, it polluted his defense spell, requiring significant effort to resolve. He did not want a repeat of that.

Dodging desperately, he also pulled out the [Silver Dragon], firing spiritual power shots at two unavoidable dark spears, shooting them out of the air.

However, he himself could dodge, but the Water Dragons, vast but far less agile than him, couldn't evade.

Each Water Dragon, including the five still forming, had multiple spears embedded in them.

Subsequently, Li Ang observed as the black spears nestled within the Water Dragons swiftly melted, merging into their bodies.

Soon after, the two undestroyed Water Dragons poised to slaughter more Yunlang soldiers abruptly froze. The water composing their bodies polluted by the melting dark spears, turned their entire form grey-black. Their bodies stiffened, movements slowed, ultimately immobilizing. The giant dragon semblance faded, leaving behind just a pool of filthy water.

The forming Water Dragons faced a similar fate.

Li Ang raised his eyebrows, his Water Dragon Spell getting countered just like that?

He had anticipated the Water Dragon Spell would struggle against the opponent. Considering Yao Cheng's displayed strength, if dispelled by a mere Water Dragon Spell, it would be too simple.

Yet he hadn't anticipated such an easy counter.

Previously, Yao Cheng's body hacked through two Water Dragons, then using his defense to shatter a third crashing into him, had already been a direct and crude response, one Li Ang could accept.

His opponent's high strength and fierce demeanor allowed them to exceed the Water Dragon Spell, a straightforward magic focused on hard-hitting. Colliding with someone tougher, failing to win, one had to concede.

But right now, utilizing several dark spears, liquefying two enduring and five half-formed Water Dragons into a ground pool of stale water... this was beyond comprehension.

Could the pollution and decay impact the Water Dragon Spell so strongly?

The most crucial part being during this process, Li Ang had no chance to intervene. Before him, similar notifications popped up as when his defense spell got polluted previously, but the Water Dragons' corruption and dissolution were so rapid, he was afforded no time for resolution.

Yet, while Li Ang was astonished in his heart, Yao Cheng shared similar sentiments.

He was not just surprised; he may have harbored a bit of unwilling-to-acknowledge fear.

Li Ang was known to be hard to deal with; Yao Cheng had expected this. Li Ang's past combat performances were collected into intelligence by dedicated personnel and conveyed to him. Thus, he knew Li Ang was a challenging adversary.

But even so, he felt completely prepared.

However, the confrontation reached this state unexpectedly.

Nevertheless, it occurred to him he'd made an arrangement.

He yelled angrily, "Zhang Heyang! What are you doing? Why haven't your people arrived yet?"

He attempted to summon Zhang Heyang, the director of the security department, via remote messages.

The current battlefield was not some desolate frontier, but rather the headquarters building of the Yunlang Group!

Indeed, he'd made prior arrangements; in his office were several dozen elite Yunlang soldiers, awaiting orders. It was a true trap, with dozens charging forth at the signal of a shattered cup...

Although failing to seize Li Ang was unexpected, he adhered to the principle of preparing thoroughly when possible. He had taken one more precaution—he had instructed Zhang Heyang to mobilize a large contingent of Yunlang Security Department soldiers for battle readiness. Unless necessary, they would not be engaged, but clearly, this situation required them.

In theory, Zhang Heyang should have promptly charged in with his team upon receiving his message.

Yet, they hadn't.

Chapter 793: The Empire's Doomsday

What exactly happened on Cartier, who conquered Cartier and destroyed that planet, which is considered one of the most heavily guarded in the entire Empire, the Central Empire does not know.

The Central Empire also doesn't know why after Cartier was destroyed, there was a violent Subspace explosion, nor why the power that erupted from this explosion is so terrifying.

The greatest disaster it brought lies in the Subspace waves surging out from the Hell's Gate, forming a torrent.

The torrent flows outward, engulfing a Star Domain each day.

Wherever this Subspace torrent sweeps through, a Scarlet Scar will form in the starry sky, visible across many Empire Worlds by simply looking up at the night sky.

All worlds within this scar will instantly lose contact with the outside realm.

Interstellar communication becomes impossible to conduct. All Star Realm Tunnels are unable to function properly amidst the violent waves.

According to calculations, this Subspace torrent will sweep from the Hell's Gate in the Imperial Southern Empire Western Border all the way northeast. On the star map, if this torrent cannot be stopped, it will split the entire Empire's territory in just about a month.

And indeed, it cannot be stopped.

A month later, the Empire was really divided into two parts.

Not only did countless worlds covered by the Scarlet Scar lose contact with the Central Empire, but also places on the other side of the scar, nearly the entire Imperial's Eastern Frontier, Southern Border, southern part of the Western Empire Border, and a small area on the east of the Northern Border... all these places lost contact with the Empire.

And what lost contact is not just within the Scarlet Scar and the other side of the scar.

The impact of this Subspace torrent is far-reaching, affecting not only the regions it sweeps through and the areas within the Scarlet Scar. As the torrent sweeps, the entire known Universe shakes. Not only can Scarlet Scar worlds not connect with the others, even other worlds don't function normally. When conducting interstellar communication, interruptions are frequent, or suddenly hearing shrill screams and frenzied laughter.

Remote communication becomes very unreliable, and even when not disrupted and connected, the worst-case scenarios may occur: critical information being altered during transmission. After suffering this consequence, rigorous multi-verification and review of information became crucial.

Beyond the increasingly difficult interstellar communication, even more challenging is interstellar travel across Star Domains.

The Star Realm Tunnel is still usable - which is almost the only means of faster-than-light travel the Empire can rely on right now.

Although many places still retain the Subspace Engine, currently, virtually existing engines are Star Realm Engines. Constructing new ships or replacing current warships with Subspace Engines is extremely difficult. The astronomical cost and time are hard to accept.

Moreover, is the Subspace Engine even reliable? When the Empire used Subspace Engines on a large scale, direct Subspace travel was already unsafe. Star Realm Tunnels replaced the former by offering far greater safety. Now, with Subspace waves raging so fiercely, even advanced ancient technology might not guarantee stability.

The current Star Realm Tunnel travel, while encountering greater dangers, has significantly increased the chances of disorientation and disappearance. But with no alternative choice, it remains the only solution.

After major restrictions on communication and travel, each Empire World becomes an isolated isle.

If a planet itself faces no major problems, it might still manage; but for those already suffering disasters, such as alien assaults or rebel threats, which originally could expect external aid, they now rely solely on themselves. External assistance, if not cut off, at least slower in arriving.

Danger doesn’t just stem from this ’isolation issue’.

Amid the Subspace waves, the reality veil between the known Universe and Subspace becomes thinner than before. This implies that Subspace incursions become easier.

In many worlds close to the Scarlet Scar, they might even suffer direct attacks by Demons.

These terrifying Subspace creatures appear directly in the real world.

And even in places far from the Scarlet Scar, when people look up with moods of depression, anger, grief, or joy... strong emotions will lead one to hear voices best left unheard.

The faint red trace visible even in daylight holds a particular magic. This magic further intensifies at night when the red trace becomes more evident.

The most direct impact is the increase in those possessing Spiritual Energy gifts - but it's not purely a good thing.

Psychics become increasingly susceptible to losing control.

Additionally, Cult activities become more frequent, as Chaos beliefs spread more widely than before.

Moreover, Chaos Rebel Army directly charges from the Hell's Gate within the Scarlet Scar, capturing cities and territories everywhere...

With the appearance of the Great Rift, the entire Empire sank into chaos.

Even on Holy Terra, panic has already spread widely.

Although Holy Terra hasn't directly suffered any calamity immediately, the officials of the Central Empire realize that the current chaotic situation of the Empire is beyond their ability to handle.

Everywhere is out of contact, when connected, it's desperate cries for help. Once reinforcements are dispatched, they may never return...

All resources imported from the outside, if not cut off, then short. Many Imperial Taxes on the way cannot be delivered, at least delayed. As for the next Imperial Tax... can't even contact, how to collect?

The originally rigid, chaotic, inefficient Empire system now directly teeters on the brink of collapse under this global-reaching catastrophe.

The Central Empire's bureaucrats are also striving earnestly.

Zebert sounded the highest-level alarm within the Imperial Palace, and Empire’s officials are working day and night. Fleets after fleets set off from the Solar System towards various places.

They are also striving to attempt to remedy the situation.

But the officials on Holy Terra understand that it’s merely about doing their best and leaving the rest to fate.

They possess no confidence regarding the future outcome.

Zebert spends his days on his throne, always distracted during his work.

He recalls his last communication with Gu Hang.

"The end is near... the end has come... Is this the Empire’s doomsday? Will the Empire end by my hands?"

"No... no... it’s impossible, I absolutely cannot allow this to happen!"

Chapter 794: Not an Island

Spiderweb Domain, Fox Moon Star Domain, Capital Planet Snow Fox Star.

The sky here has remained crimson for thirty-seven standard days. A scarlet scar stretches across the firmament like a festering knife wound, its edges shrouded in a mist that envelops the capital in a dark red glow akin to eternal night. Star Domain Head Jason Morgan stands beneath the prismatic dome of the observatory hall, gazing at the many crisis markers flashing on the holographic star map—those are planets falling into chaos.

Since the central Alliance issued a warning for the entire Alliance to prepare for disaster, he synchronized the entire Star Domain for pre-disaster war preparations.

Yet the disaster still came too unexpectedly.

In the textile hub of Snow Fox Star, all binary control cores of the textile machines suddenly began weaving blasphemous scriptures. The production lines no longer output nano-scale snow fox wool but instead blended human hair and metal fibers into the "Song of the Father."

A gravity regulator in one Nest Capital began malfunctioning at a rate increasing by 5% every ten minutes. If not properly addressed, thirty million civilians would have their internal organs crushed by their weight in forty-eight hours.

In the planet's circulating civilian currency—the Alliance coin—some banknotes featuring Gu Hang's, The Emperor's likeness, or the Phoenix Battle Group emblem occasionally transformed into the image of Slaanesh's allure during the night when the scarlet scar was most prominent.

Several lower nests disconnected from the Alliance local government saw transactions using human organs as currency emerge spontaneously. A healthy kidney could fetch a week's worth of food, with untainted spinal fluid being extremely sought after. Black market merchants even developed 'pain futures,' using the intensity of neural pain as currency credit.

A ship arrived at Snow Fox Star's starport after the Great Rift, requesting entry. They correctly replied to the electronic signal verification; their ship's encrypted serial number was also correct.

After allowing the ship in, inspections revealed the engine room grew coral reefs of flesh, turrets became weeping bronze faces, and the crew degenerated into semi-transparent gelatinous creatures under subspace radiation.

The crew did not even realize their transformation, bewildered by the inspectors firing upon them directly upon boarding. Those not shot immediately went mad when informed of their current appearance.

...

These events were merely the tip of the iceberg. The impact of the scarlet scar had many more effects. Such incidents continued to emerge on the planet.

According to the star map, the scarlet scar is still far from the Fox Moon System, stretching through the southwest side of the Star Devouring Cosmos, splitting it in two. Near the Alliance side, there are approximately five Star Domains; nearer the other side, there are eight Star Domains. In the area directly enveloped by the scarlet scar, where subspace currents pass through, there are nearly seven hundred worlds.

The Fox Moon Star Domain is at least half a Cosmos Domain, even a full Cosmos Domain away from the scarlet scar, yet the subspace aftershocks have caused many ’oddities’ on the planet. This illustrates the state of those areas close to the scarlet scar.

As for the planets within the scarlet scar, one need not even consider; they’re likely doomed.

Despite numerous special situations, severed communication signals, unreliable Star Realm Tunnel navigation throwing Jason Morgan into frenzy,

he had long been warned, and with all contingency plans in place, he led the Snow Fox Star government to counter and resolve various issues.

Most importantly, the Alliance Government system’s control over the planet was unmatched by ordinary Empire Worlds.

Not every Empire World is bad. In such a large pool, there’s bound to be well-managed ones. But in terms of average standards, the worlds under Alliance rule are undoubtedly top-tier.

The numerous problems appearing on the planet, although each seemed quite terrifying looking at them individually, were not too difficult to handle.

The tainted textile machines were restarted; those that remained tainted were destroyed. All "Song of the Father" articles were burned in sacred fire. Everyone who had seen them, even if unintentionally, was detained, required to recite "Emperor’s Holy Words Record" for a long period before they could be released following multiple rounds of screenings.

Meanwhile, a team of Psychics accompanied by priests and Legal Department guards examined the textile central zone, cooperating to correctly deploy the reality curtain reinforcement devices sent earlier by the Sect of Mechanics.

It won't completely prevent situations, but it will improve greatly.

The malfunctioning gravity regulator in Nest Capital was difficult to handle; restarting it recklessly was out of question. Ultimately, under accelerated malfunction conditions, three million civilians were evacuated within a few short days.

Such a vast population and swift evacuation speed highlighted the immense mobilization capability of the Alliance system.

Not to mention those feudal worlds or slave systems, even worlds with modern organizational systems may not resolve a three-million-person evacuation issue within days.

Operations like searching and destroying tainted currency, dealing with potential cultist organizations, cleaning up lower nests, reconstructing starport system ship verifications...

Such actions were swiftly pushed forward in a short time.

The Snow Fox Star was resolved entirely before reaching the state of 'chaos.'

Jason Morgan felt much more at ease.

Although the problems brought by the scarlet scar were troublesome, they were much better than the worst-case scenario he had imagined.

And with some strength remaining, as Fox Moon's Star Domain Head, Jason Morgan certainly wouldn't just be satisfied with success on the capital planet.

He began arranging personnel for active interstellar communications, collecting and organizing some reliable communication methods, along with means to identify potentially tainted information.

The planet saw a multitude of priests from the Alamita Sect, New National Church priests supported by the Alliance, nuns, Psychic Mages, Anti-Spiritual Ability Forces from the Legal Department... all working collaboratively under the Alliance Government's coordination.

They overcame one challenge after another, and gradually the effects became clear.

In four months, 90% of Fox Moon Star Domain's worlds reestablished contact with the Star Domain Government.

Government institutions at the Star Domain and Star Sector levels began operating normally, fulfilling their functions.

Even though star realm navigation remained difficult, and daring not to cross star realm tunnels for exchanging resources and personnel voluntarily, mere communication connectivity alone was already reassuring.

At least, knowing the situation outside, each planet felt it wasn't isolated as individual islands.

Chapter 795: The Optimal Solution for Mortals

The overall situation in the Fox Moon Star Domain is quite commendable.

In 90% of the worlds, after reestablishing contact with the Star Domain Government, the functioning government agencies quickly assessed and evaluated that the majority of worlds have enough capability to resolve their planetary issues.

It's definitely impossible for the functioning of society and the lives of the people to be completely unaffected. However, at least on the whole, there are no major problems. Even if there are issues, they are gradually being resolved.

On many planets, internal commercial trade, and industrial and agricultural production are rapidly recovering. Reflected in the government work reports, these indices experienced a downturn during the disaster but have quickly soared afterward.

However, there are six worlds with relatively severe problems. They might eventually resolve their issues on their own, but it could take a long time, and the costs could be painful.

In weighing the options, Jason Morgan still decided to gather some resources from the Star Domain Government to help them through the difficult times.

Under normal circumstances, it wouldn't be much of a problem—simply a few planetary crises. For a powerful Star Domain Government, if they are determined to resolve it, they definitely can.

But now, isn't there a problem with the Star Realm Tunnel? Forcing a passage, the fate of the ship that previously entered the Starport is a vivid memory for all who witnessed.

Nobody wants to end up like that.

Yet, Jason Morgan decided to be assertive. If it needs testing, then it must be tested.

Of course, not in a reckless manner.

People are precious, and ships are precious.

We need to think of less costly methods.

Jason Morgan silently stared at the model of the Star Realm Tunnel hovering in the center of the tactical round table; the originally stable bands of ghostly blue light were now showing a sickly pink and purple ripple.

"It should have already begun..."

He thought this, and soon news arrived:

"By the God of All Machines and the decree of steel, the first group of test subjects is ready, requesting approval for action."

"Approval granted."

Far at the Star Realm Warp Point in the Snow Fox Star System, a fleet composed of a dozen starships was ready for action.

These starships were, of course, not warships. All complete warships of the Alliance are within the Alliance Navy. The Starport at Snow Fox Star is indeed considered a navy base of the Alliance Navy, but during the great cataclysm, the navy was not here.

Currently, Snow Fox Star only has ordinary merchant ships, at most modified with some weaponry.

But there’s no need for it, this isn’t a battle.

In fact, the core of this mission lies in a ’fat-bellied’ warship without any combat capability.

Inside the ’fat-bellied’ ship, the dome reverberated with the roar of metallic friction as twelve probes ascended, left the ship, and entered the outer space.

Their shells were engraved with three layers of exorcism runes, with the navigation core soaked in liquid silver bathed in Holy Oil.

These probes moved through space to the two ships that would act as the main reconnaissance force and then docked alongside.

These two exploration ships are of the Voyager class, the minimum class capable of traversing the Star Realm Tunnel.

When the first probe accompanying the Voyager pierced the Star Realm Tunnel, the holographic image suddenly contorted into a screaming face.

"Mass projector overload!" the Mechanical Priest's mechanical eye sparked with electricity, "Probe No. 3 is sending back anomalous light..."

Before he could finish, the monitoring screen suddenly erupted with viscous black liquid.

Alert guards immediately raised their flamethrowers, but that liquid solidified into the characters of "Hymn of the Father" the instant it touched the air.

Flames spurted out instantly, charring the entire screen and the infected data stream.

At the Starport, upon hearing the firsthand information from the frontlines, Jason Morgan's eye twitched a few times.

He asked, "Is this situation anticipated?"

"Yes."

As the Technical Priest relayed back this message, Morgan also heard the sound of a lullaby.

"...Is this also a normal condition?"

"It's also accounted for in our contingency plans. Please wait a moment; the priest is dealing with a technician who is engraving mathematical formulas on the console using an eyeball... Okay."

Jason Morgan still found it really peculiar.

But this is how testing is conducted.

A standard Terra Day later, Morgan reconnected to the front line communications.

"How are things progressing?" he asked eagerly.

"Navigation data has experienced cognitive contamination," said the Mechanical Priest, "We have failed this time, but it’s time to prepare for the next one."

Morgan rubbed his eyes.

He had anticipated that things wouldn’t be this simple, yet he still harbored hope.

The loss of the two Voyagers is one aspect; together they might cost several million tax credits, a bearable loss. However, the volunteers and responsible testers are invaluable talents.

Yet, when he made up his mind, someone beside him spoke.

It was his Spiritual Energy advisor.

"No, wait a moment... Look at the sub-signal on Channel Seven—although the main sensor failed, the Holy Oil silver left a trace in the Subspace."

After a series of operations on the interface, a faint silver line meandered through the pink-purple torrent on the holographic star map before Jason Morgan.

"Looks like there’s hope," Jason Morgan said with relief, "Just be patient... At the normal speed, it should take four to five days for them to pass through the Star Realm Tunnel to reach the other side. Let’s see if there will be any news by then."

For several days, they fixated on this faint silver line, occasionally appearing and disappearing amidst the torrent.

Four days later, the signal was recaptured. Among the twelve probes, the last one remaining faithfully transmitted back the information.

From its perspective, one could see both Voyager's hulls covered in throbbing blood vessels.

When attempting to contact the two Voyagers, the crew claimed bizarre incidents did occur during their legendary journey, but with the help of the ship's choir, the issues remained manageable. During the journey, they continuously cleared malevolent, corrupt, and mutated entities inside the ship. Finally, they successfully completed the mission.

This news was exhilarating.

Yet, they still couldn't let their guard down at this point.

Previous entities transformed into translucent gel forms also had no self-recognition issues.

They opened the spacecraft doors, sending probes in for thorough inspection.

Indeed, nothing was amiss, just as they had claimed.

A New Teaching priest representative excitedly told Jason Morgan: "The choir worked! This is a reusable method!"

The front-line Technical Priest remarked, "It must have been the effect of our modified Star Realm protective field."

The Spiritual Energy advisor claimed, "The protective field's array was the key element."

Everyone vied for credit, but Jason Morgan wasn't concerned with such trivialities.

"Everyone did their part!" he continued, "However, this isn't over; the risk of traversing is still high, and the successfully traversed vessels are the smallest ones. We haven't conducted tests on larger vessels yet. All methods must be further optimized, and everyone still needs to work in concert!"

"Understood!"

As everyone plunged back into their tasks, Jason Morgan once again turned his gaze to the probe images from the front lines.

The mutated organism on the ship's hull was glaringly conspicuous, reminding him clearly that this level of safety was just a temporary compromise—much like bandaging a festering wound.

But in the shadow of the doomsday clock, it was the best solution that mortals could reach.

Chapter 796

The first step is always the hardest.

Jason Morgan led the ships of the Fox Moon Star Domain and basically mastered a relatively safe way to pass through the Star Realm Tunnel in the subsequent tests.

A church filled with the Emperor Divine Statue and inscribed with the Holy Words, equipped with the National Church's choir, and supplemented by a Blessed Star Realm Protective Field generator, forms the most basic configuration.

Equipped with enough Blessed Holy Water, the ship has a 'clean-up team' to constantly combat corrosion marks and eliminate the evil entities invading the vessel. This is what needs to be done on top of the previous setup. Only when the choir, church, and Blessed Star Realm Field are all in place can the phenomenon of evil presence and even invading Evil Demons be weakened to a level that can be fought against, allowing the guards on the ship, using Holy Water, to destroy the enemies with mortal bodies.

It is precisely because this set of solutions was explored that Jason Morgan realizes why all the ships, when designed and built, must have a church constructed on board.

To be precise, he wasn't unaware before. With his rank, hearing explanations of these design intentions is definitely sufficient.

It is said that the church is meant to pray to the Divine Emperor during interstellar travel, seeking protection for the ship's safety. However, traveling faster than light through the Star Realm Tunnel is already a relatively mature option.

Indeed, occasionally strange things happen, but overall, safety can still be assured.

At that time, although he knew what the church was for, without the harsh reality, the understanding was not thorough enough. Compared to ensuring safety, providing the crew on board with a place to spiritually anchor during the long voyage might be a more important factor.

It always felt like, though the Starship is big, every inch of space is extremely precious. Keeping a large area as a church and decorating it so 'extravagantly' seemed unnecessary, sometimes wishing it could just be dismantled.

In the actual process of running the ship, when encountering particularly large amounts of cargo or people, indeed there would be instances of cargo being piled up in the church. Often, this had no consequences.

Precisely for this reason, the real function of the church is less felt.

Luckily, these designs were not discarded in the subsequent shipbuilding processes due to current lack of use, but rather, they were retained according to past traditions and because there really weren't any capabilities to modify the ancient blueprints.

Now, they've come into play.

Those bronze pipe organs engraved with the Emperor's Holy Words are not mere spiritual sustenance—each pipe is a resonator for reality-stabilizing anchors, and the pitch changes of the choir's hymns are actually a precise equation countering the entropy increase of Subspace with sound wave frequencies.

Beneath the base of the holy statues, different numbers of hero statues are buried according to specifications, all figures of heroes from the Empire's legends, working alongside the Emperor's Divine Statue to have a collective effect.

And in the ship's tradition, many crew members who have long served on board or made outstanding contributions are buried in the church. These former crew members, each grain of their ashes, act like a mini anti-Subspace generator, resisting Subspace penetration.

The stained glass inlaid in the dome is far from mere decoration. When the Star Realm's tides surge, the scenes depicting the Emperor's battles would seep out with liquid light, burning any whispers penetrating reality into scorch marks.

It is this harsh wisdom of transforming faith into a physical barrier that allows steel and flesh to voyage through the void.

But maintaining this system comes at a cost—the choir members, after completing an intergalactic voyage, would develop coral-like crystals on their vocal cords, requiring long periods of rest and even surgical treatment; the church floor tiles need to be recalibrated for resonance frequency after each resistance to Subspace impacts and cleansed with Blessed Holy Water; the blessed Star Realm Protective Field also needs constant addition of Holy Oil for maintenance.

The larger the ship, the more churches, clergy, and Blessed Star Realm Protective Fields it requires...

All these are additional costs and require extra time to solve.

Currently, the largest scale of ships that Jason Morgan's fleet can sustain navigation with is only of cruiser-size vessels.

Forget about trying to send something as big as a behemoth. Only some medium-sized transport ships can be used to deliver supplies and personnel.

But it's enough.

The most critical issue to resolve is just the six heavily disaster-stricken worlds.

The urgent relief supplies, the sorely needed anti-riot forces, once reaching the target planet, alleviated the urgent crisis.

Up to this point, the disasters caused by the emergence of Scarlet Scar throughout the Fox Moon Star Domain have been effectively controlled.

The entire Star Domain has returned to a relatively normal social order.

This is what pleases Jason Morgan the most.

Of course, there's always a gap compared to before the disaster outbreak.

The main headache for him is that the economic curve of the entire Star Domain has always been crawling below the recovery line.

Every cargo ship requires accompanying singers, Blessed Star Realm Field generators, and the consumption of Holy Oil and Holy Water... these costs are extremely high, yet they are still minor issues.

The biggest problem is that regardless of the means used, Star Realm navigation is inevitably severely affected.

This directly resulted in severe setbacks to the entire Star Domain's economic development.

Transportation is the blood vessels of industry. Now, it's at most barely getting the blood flow started, but still far from being 'unobstructed.'

Chapter 796_2

This is the problem Jason Morgan is completely unable to solve.

He can only smile bitterly and comfort himself:

"I've done everything I can. The rest depends on whether the Governor has a way to save us..."

The Governor he is constantly thinking about naturally refers to Gu Hang.

As a veteran member of the Alliance, in his heart, there is always a strong, almost blind trust in Gu Hang.

And Gu Hang, in most cases, does not betray their trust.

The savior who solves the final issue of the Foxmoon Star Domain has arrived like this.

Thirty-five transport ships, escorted by an equal number of warships, pierced the scarlet sky.

They migrated out from the Star Realm Tunnel, with engines at the rear of the starships spewing out azure tail flames, burning away the pursuing red-purple subspace tendrils.

As the fleet officially entered the border of the Foxmoon Star Domain, although he had received the news, Jason Morgan still found it difficult to contain the joy in his heart.

He knew what these ships were here to do — to install Ray Beacon Towers.

A few months ago, when he was still working to solve problems within this star domain, he received a communication from the Alliance Central.

Thanks to Mr. Gu's great power and the support of the Storm Mage Corps and the Psychic Cultivator's Association, communications from Alliance Central to subordinate regions could still remain smooth.

Through communication with Alliance Central, Jason Morgan learned about the existence of this miracle, the Ray Beacon Tower.

This is a device manufactured personally by Alliance Leader Gu Hang in cooperation with the Alliance Research Institute. Once installed on a planet, it can affect all connections of the Star Realm Tunnel within this star system. As long as the other end of the Star Realm Tunnel also has the presence of a Ray Beacon Tower, the direct Star Realm Tunnel between the two will be connected by thunder.

The Alliance's public sphere jokingly refers to this as 'electrification'.

With an 'electrified' Star Realm Tunnel, when Alliance ships travel through it, flashes of lightning and thunder can often be seen outside the observation window, with no evil existence.

Although it may not return to the safest times before, it's not far off.

Those protective rituals that once needed to be maintained throughout the entire process now only need to be initiated at the start and end nodes of migration to ensure safety.

The risk in the middle process is greatly reduced.

Before the disaster occurred and affected the Alliance's territory, Gu Hang had already 'witnessed' the subspace explosion.

From that explosion to the Scarlet Scar tearing through the entire Empire and affecting the Alliance, there was merely one or two months in between. During this period, Gu Hang implemented many measures.

Not only warning the Central Empire and asking the Alliance to prepare throughout for responding to the disaster, but he also carried out many actions himself.

The two most core aspects were communication and navigation.

Both problems can basically be solved through the Ray Beacon Towers.

This approach was learned from the achievements during the founding of the Empire by the Divine Emperor.

The Empire used to achieve faster-than-light travel only through the subspace method. Until after The Emperor's ascension, the Star Realm Tunnel was established, providing a far safer and more reliable method of travel than subspace travel, and it quickly replaced the original high-risk and unstable subspace travel.

Gu Hang researched and pondered what the Star Realm Tunnel was all about.

This thing has an unknown origin and is very ancient. Even the star realm travel means used by the Spirit Race and the Star Realm Gate utilized by the Dark Spirit Race's Veil City are actually closely related to the Star Realm Tunnel.

Except over the long years, it has come to many issues.

The means used by the Spirit Race to solve this are unknown. But in that era, The Emperor had a confidential, massive project. Even now, this project has not been decrypted, but Gu Hang knows that the project, which was incredibly costly and lasted hundreds or even thousands of years, was related to the Star Realm Tunnel.

And the final, most crucial and grand completion symbol of this project was The Emperor's ascension.

After his ascension, he had a place in the subspace, becoming the fifth among the 'Four Great Evil Gods'. Hence, there was a huge cold sun in subspace, combined with The Emperor's past project concerning the strengthening and building of Star Realm Tunnels, all the Star Realm Tunnels were supported, allowing humans to utilize these ancient miracles that were previously unusable.

Now this severe subspace explosion has made these ancient miracles no longer stable.

This is the key to this disaster.

In such a large environment and background, for Gu Hang to reconstruct a safe means of faster-than-light travel is almost impossible.

So the choices were few: utilize the mature mechanisms already in place from The Emperor and turn the problem from ’reconstructing new faster-than-light travel’ to ’reinforcing the Star Realm Tunnels’, and it becomes a much smaller issue.

While Gu Hang does not presume to be one among the ’Four Great Evil Gods’, he believes that even when evaluated by the standards of the entire subspace, he is only slightly less, or a notch below that rank.

The more crucial difference is that, unlike many ’native’ subspace existences, he is himself in the real universe; he is the leader of the entire real universe’s forces and possesses a real-world anchor point, making him far more advantageous than any pure subspace existence.

His Storm God Kingdom has a deeper link with reality.

Considering these factors, over the past few months, Gu Hang indeed collaborated properly with the Alliance Research Institute and meticulously developed this ’Ray Beacon Tower’.

Essentially, on two planets, constructions were set up to connect with the Storm God Kingdom, resonating with each other, locating the Star Realm Tunnel, and using the power of the Storm God Kingdom to open and form protection for it.

Once that was done, things went relatively smoothly.

Focusing on the Nuxiao Star and Tianma Star Sector, all industrial capabilities that could be utilized were fully dedicated to the construction of these ’Ray Beacon Towers’.

The first batch of Ray Beacon Towers was delivered by dozens of ’electrification’ fleets carrying them, shielded by warships, starting from the Nuxiao Star and deploying them one by one.

Building the Ray Beacon Tower is not simple, but the Alliance possesses superior production capacity.

As world after world reconnected with the Alliance Central, interstellar travel became stable, related technology spread comprehensively, and production speed soared as if it had ridden a rocket.

Hence, the Alliance's 'electrification' fleet could naturally carry an entire batch of Ray Beacon Towers and select a route to reestablish connections among worlds.

Though during this process, some worlds inevitably suffered substantial impacts, Jason Morgan's achievements in the Foxmoon Star Domain are not an exception. Although he performed notably well compared to others, even the less successful attempts were not extraordinarily poor.

All losses were calculated to be acceptable.

Indeed, slightly better than the Alliance's most optimistic predictions at the start.

Under such circumstances, Gu Hang did not hesitate in awarding rewards.

He virtually made calls to every leader of worlds that performed reasonably well, star sector leaders, and heads of star domains.

Beyond verbal commendations, there were also medals and higher rank promotions.

Those who deserve merit should receive rewards.

Those worlds in particularly dire circumstances were mostly located in the northern parts of the Spiderweb Domain, as it was the region farthest from the Dragonhawk Star Domain.

Moreover, the Alliance's rescue operation transcended its core territories.

The Eastern Cosmos Domain was also within the Alliance's rescue scope.

By the seventh month following the outbreak of the calamity, the entire Alliance was reconnected, and 60% of the Eastern Cosmos Domain was linked.

By the thirteenth month,

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Chapter 797: An Open Letter to Compatriots Amid Disaster

The entire Alliance, as well as the entirety of the Eastern Cosmos Domain, were all linked together during the months-long 'Electrification' operation.

When the linking work on the last planet was completed, Gu Hang could finally let out a sigh of relief.

No matter what, during this great catastrophe, his foundational territory was preserved.

After the 'Electrification', Star Realm navigation still couldn't match the safety levels of the past, but it had reached a usable point.

In the current environment, being able to achieve this level is already quite satisfactory.

At least within the Alliance, everyone is now rejoicing. Although life is still quite tough, at least the most difficult times are over.

There isn't any grand celebration, but at least people's lives and the development of the Alliance can return to their normal tracks.

However, Gu Hang did not feel happy.

Thinking of other regions of the Empire, the situation is probably dire enough to make one lament.

The only piece of good news is that Gu Hang observed the aftermath of the subspace turbulence, gradually lessening as it passed.

This inevitably gives rise to a hope: Will the disaster pass over time?

The fact proves it will not.

When the subspace waves diminished to a certain level, they no longer weakened, instead entering a very stable state.

By directly observing the subspace, Gu Hang could see that after the world called Cartier disappeared, what's left in the real universe is a never-healing wound. The power of the subspace constantly leaks out from it. Though not as violent as at the outset, it is enough to sustain the existence of the Scarlet Scar, perpetually altering the real universe.

That Scarlet Scar itself remains like an impassable barrier, completely isolating both ends.

Without addressing the problem at its root, the disaster will not end.

But how to eradicate the problem?

Gu Hang simply has no idea right now.

At least, from his perspective, he is powerless.

In the subspace, even the Divine Emperor must avoid confrontation, so he stands no chance.

In the real universe, the Alliance is quite far from the Hell's Gate, almost from the northeastern end of the Empire corresponding to the southwestern frontier. When the Star Realm Tunnel was usable, a trip there would take two to three years; now that the Star Realm Tunnel is unusable, it's utterly unreachable.

What should be done?

Gu Hang felt deeply sympathetic.

He's not thinking about the bugs in the Central Empire or Holy Terra, those high officials better off gone. Expecting Gu Hang to have any loyalty or concern for them is sheer fantasy.

However, for the human race and the whole emblematic 'Empire' that encompasses the entire species, Gu Hang naturally worries.

The fundamental hue of this universe is dark and terrifying. However flawed, the Empire, as the aggregation of the entire species, seems objectively to be the greatest reliance the human race has had to exist among the stars until now.

It has borne countless pressures over the millennia.

No matter how many contradictions have existed between the Alliance and the Central Empire, Gu Hang never thought that without the Empire, the Alliance would improve.

It won't.

Without the Empire as the 'tall one,' if the sky collapses, the Alliance would have to bear it alone.

If other human worlds outside the Alliance fall one by one, Gu Hang can't even imagine how powerful those enemies of humanity would become.

The Green Skin Orcs would occupy many worlds suitable for breeding; the Void Insect Species, having devoured countless worlds, would expand unimaginably; human souls sacrificed in trillion and quadrillion numbers would become the most delicious supplies for the Subspace Evil Gods...

For now, the Alliance can ensure temporary stability, and due to being unable to communicate with the Central Empire, they don't even have to pay the tens of trillions of Imperial Tax each year.

But who can guarantee a century of peace?

When the outside has been nearly eaten up, and the Aliens or Chaos push to the Alliance's borders, it will be just the Alliance left to withstand those enemies enhanced to an invincible level.

Such a situation must not happen!

Something must be done.

The predicament within the Alliance's homeland has already been solved; lingering side effects aren't a major issue. Thanks to timely handling and clear effects, severe chaos invasions and rebellions were not triggered. Small-scale quelling wars don't pose a challenge to the current governance of the Alliance.

Now, Gu Hang's focus must extend beyond the Alliance.

The first thing he wants to do is to establish contact with the Central Empire and Holy Terra.

No matter how much their relationship has deteriorated, at least they haven't openly fallen out; so far, only Holy Terra possesses the grand cause to unify the entire Empire.

Even excluding this, the strength held by the Central Empire remains the strongest. Just Holy Terra alone, with a population of two trillion, is equivalent to an entire star domain elsewhere. Not to mention, the countless years of accumulation, how many secrets and depths are unknown in Holy Terra.

Moreover, the Solar Star Domain where Holy Terra is located is the most developed area in the entire Empire; The current Dragonhawk Star Domain might not even match up, mainly because Holy Terra and Mars are too formidable.

Indeed, the nine Cosmos Domains of the entire Imperial Central Territory are, within the Empire's scope, the region with the strongest average productivity. Of course, now if the fourteen Alliance Star Domains are counted as a Cosmos Domain, it would probably be more developed than a Central Territory Cosmos Domain.

Chapter 797: Letter to Our Compatriots in Disaster (Part 2)

Bringing the Central Empire back to life, or at least confirming their current status, would be immensely helpful for the empire's fate.

Gu Hang thought he had the ability to do so.

I am a top psychic, if not the first, not the second, then at least third in the entire subspace. Can I not handle this?

Turns out, I really can't.

Now, it can basically be determined that the Alliance and Holy Terra have been completely separated by the Scarlet Scar.

Under the current situation where the Great Rift traverses the empire, the two have already been divided into separate sides.

In the past, he could casually make a psychic call to Holy Terra, chatting with Galaraldo. Moreover, if he wished, he wouldn't necessarily need a year's voyage, but could directly traverse physically, reaching Holy Terra in just two to three days.

The price was merely the hassle during subspace traversal, easily attracting attention; also, when descending upon Holy Terra, the noise would be considerable, inevitably being discovered by the Tribunal, the Imperial Guard, and so forth.

Compared to those troubles, it was better to just take the year-long ship ride.

However, now he can't even make a call.

The Scarlet Scar's turbulent subspace waves are too violent. In the past very easy route, now he has to pass through countless unreliable Star Realm Tunnels; Gu Hang could handle all these. But when facing the Scarlet Scar, like a wall of sighs, all messages are stopped on this side of the wall, unable to penetrate.

If he had to penetrate it, Gu Hang would have to be at the edge of that wall—not just physically reaching there in reality, but also in subspace.

The risk of the latter is quite high.

In the current subspace environment, Gu Hang conceptually reaching near the Scarlet Scar in subspace and attempting to breach it, truly would be seeking death. During that process, there is nothing that could protect him. And he would be completely exposed to the 'hunters'. To those four great gods, he is a mouth-watering delicacy.

Moreover, it's different than with mortals. Sometimes, for a super-dimensional existence in subspace to eat a mortal hero, it has to spend a lot of effort to lure them into corruption. But Gu Hang has an essence in subspace, which makes eating him unnecessary of weaving fate or enticing corruption.

Finding him and swallowing is enough.

He has to thank the Emperor, without the protective canopy of some powerful figure, he'd have been devoured long ago amidst the constant growth of his spiritual power, becoming conspicuous in subspace, never reaching his current level.

And without being able to go in person or break through the Scarlet Scar in subspace, he can't contact Holy Terra.

Calculating the entire situation, about three domains in the Central Empire territory, all thirteen domains in the Eastern territory, two domains in the Northern territory have been split in half on this side, and there are 8 domains in the Southern territory...

Altogether, it really is about half of the empire.

Now, with Holy Terra on the other side of the Scarlet Scar, does having this half of the empire on this side mean Gu Hang can do as he pleases?

In a certain sense, yes.

However, Gu Hang doesn't feel happy at all, just wants a bitter smile.

Just thinking about how much trouble is out there now gives him a headache.

Power is always coupled with responsibility.

But what can be done?

At this moment, I can only say, if not me, who else?

...

Even though he has been mentally prepared to bear the responsibilities of half of the empire, in practical operations, he must proceed with utmost caution.

Gu Hang knows the outside world urgently needs the Alliance's rescue, but just like meals need to be eaten bite by bite, the domain also needs to be rescued bit by bit...not swallowed.

Rescue of the empire, or rather half of the empire, fundamentally relies on the strength of the Alliance itself. Gu Hang can't be overaggressive to achieve success, consequently losing his main forces, plunging the Alliance into crisis, as that would be a huge loss.

During the rescue process, who knows how many demons are waiting for him on the outside.

The Alliance General Staff Department devised three cautious marching routes, with relatively modest force deployment, targeting the Magrey Cosmic Domain neighboring the Spiderweb Domain.

This domain isn't large, medium-scaled, with eight Star Domains. Between it and the Spiderweb Domain, there are nine Star Realm Tunnels connecting. They chose three of them, cautiously advancing with a fleet of not particularly large scale.

Venturing into outer domains poses significant risks.

Primarily during the journey.

Although in the departure world on the alliance's side, Thunder Torch Towers were surely arranged, but not on the other side.

This process is conceptually similar to the previous 'electrification' actions where they went to ignite many alliance worlds, but slightly more challenging.

In the Alliance territory, Gu Hang's Storm God Kingdom could provide a degree of protection. After all, while not everyone in the alliance chants Gu Hang's name, his leadership stature does resonate deeply. Positive emotions like gratitude, trust, and adoration, or negative emotions like hatred and fear, as long as they aren't ignoring or dismissing, exert an effect.

However, outside the alliance, the protective effect of the Storm God Kingdom diminishes significantly.

This implies increased difficulty in Star Realm navigation.

Alliance vessels are equipped with more and even excessive anti-Chaos measures.

This so-called ’standard’ was derived from various precious data from experiments like the one Jason Morgan conducted in the Fox Moon Star Domain, along with dedicated testing data from Alliance Central, compiled into a "Dangerous Navigation Manual".

Yet, its reliability remains questionable. Warnings are prominently printed on the first page of the manual.

The main reason being the test data still isn’t abundant enough due to time constraints. Also, these data were obtained from within the Alliance territory, and Alliance technical experts believe that safe navigation is higher internally than externally.

While compiling the manual, a margin was added to the existing data standards, but that only added to the uncertainty.

For these initial three expeditionary fleets, even after utilizing measures thrice the manual standard, they still felt insufficiently secure.

However, facts proved, the Alliance, being very strong, was also overly cautious.

The threefold safety measures proved quite effective.

Despite inevitable occurrences of Chaos corrosion on board after traversing the Star Realm Tunnel to reach regions outside the Alliance,

the severity wasn’t high and resolution was swift.

Additionally, the fleet wasn't solely composed of the Navy; considering that the rescues of external planets involve ground operations, a substantial deployment of Army units with the fleets was necessary.

When encountering Chaos corruption onboard, naturally, there were ample manpower resources to resolve it.

Moreover, war might be the main theme, but an even greater theme is disaster relief. Following the warships were numerous transport ships. Besides transporting Army and equipment, resources for disaster relief were also abundant.

The Alliance's expeditionary fleet thus wielded a carrot in one hand, a big stick in the other, arriving at the Magrey Cosmic Domain.

...

In contrast to the cautious advance of the Alliance expeditionary fleet, another measure of Gu Hang seemed far bolder and more aggressive.

That concerns communication.

Can't contact Holy Terra, but can't contact the other Empire Worlds on this isolated side?

Certainly, it can be done.

In fact, it can be considered relatively easy.

Even without the help of Alliance Central, a well-managed region like the Fox Moon Star Domain took nearly six months to reunify all planets. In places beyond the alliance, the islanding problem would be even more severe.

People always try to grasp onto lifelines desperately.

At this moment, Gu Hang could feel numerous helpless communication signals flying out from various planets.

And he intends to give them hope.

He had the Alliance Foreign Affairs Department draft a "Letter to Compatriots in Disaster" in the name of the High Lord.

Chapter 798: Savior or Usurper

"Letter to Disaster-Facing Compatriots"

To all Imperial citizens steadfast amidst the torrent of Subspace:

As you read this transmitted Star Language message, the Star Realm Tunnel in the Spiderweb Domain and Eastern Cosmos Domain has been reopened, and the Alliance has reformed. But this is not the end; under my leadership, the Alliance takes on a greater meaning: to save the entire Empire when necessary.

The support fleets from the Alliance have set off, possibly facing numerous dangers, but we are on our way to your world.

Remember—you have never been forgotten.

The Scarlet Scar has severed our connection to Holy Terra. We are now on the Dark Side of the Empire, but this does not constitute an "Empire-ending state." All administrative units must immediately cease misuse of all kinds of temporary acts, strictly prohibiting unauthorized signing of any illegal political or legal documents.

The Empire’s majesty will not fade due to the obstruction of the Star Sea, nor will the will of the Emperor diminish due to Chaos’s whispers.

As the sole High Lord of the Empire’s Dark Side after the disaster, I represent the Imperial Supreme Council, embodying the Emperor’s will, to declare to all humans who can hear or see these words:

Effective immediately, the "Imperial Dark Side Control Committee" is established.

This committee is the highest legal authority on the Empire’s Dark Side, until the disaster concludes.

Current Planetary Governors, Star Zone Leaders, Star Domain Heads, Cosmic Domain Chairs automatically gain control authority, with vacancies filled by the highest-ranking military personnel.

Governments of planets, star sectors, star domains, and cosmic domains should protect territories, strive to minimize losses, extinguish or curb Chaos, and wait for the committee’s rescue. Upon the committee’s arrival, they must comply with all committee directives.

I swear in the name of the Emperor:

Whoever indulges Chaos worshipers, their bloodline will be traced and purified up to the third generation.

Whoever alters Imperial laws as a temporary constitution, their family’s lineage will be permanently marked with disgrace.

Whoever obstructs the landing of committee envoys, that star system will be subject to the "Simplified Process Regulations for Extinction Orders."

When the stars vanish, we ourselves become mobile beacons; when the sacred hymns are silent, our heartbeat is the rhythm of resistance; when the codes burn, our flesh and blood are the final law.

The ships traversing the fierce Star Sea transmit the engine’s tremors through the Star Realm’s veins; the navigation beacons personally calibrated by me, each imprinted with humanity’s traces in the subspace storm.

We may have to travel a long night road, but remember—all breadcrumbs passed in the dark will eventually link into a galaxy of dawn. When you hear the resonance of gears and verses in the void, when you see azure threads piercing the scarlet sky outside the clouds, that's me saying: Persist, persist like piercing Chaos's eyes.

As long as you persist, I will surely reach you.

—High Lord of Empire, Alliance Leader - Gu Hang

...

This "Letter to Disaster-Facing Compatriots" was like throwing a massive stone into a tranquil... er, originally already quite turbulent lake surface.

Compared to the Alliance's cautious advance during the Dark Side Expedition, Gu Hang's letter is far more radical.

His Spiritual Power connected almost instantly with the communication signals continually emitted by tens of thousands of worlds on the Empire's Dark Side.

The "Letter to Disaster-Facing Compatriots" thus reached almost all worlds on the Empire's Dark Side instantly.

Everyone could see that it was unrealistic, but over the past few months, those with the ability to send communication requests beyond planets—likely the aristocrats—could probably see it.

If this were a normal time, it would certainly cause a massive reaction, countless worlds would connect, countless ideas and thoughts would collide within, and ultimately, there would likely form an anti-Alliance alliance.

Who are you, to think you can call the shots?

Gu Hang undoubtedly has a certain reputation within the Empire, and he is quite powerful, but it is definitely not enough to make him the co-ruler of half the Empire.

Far from it.

However, this is definitely not a ’normal time.’

Taking the first phase target of the current Alliance’s Dark Side Expedition: the Magrey Cosmic Domain as an example, this domain with eight Star Domains and over five thousand worlds still largely remains isolated islands. The most connected place has only 37 worlds surrounding the Space Domain Government, having opened up navigation.

Even excluding navigation, just looking at communication, the Space Domain Government has only reconnected 136 worlds.

Compared to the entire domain of five thousand worlds, this is quite a small number.

What can this string together?

Compared to the already consolidated collective Alliance, those aristocrats, no matter how dissatisfied, cannot solve the problem. Once the Alliance arrives, they will be picked off one by one.

And their attempt to overthrow Gu Hang’s letter rationally... seems unlikely.

Disregarding the rhetoric, the core content of the letter is Gu Hang, under the dual capacities of High Lord and Alliance Leader, establishing the so-called ’Imperial Dark Side Control Committee,’ and declaring that until the Scarlet Scar severs the Dark Side’s connection to Holy Terra, the Control Committee holds the highest authority.

The meaning is, I am the highest authority on the Empire’s Dark Side; I call the shots on the entire Dark Side of the Empire.

The fleets claimed in the letter as heading towards each world of the Alliance could be seen as coming to save worlds, but equally they could be seen as coming to enforce martial rule.

Chapter 798: Savior or Usurper_2

The essence of power lies in the two words 'name and reality'.

Gu Hang's declaration seems earth-shattering, but upon closer examination, there really isn't much of an issue in these two aspects.

Nominally, we must note that the Empire's highest power structure, both in name and reality, is the Supreme Council.

What is the Supreme Council? It is composed of thirteen High Lords.

And currently, in the Dark Side of the Empire, Gu Hang is the only High Lord present.

The other High Lords are isolated on Holy Terra, on the other side of the Scarlet Scar.

Only Gu Hang, this special High Lord, is on this side.

No matter how Gu Hang obtained his High Lord status, whether he genuinely had the actual power of a High Lord in the past, nominally, if there truly must be a legitimate supreme ruler of the Dark Side of the Empire, it would only be Gu Hang.

In terms of strength, the Alliance not only unified itself first amidst this darkness and disaster but also has the capacity to care for and aid other worlds—some may even interpret this as invasion. In any case, when others struggle to ensure their own safety, their ability to aid/expedite external worlds proves their formidable power.

From both perspectives, Gu Hang truly has the legitimacy to become the supreme sovereign of the Dark Side and enough strength to achieve this goal, while others are powerless to resist.

Of course, if that's all there is, even though it's enough, it might still fall a bit short.

Once established in name and reality, it's essential to evaluate whether the actions are genuinely righteous.

Otherwise, being labeled as a 'tyrant' or 'pretender', doing anything would be inconvenient.

Since Gu Hang declares he wants to be the sovereign of the Dark Side of the Empire, his claim to legitimacy comes from being the sole High Lord; what he aims to do is save all the worlds in the Dark Side of the Empire. Whether this sounds reasonable needs some exploration. After all, plenty of ambitious individuals use this title to stir troubles.

So, is there truly a need for this supreme authority?

There really is.

In the wake of the great catastrophe, all worlds become isolated, with internally generated disasters intensifying. At this time, if someone is able to stand up and truly restore normalcy to each world, wouldn't this justice and rationality be paramount?

As long as Gu Hang carries this goal, whether his methods are persuasion, aid, coercion, or military invasion, the disasters faced by each world are real. Eradicating the calamities will earn his High Lord status massive support across worlds. The existing ruling classes either cooperate or are replaced. Malevolent actors have no legitimate reasons to rally the vast Imperial People against the Alliance's rule.

Nationalism is ineffective; in the current environment of the Empire, the concept of 'nationality' has been dissolved entirely. What truly unites humanity is the common notion of humanity itself, along with the 'Emperor' and the 'Empire' that represent this notion.

Regional concepts have some influence but not much, certainly not enough to rally an entire world against a strong power.

As for the rest—equality, freedom, fairness and the like—they are even more meaningless in the context of the Empire. The populace neither believes in nor understands these notions.

Moreover, under the Alliance's system, planetary aristocrats whose ruling foundations and ruling classes are much more backward compared to the Alliance, comparing themselves to the Alliance is suicidal.

In this larger context, there are many intelligent individuals.

In normal circumstances, hearing Gu Hang's audacious declaration, one would definitely jump up to oppose Gu Hang, but after figuring out various aspects, they made some possibly drastically different choices.

Some local aristocrats send signals, praising Gu Hang as a savior, acclaiming his actions as taking charge at a critical moment, showering his rainbow farts.

Some Planetary Governors directly continue with the previous format for sending distress signals, announcing that the entire planet is willing to obey the Control Committee, while also sending messages that their planet is facing enormous disasters, requesting the Alliance Fleet to arrive soon and save their world.

Some remnants of the Star Realm Army replace recruitment advertisements with Gu Hang's "Letter to Disaster Fellowmen", rallying numerous slogans, each word and sentence conveying the message 'obey committee instructions'.

These are good; they're what Gu Hang expected to see.

But there are also bad phenomena occurring.

Those who are either stupid, ambitious, or pedantic also send out messages denying the Control Committee, even radical declarations that Gu Hang is taking advantage of the nation's crisis, being the biggest traitor in millennia, and a usurper.

Gu Hang silently noted these worlds and sent them to the Dark Side Expedition Headquarters. The list wasn't accompanied by any handling opinions, but surely, the commanders, generals, and commanders of the Expeditionary Force will know what to do.

However, this world is not merely black and white.

The gray in between represents the majority.

An Imperial Navy Fleet named the 'Black Steel Fleet' were once pirates, only recently conscripted. Now, they've surprisingly mastered some rudimentary methods of interstellar navigation and not only returned to their former profession but also hijacked three communication relay stations, using Gu Hang's voice package to extort 'loyalty tax' from surrounding worlds. Planets, whether clueless or coerced, indeed began to tribute them.

The Empire Commerce Guild is mass-producing forged certificates of committee cooperation, extorting high prices, profiting enormously from the nation's suffering, even hawking 'Gu Hang concept stocks' at the interstellar exchange.

Agricultural World Governors disguise granaries as signal stations, luring nearby contacts to land and attacking spacecraft...

Even a frenzied Religious World has emerged with deconstruction sects, copying the full text of the "Letter to Disaster Fellowmen" with virgin blood, claiming it is an extension of the "Emperor's Holy Words Record", while actually utilizing all this to vie for the interpretation of divine authority.

These gray and even black aspects care not whether Gu Hang is a savior or usurper—they only care about how to maximize their own interests in the current general environment.

Those flashing distress signals, fake loyalty oaths, twisted religious interpretations... they seem to prove an ancient truth: Even under the pressure of apocalypse, countless people will still ignore grand ideals and collective interests. Once the shackles of order fall away, the beastly parts of human nature, selfishness and self-interest, are instead more forcefully unleashed.

Aside from reactions from various worlds, there are even enemies of humanity mingling within.

The Dark Spirit Race altered Gu Hang's "Letter to Disaster Fellowmen", claiming it's a revised version, deceiving the garrison, and invading certain worlds.

A Chaos Rebel Army emerged from the Scarlet Scar, sending fabricated Extinction Orders with genuine encrypted steel seals to border outposts, causing outposts to destroy defensive arrays in terror.

Such incidents occur day by day, one after another.

It's a pandemonium.

Moreover, there are many things happening that Gu Hang, even in Subspace, cannot clearly see. Among his Heroic Spirits, those adept at information processing work overtime to the brink of smoking, busier than when they were alive, yet still unable to handle the myriad occurrences across tens of thousands of worlds.

Gu Hang can only pick out the important ones to deal with.

The method of handling is simply delivering the right information, offering positive encouragement, urging each planet to persevere through endless difficulties.

The "Letter to Disaster Fellowmen" certainly caused some chaos, but all of this was within Gu Hang's expectations.

It's not that these are necessary costs, but rather, even without this matter, those exploiting chaos, ambitious individuals, and enemies of humanity would find other means to seek profit.

The positive significance of this announcement still exceeds the negative.

It truly provided hope to many worlds in difficulty. Moreover, certain gathered collective wills are indeed forging the announcement into a spiritual anchor. Not much, but it genuinely diminished Subspace erosion.

That’s sufficient.

As for the real issues, let’s wait for the Alliance’s Dark Side Expedition to sweep away all those spirits and monsters with thunder and storms!

Chapter 799: Prelude to the Dark Side Expedition

Despite witnessing countless abominations in the Subspace, Gu Hang’s heart was filled with rage, wishing he could unleash thunderbolts immediately to incinerate all those damned things to ashes.

However, Gu Hang would not change the predetermined advance plan for the Dark Side Expedition because of this.

Everything would still proceed according to the original plan.

Urgency would not solve the problem.

Currently, the Alliance’s Dark Side Expedition in the Magrey Cosmic Domain was going relatively smoothly.

In one month, the three expeditionary fleets liberated nine worlds by following three advance routes.

These nine worlds, being relatively close to the Alliance, encountered essentially no obstacles.

In eight of them, as soon as the Alliance Army arrived, they changed flags willingly. Under the pressure of the vast fleet, they had no thoughts of resistance. The Thunder Torch Towers were installed as needed, the temporary military control by the Control Committee was accepted, and the aristocrats and officials on the planets waited dutifully for new appointments like quails.

According to policy, the Control Committee would not make things difficult for them. After screening and review, necessary appointments and reassignments were made.

The administrative agencies of the Alliance also went in, and systematic reforms followed promptly.

However, the Alliance’s system would not be transplanted to every newly liberated world during the Dark Side Expedition.

The Alliance did not have so many administrative officials to manage.

The current plan was to implement this strategy only in places seized in the initial stages of the expedition that are relatively close to the Alliance.

Two fleets, equivalent to an armed parade, at most delivered hundreds of thousands of troops to the ground and a large amount of relief supplies, each divided into three as planned, continuing to advance toward the inner part of the Magrey Cosmic Domain.

As for the strongest among the three expeditionary fleets, it encountered one of the more troublesome places among the nine worlds.

In previous political confrontations between the Alliance and Holy Terra, it was regarded as the fortress core for border defense, with its overall political stance being very anti-Alliance. When it previously received the "Disaster Proclamation," the reaction was relatively intense. More crucially, both the Empire and the local Star Domain Government had deployed a large amount of military force on this planet ahead of time.

When faced with the advancing expeditionary fleet, they resorted to armed resistance and attempted to negotiate conditions.

Strictly speaking, this world was not easy to conquer.

As the first line of defense constructed by the Empire when regarding the Alliance as a hypothetical enemy, significant resources were invested. The head of this Star Domain, before the disaster, had a heavy political task to defend the frontline in case of military conflicts with the Alliance. Thus, from the perspective of the Star Domain, they also channeled many resources to this planet.

This made the world have a high degree of fortification, with a permanent Star Realm Army garrison. The Star Realm Army here even had 20% of its troops directly coming from the Sun Corps of the Central Starfield.

In terms of the naval fleet, a flagship aircraft carrier and a battleship led a fleet of over a hundred warships. Combined with the planet's fortified defense system, it would be a hard nut to crack in any part of the Empire. No matter what type of enemy, it would be quite difficult to take it down.

This was the reason they dared to negotiate with the Alliance under the current circumstances.

Unexpectedly, the Alliance utterly refused to negotiate.

The expedition had just begun, and it was precisely the time to establish its majesty, so where could there be any conditions for negotiation?

An eight-hour final ultimatum was given directly. As soon as the time was up, a ferocious assault followed.

At first, this Fortress Planet was not intimidated.

If they wanted to fight, let them fight.

By fighting, they would hurt the Alliance, which would allow for a decent negotiation.

Apart from those truly loyal to Holy Terra's commands, idealistically resisting the Alliance at the cost of their lives, the rest who still wished to continue fighting essentially wanted to 'promote reconciliation through fighting' in essence.

Surrendering everything, bowing servilely to the so-called Control Committee, what good outcome would there be? There had to be a show of valor and united resistance value, so that during negotiations, the external fleet, the Star Realm Army, and the entire planet could be sold at a good price.

Initially, this was indeed the case. With a decent fleet and comprehensive planetary defense systems, they engaged in a sound battle with the Alliance, accomplishing the task of denying them entry into the planetary orbital system.

But what followed was stricter and more intense assaults from the Alliance.

Additionally, there were plenty of bad news.

According to reports from the military commanders of the main war faction on the planet, they had consumed about 10% of their stored ammunition and high-level energy in these few days. Undoubtedly, all of these could not be produced domestically. Before the disaster, they entirely relied on supplies from the Star Domain Government.

Now, with the supplies cut off, they could only rely on storage for the fight.

Though storage would eventually run out, more critically, in previous combats, they could hardly inflict any damage on the Alliance's expedition fleet. The Alliance's fleet suffered almost no losses, at most some intentional minor damage to some ships.

The high-ranking officials on the planet were naturally unsatisfied. However, the leaders able to occupy positions here were knowledgeable military personnel. Upon scrutinizing the reports, they needed no explanation to see that this was due to the Alliance's tactics.

This group of 'invaders' from the east, with extraordinary strength, appeared harsh and explosive, with no room for negotiation, directly issuing an ultimatum with no compromises. Yet, in action, they weren't rash at all, not launching direct attacks but clearly employing tactics to bait the defenders into expending ammunition.

However, this was an unbreakable open conspiracy.

There was no way around consuming resources; otherwise, they had the ability at any time to turn diversion and feigned attacks into a real offensive.

By then, it would be a fatal encounter.

Under such circumstances, what could be done?

On the planet, those who were already unsteady became even more shaken.

It’s just that it had only been a few days, and they were not ready to surrender yet.

They only continued to send negotiation terms to the Alliance, explicitly proposing some demands—not even their bottom line yet.

Meanwhile, they drafted new combat plans, asking the frontline to conserve ammunition.

But this conservation led directly to a problem.

The Zhugeli-class aircraft carrier among the Alliance fleet demonstrated its formidable delivery capability. An Interstellar Warrior Squad, along with several obviously single-use landing ships, was sent into the Starport. In a brief yet intense battle, the Blood Shark Soldiers executed a decapitation strike on the frontline commander within the Starport.

The most determined war faction was thus decapitated.

This battle sent a significant shock.

Although they still retained the fleet, and numerous orbital cannons on the planet’s surface, all war facilities required human operation to function.

If morale was shaken, how could the battle continue?

Chapter 800

When the starport commander’s body froze into a sculpture of remorse in the vacuum, the people on the ground were already inevitably shaken.

Panic had erupted across the planet at the onset of the disaster.

Everyone knew the significance of their existence here was to block the Alliance. But after such a catastrophe, does this task itself still hold any meaning?

Even before Gu Hang’s notice arrived, similar debates had taken place among them.

They had long lost contact with Holy Terra; who knows what Holy Terra’s stance is now?

From the perspective of the entire Empire, it was clear that the Alliance, capable of reconnecting countless worlds, was the side more deserving of assistance. Standing against the Alliance, obstructing the Dark Side Expedition, seemed more like what traitors would do.

To fight to the death here, and indeed die, would not only be detrimental to the grand enterprise of humanity but would also result in widespread scorn after death, not heralded as heroes.

Aside from a few hardline war advocates, most people could comprehend this logic.

The previous hardline stance was merely bureaucratic inertia, attempting to discuss terms.

But witnessing the Alliance’s firm attitude and now seeing the drastic changes in the war situation, those who already harbored doubts became even more uncertain.

Two weeks later, as the situation worsened, with the Alliance expeditionary fleet poised to fight to the last unless an unconditional surrender was offered, vowing to execute all "war criminals" and bring disgrace upon them, the changes on the planet finally occurred.

When the neurotoxin felled the last hardline advocate Major General, and at the moment the gas purification system activated, the badge of the Sun Corps from the Imperial Central Territory corroded into scraps in the spasms, everything ended.

In the announcement of unconditional surrender, all the warriors on the planet laid down their weapons.

There were soldiers and officers who felt humiliated and betrayed.

But more felt a sense of relief.

This war, whose meaning they never understood, was finally about to end.

...

The expeditionary fleet, which had been blocked for a month, was in fact the fastest among the three fleets to advance afterward.

Because the planet they conquered had been actively self-rescuing over the past few months, opening navigation with two worlds and establishing communication with eleven others.

Their surrender led to the surrender of these eleven worlds as well—not surrender, but acceptance of liberation.

Relevant documents had already been sent via communication. On these planets, there were no particularly significant issues; as long as supplies were in place and the planet's own forces were organized, stability could be achieved.

The Alliance didn't even need to dispatch battleships; just one or two transport ships to deliver the Control Committee's officials, appointment letters, and some relief supplies would suffice.

This is why they could conquer an average of one planet every two or three days during an expedition: winning a decisive battle not only conquers one planet but often leads many other worlds to surrender.

Like this time, they effectively conquered 12 worlds in a month, averaging less than three days per world.

Afterward, this fleet, like the other two fleets, split into several routes and advanced individually.

They were progressing smoothly, but the other two fleets began encountering some trouble.

There wasn't a fortress world like the one they just defeated, with organized rebel forces; nor were there multiple worlds united, forming a unified force to protect each other against the Alliance.

However, the two fleets generally encountered worlds where internal problems were quite severe.

Within these planets, there were organized rebel forces.

The rulers of these worlds were completely leaning towards the Alliance, obeying its instructions—they themselves were unable to resolve their own internal problems, hoping the Alliance would help.

In such situations, help should be provided where needed.

Using brute force was inadvisable; instead, large numbers of Alliance Army units, numbering in the millions, were dispatched to the ground, leaving some Starships in planetary orbit for fire support. The officers and political commissars of the Army could then enter the planetary defense units to reorganize the Planetary Defense Force.

In this way, a path could be formed with the Alliance Army as the backbone, the Navy as support, and the development of the Native Defense Forces as the direction.

This whole approach generally ensures that planetary problems can be resolved. Whether it's a simple rebellion or a Chaos Rebel Army, they can be dealt with.

However, the issue is that it consumes a long time.

That's not all; it also requires significant military forces and ships.

The combination of these two issues slows down the overall expedition progress of the fleet.

If there were just one or two such worlds, it wouldn't be much of a problem. The dispersed forces wouldn't be too much, and the remaining main forces could continue on their expedition.

However, the two fleets encountered a total of thirty worlds requiring dispersed forces.

This created problems.

Continuously dispersing forces, the two fleets seemed to be stuck in a quagmire.

Given the condition of these worlds, without dedicating a year, it's impossible to extricate themselves.

But this is an unavoidable situation.

The Expedition Command Center gave clear instructions; when faced with such circumstances, a steady and thorough approach was necessary. Rushed attempts to finish may leave some problems unsolved, causing repeated issues. Thereby, the Thunder Torch Towers established would be destroyed, and they would have to return to handle it, consuming the Alliance's prestige on those planets.

It's better to progress slowly yet steadily.

Fortunately, the third fleet's progress could be guaranteed.

Of course, these three fleets were merely the advance forces of the Alliance's Dark Side Expedition.

After controlling a total of sixty-nine worlds over three months, the second batch of expedition forces arrived in the Magrey Cosmos Domain.

This batch of expeditionary forces had more ships and a larger number of transported Army troops than the first batch, even reaching over five times more.

A third of them were incorporated into the previous three expeditionary fleets, directly revitalizing the two fleets stuck in the quagmire. They actively researched which planets could resolve their missions quickly with an increased troop concentration, freeing the trapped forces promptly; some places truly needed more time to resolve issues slowly, which was fine. The remaining forces still needed to press on as a united front, continuing the path of expedition and bringing other worlds into their objectives.

Meanwhile, the remaining seventy percent of the second batch of troops formed four new expeditionary fleets, continuing their actions in the Magrey Cosmos Domain from different directions.