Chapter 81 - Chapter 81: Chapter 81: Each Harboring Their Own Schemes

Chapter 81: Chapter 81: Each Harboring Their Own Schemes

Norris and Bradford, these two men who used to call the shots within the Alliance and in Revival City, had utterly lost their composure.

“Damn that Mondok! Insisting on taking a hard line! He sent himself to his doom without due consideration, and now what are we to do? We’ve lost our army, and the city is under siege. We are all fish on the chopping block now!” Bradford, disheveled, looked both frenzied and panicked.

Yet, within his ranting, he kept stealing glances at Norris across from him.

Despite hearing Bradford’s words, the aged Norris did not speak. Under his thick white hair and beard, the expression formed by his eyebrows and lips was one of deep gloom.

Bradford, grinding his teeth, continued to complain, “What are we supposed to do now? Nothing we do is going to work, is that it? Have you seen the photos? Have you seen the videos? That Gu Hang! He was flying through the sky! He publicly executed Mondok! Damn it, why did we never know before that Gu Hang was actually a powerful wielder of Spiritual Energy?!”

After he finished, he looked at Norris again.

The old man was still not speaking.

Bradford went on to speak, “Those star warriors! Battle Nuns! Weren’t they supposed to be fake?! They slaughter fully-armed soldiers as easily as if they were chickens, and they destroy our tanks as if opening a can was nothing! How could we dare to wage war against such enemies? That brute Mondok misled us and doomed us all!”

“And those soldiers! How dare they? Each month, each year, so much money from the treasury was spent on those soldiers, allowing them to live lives they could never have dreamed of when they were beasts of burden, granting them higher status and positions. But how did they repay us? When we needed them most, they lacked the courage to fight to the death and instead surrendered! Gu Hang claims he is the ruler, that he is the commander of the army, nonsense! Why can’t those soldiers use their heads for once and think, has Gu Hang ever paid them a single penny?”

Bradford, the business magnate, abandoned all decorum, cursing left and right, first Mondok, then Gu Hang, and returning to ranting about both Mondok and the common soldiers.

He finally succeeded in annoying Norris.

“Enough, put aside that insane facade, and stop posturing in front of me,” Norris said, “You want to ask me, want to know what I’m going to do next? I can tell you, no problem, now that Revival City has become our prison, what’s wrong with dead men talking? But even if I tell you, do you really dare to join me in whatever comes next?”

Bradford immediately abandoned his previous crumbling demeanor, and with a different face, he said, “Why wouldn’t I? The Legion is done for, Mondok is dead, and now in the entire city, only you, Lord Norris, are a true power player. You have the people, and with access to the armory, you have guns and cannons. Anyone in the city who doesn’t want to return to the Governor’s rule will rally around you!”

“Hmph,” Norris snorted coldly.

After Mondok’s death and the Alliance Legion’s surrender, the political nature within Revival City had changed.

Any clear-sighted person could see that the Alliance had changed rulers, right?

If in the past it was possible to confront the Governor by relying on the Alliance Legion and the military potential represented by Revival City’s numerous population, now that had become utterly impossible.

With all four gates sealed and the army’s defection, not even leaving the city was possible, let alone overturning the situation.

And what remained was the question of how to survive.

Their fate was now solely at the discretion of His Excellency the Governor.

According to their thinking, although the Governor had not yet entered the city, waiting until he did to make decisions might be too late.

At this moment, the choices they could make were indeed limited.

It boiled down to flee or kneel.

But wanting to flee Revival City now was no simple task; as for kneeling before the Governor, if the posture wasn’t right, one might still not live to tell the tale.

Friends who used to work together now inevitably mistrusted and sabotaged each other.

For instance, right now, Norris could tell that Bradford, pretending to be distraught in front of him and flattering him, definitely had no good intentions. That guy seemed to be riling him up, wanting to arm the industrial workers to resist to the very end, but if he really did so, he feared that the first one to sell him out would be this very man in front of him.

Of course, his claims of having a way and knowing what to do were equally false.

He would arm the workers, he would turn the factories into military strongholds. But this wasn't for resistance; rather, it was to concentrate as much of the actual power within the city into his own hands, to increase his bargaining chips so that when the time came to kneel before the Governor, he could kneel with more weight.

The organized population, weapons and equipment, the means of production within the factories—all of these belonged to me, Norris. The Governor kept me around for a reason; I must be of great use in the future!

As for the current Bradford?

A man who, in the past, made his living through connections and trafficking, had better fend for himself.

...

After finishing the brief conversation with old Norris, Bradford's expression was extremely grim.

He felt that Norris had seen through his intentions and hadn't fallen for them.

Damn it! Without a conspicuous fellow to hold and attract the Governor's attention in the city, how could he make his escape?

That's right, Bradford wanted to flee.

Bradford did not want to stay and be a dog—he didn't have the assets to be a dog like Norris did.

On the contrary, the extensive network he had built over the years as a channel merchant meant that he had many other places to go after leaving Revival City. Even if life wasn't as good as before, it was still better than staying.

As long as he could get out.

There was no hope in counting on Norris. He didn't believe Norris's words; he didn't believe that man would truly confront the Governor.

Instead, he felt that Norris was looking for a way to make himself more valuable in surrendering to Gu Hang, potentially even using him as part of the bargain to add weight to his own situation.

But to him, such thoughts were not worth mentioning.

If you're not going to survive, the Governor will already have struck with thunderous force, and no matter how beautifully you kneel, it can't compare to being a dead man.

To clear the space, to sweep the upper echelons clean, the Governor needed a blank slate to begin his new work.

And even if one did survive, the one whose words would count in this city in the future would be the Governor; the Alliance Council was unlikely to retain the power it once had, and whether it would exist at all was another matter.

Old Norris was certainly done for, but the infuriating thing was, if you're going to be finished, why not do it in a more spectacular fashion and give me a better chance to escape?

After much deliberation, Bradford gritted his teeth and decided he couldn't wait any longer.

If he waited any longer, the Governor might enter the city at any time; the big purge could start at any moment. If he waited any longer, his chances of escaping would only diminish.

He made up his mind.

Chapter 82 - Chapter 82: Chapter 82, The Value of Living

Chapter 82: Chapter 82, The Value of Living

Bradford decided to make a run for it.

Without delay, tonight was the night.

He didn't dare take too much with him; despite his considerable wealth in Revival City, these tangible assets would obviously be a burden. Carrying them would hinder his escape.

His greatest asset was his own life, along with the connections he'd made over the years in business. As long as he made it out alive, lost wealth could be regained.

On the contrary, he took out a lot of money, giving it to his bodyguards and the skilled mercenaries he had hired, promising that if they could leave the city and get outside, there would be even more money waiting for them.

At night, Bradford headed to the northwest side of the city.

This wasn't where the city gate was located, but it wasn't impossible to leave.

His years of business experience, of course, had given him control over some special passages.

In the past, this route through the sewer, dug under the city walls to the outside, was used for smuggling. Special goods that needed to be secretly imported or exported, as well as for tax evasion, this route saved a lot of effort and money for these shady dealings. And now, this passage would save Bradford's life.

After half an hour in the dark sewer and the secret tunnel that followed, they had arrived.

A group of bodyguards led the way, some climbing ladders upwards, forcefully pushing open the manhole cover above.

This wasn't easy, as the manhole was sealed with dirt for camouflage. If it wouldn't budge, they had to insert knives along the rim of the cover, loosening the soil above.

It was troublesome, but manageable.

After much effort, the cover was pushed aside, and three bodyguards emerged. They held their guns professionally, watching in three directions on high alert, and waited for the others to come up.

Before long, protected by the bodyguards in front and behind, Bradford reached the surface.

The sky was dim, the surrounding environment was very familiar to him, as he'd seen it many times before, but it was too quiet. In the past, after crawling out from here, the noise from the outer city could be heard. The poor in the night sometimes made a lot of noise, reflecting the nightlife.

But this was normal.

There had just been a battle, and it was customary to stay hidden in fear at night. Besides, for all he knew, the Governor might have imposed martial law outside the city.

While lost in thought, the bodyguards covering the rear also surfaced.

“Move, move, move!”

Bradford urged them.

Getting through the tunnel wasn’t too difficult; what came next was the most perilous part of the journey. They needed at least half an hour to completely leave the outer city.

Only then could they consider themselves safe.

Before setting out, they restored the manhole cover of the secret passage to its original state; otherwise, if spotted, it would reveal that someone had escaped.

After they finished these tasks, they were ready to depart.

‘Swoosh’!

Two white searchlights cast an extremely bright light upon them.

At the same time, a shouting voice carried over: “Drop your weapons! Kneel and surrender!”

Bradford, blinded and in pain, could not open his eyes. His heart was filled with despair.

He knew it was over.

He resigned himself to his fate, dropped his gun, and knelt on the ground obediently, daring not to move.

But his bodyguards, they reacted differently.

Some were attempting to flee, others were trying to fight back, squinting against the glaring light to aim at its source.

But the next moment, the distinctive ‘pop pop pop’ of the G9 rifle’s gunfire erupted.

Those who wanted to run, those who resisted, they all died.

...

On the way back to the camp, the commander of the Governor’s Infantry Regiment Second Battalion, Perbov, laughed out loud:

“Haha! I didn’t think there’d actually be a catch! That information about the tunnel was spot-on!”

His adjutant was also beaming with joy, “Yes, yes, sending someone to act as that political commissar was really useful. I was a bit reluctant when Kodi was picked, but to think we got this news about the smuggling tunnel the very next day. We just set up a blockade here on a whim, and we unexpectedly hit the jackpot!”

“Did that captured man say anything?”

“He did. He said he’s an Alliance Councilman and that he wants to meet the Governor himself.”

“Fuck. Can just anyone meet the Governor now? But... still, let’s report to the Governor, see if he’s willing to meet this man. If he is, we’ll send a squad to escort him over; if not... damn it, I don’t have anywhere to keep him anyway, might as well just execute him.”

The bound Bradford, following behind, was scared out of his wits.

“The Governor must see me! I know a lot of things! I will be very useful to him!”

...

Bradford had thought that his fate wouldn’t be decided until the next day, but unexpectedly, despite it being late at night, Gu Hang hadn’t rested and met with him in the early hours of the morning.

This gave Bradford a sigh of relief.

The Governor had shown willing to see him, so at least he wouldn’t be shot by the military officer who had caught him.

But now was far from the time to relax.

What came next was the real moment that would decide his fate.

Whether he could exhibit his worth was to be determined in the next few words.

To live, he had to demonstrate his value. He needed to tell the Governor that he was more useful alive than dead.

However, the conversation with the Governor was a bit beyond his expectations.

He was baffled from the very first sentence.

“Bradford, we met on the day I first landed on the surface. Back then, I felt that you would die at my hands, because I really hated the way you looked when you smiled. Now, it seems my feeling was right.”

Bradford panicked: Why the fuck did I have to smile that day?

If the reason for his death was that, it would be too unjust.

Without giving him a chance to speak, Gu Hang continued, “I know you want to convince me to let you live, to show your value. I’ll give you that chance, but let me first tell you the benefits of your death. This way, you can weigh in your mind what it is you’ll have to offer that could replace those.”

Nervously swallowing, Bradford listened as Gu Hang spoke slowly:

“I’m going to carry out a major purge within Revival City. The performance of the entire Alliance Government these past few months has utterly disappointed me. How can good politics arise with you vermin around? Therefore, I plan to arrest all the Alliance Councilmen, senior governmental officials, conduct public trials, and exclaim your crimes to the world...”

“I haven’t...” Bradford couldn’t help but try to explain, but Gu Hang interrupted him.

“I don’t care, you’ll be found guilty anyway. People inside Revival City not being able to live better lives, those outside the city struggling for food and warmth, the world in complete chaos, these are your original sins, and they will be woven into specific and outrageous crimes. In the end, you will pay the price on the gallows, the public will be satisfied, cathartic, maybe even scared, but ultimately they will respect me more. Don’t worry about being lonely, you’ll have plenty of company on your way up.”

“After a comprehensive purge, the political landscape within Revival City will be renewed. I’ll promote some new officials, people without solid foundations or deep connections. They came up from the lower ranks and will become a new stratum of interest. Their entire glory and shame will be tied to me; they might not perform well at first due to lack of experience and capability, but they’ll be utterly committed to executing my will. And I, I will control this city completely and thoroughly, implementing my determination to revive not just the city but the whole world.”

“Alright, I’ve had my say. Now it’s your turn, Mr. Bradford. Can that intelligent brain of yours think of a reason why you living is more valuable than your death? I’m quite looking forward to it.”

Chapter 83 - Chapter 83: Listing Remarks

Chapter 83: Listing Remarks

The book is going on the shelves tonight!

The idea to start this book was actually quite impulsive.

Many friends advised me not to write it, saying that the niche is too small, the market limited, and it's relatively obscure, so the performance is probably uncertain.

When it comes to writing a book, what's the most important thing in choosing a subject? Is it market acceptance? Is it within one's ability to write?

These are important, but they're not the most important.

To me, what's most important is, what am I really passionate about creating and expressing?

What do I want to write about? Space opera, interstellar themes, World War I/II style warfare, cannons and tanks, Mecha, special forces, trench warfare, human wave assaults...

Then find a way to concretize these ideas. Total War + Stellaris + Hearts of Iron + Warhammer 40k... Mixing all these together is something that really excites me.

So I started writing without listening to advice, and once I finished, I published it.

The start wasn't smooth, the results weren't great, to the point where my editor told me I could be featured on Sanjiang, I was actually surprised and thrilled—I thought it was a no-go...

Of course, overall, the performance still wasn't considered good.

I was prepared for that.

To write what I want and then hope to find readers who can vibe with my thoughts, that's my goal.

That's roughly the background of the creation of the book. Tonight it goes on the shelves, and I'm here to talk about the update plan.

For the long-term updates, I plan to write a fixed 4000 characters every day, which is about 2 chapters. Sometimes it may be combined into one chapter, and I'll try to release it all by noon.

Some comrades have said that's too little, but I can't help it. Approaching middle age, my energy isn't what it used to be, with a day job and family, it's hard to commit to more.

But I'll strive to add more on top of the 2 chapters, hoping to often reach 3 updates, but I can't guarantee that. I can only say that 2 chapters are guaranteed.

If any good things happen, like if the average subscriptions hit a round number, or if I get a large tip (10 chapters for a Leader!), or if my boss gets hit by a car when he goes out (just kidding)... On those occasions, I'll try to add more on top of the 2 chapters!

Now, let's talk about the update plan for the day of the launch.

The two chapters for today were released at noon, free chapters;

After midnight tonight, I'll directly release 5 chapters;

Then at 11 a.m. tomorrow, there will be 2 regular chapters;

That makes for 7 chapters on the day of the launch.

If the average subscription goes over 1000, I'll add one more chapter! And another for every additional 1000! (Though I doubt it'll go any higher).

So that's the plan, and I hope everyone can come and show their support! Your support will allow me to write this book for a long time to come, ensuring a steady output, and hopefully, some of the income can help supplement the family expenses!

See you tonight!

Chapter 84 - Chapter 84: Chapter 83, Is This the CPU?

Chapter 84: Chapter 83, Is This the CPU?

Gu Hang spoke with an attitude that seemed earnest, as if he were not conversing with a prisoner.

However, the content of what he said was so chilling.

What mattered most was that Bradford believed every word that Gu Hang uttered.

He was acutely aware that Mr. Gu held no interest in deceiving him.

His mind raced, the pressure of death forcing him on.

"You can't make me wait too long; the night is long, but I have even more to do and no time to waste on you," Gu Hang's words rang out again, undeniable harbingers of doom.

Bradford had never felt his mind work this fast in his life; his thoughts were still incomplete, his reasoning not yet thorough, but he was forced to speak immediately, “I’ve been on the Alliance Council for four years and am well-acquainted with many businessmen inside and outside of Revival City. I know a lot of intelligence!”

“Good, that’s one point,” said Gu Hang, “But it’s not enough. Your will isn’t strong enough to withstand torture; in the end, you will tell everything. There’s still some time until the public execution meeting commences, enough time for us to pry out everything we want to know from you, and it won’t interfere with your ultimate execution. Only then will you have served your purpose to the fullest.”

The words that Mr. Gu spoke with a smile sent shivers down Bradford’s spine. Served your purpose to the fullest... is this what it meant? Truly ‘use’ me?

Sometimes he really wished Mr. Gu wouldn’t be so honest; he wasn’t accustomed to such candid conversations and felt extremely frightened.

But he had no choice but to toughen up and deliver another reason, “After the Purge... The quality of the administrative personnel you promoted is hard to guarantee, and their work will be very difficult. I started from scratch and got to where I am today because I am capable. I will serve you loyally, doing everything you want without regret or complaint!”

“A valuable proposal, but keeping an old councilman would flaw the deterrence of the Purge and the revelation of crimes at the public trial. Your personal capabilities are not enough to outweigh the loss,” Gu Hang continued after a pause, “Bradford, you’re disappointing me. I thought you were smart enough to understand that neither intelligence nor service could save your life, yet you still proposed those two reasons, making me doubt whether listening to you was worthwhile. My time is running short, and so is yours.”

With every exchange with Gu Hang, Bradford felt the fear and despair building inside him. The Governor’s words, his demeanor, were like giant hands gripping his heart, squeezing tighter with each moment of conversation.

He felt like he was running out of breath, his faculties almost shattered by the terror of impending death.

But at this point, he was finally ready to lay everything on the line.

Gu Hang had always been candid, openly discussing the Purge and his subsequent plans. And now, more than ever, he needed to be equally forthcoming with all his thoughts and ideas.

“I’m a channel merchant; my foundations aren’t just in Revival City, they are spread everywhere. In the many city-states of the Eastern Province, each with a population of over two hundred thousand, I have contacts; the landowners in the Southern Green Valley

Region enjoy my company, even Wohan, who wanted to engage in grain trade, had to use me to connect with them; as for the Oasis Kingdom on the Western Great Wasteland and further west, Blackbird Heavy Industries, I've painstakingly built trade routes there. That is one of the very few industrial cores on the entire Rage Owl Star..."

"My connections, the trade routes I've established, and the many hands I've placed along these routes are my greatest wealth. Yet, it is invisible and will vanish with my death. Even if I wanted to hand them over to you, if I were dead, I couldn't do it. You can torture me into revealing every contact person, method of communication, and even their personalities and histories, but their trust in me isn't something you can replace just by sending someone else. Once I'm dead, they will disappear like raindrops falling into the sea, never to be found again."

"You might worry that if I don't die, the public trial will be flawed. But I am willing to be your tainted witness and, according to your needs, testify against every councilman's crimes. There are many things for which you wouldn't even need to fabricate or enumerate—I know plenty of truths."

"Being a liaison officer, a diplomat, a trade representative, an intelligence officer... These are the irreplaceable values I hold while alive. But you will invariably have doubts. Given my vast network of connections abroad, I could easily escape once I am freed. To address this, I am willing to relocate all my family members to Revival City to live; I am willing to be constantly accompanied by your most loyal guards when I act outside, who can monitor and execute me at any moment; or if you have some kind of periodically administered poison and antidote, I am also willing to accept that."

"Of course, all this may not be secure. I could heartlessly abandon my family, loyal guards might be taken out by me, and an antidote for the poison might also be found outside... But that's the risk."

Having said this, Bradford gritted his teeth and spoke the audaciously brave words that even he found too daring in hindsight, "You are testing whether I am smart enough, honest enough, and I've given my answer; now it is your turn to see, Mr. Gu, do you have the courage to take the risk?"

"Do you have the confidence that the great deeds you will do in the future will make me sincerely impressed from the bottom of my heart, so much so that I would not consider betrayal?"

"Hahaha!"

Gu Hang burst into laughter and slapped Bradford on the shoulder, taking the somewhat provocative last words in stride, "I now think you are indeed a smart man. It is clear that I have full confidence in myself. Let's do as you say, and I hope you won't disappoint me. I also hope you will see the day when the great endeavor succeeds and be a part of it, rather than fall by the wayside."

Bradford knew he had passed the test.

But, unexpectedly, his heart wasn't filled with much joy.

His feelings at this moment were strange.

Relief from surviving a catastrophe? Certainly, that was there, but there was also a special emotion towards Gu Hang.

A mix of a little hatred, a lot of fear, some admiration, some respect... and a touch of hope he himself scarcely noticed.

He remembered Gu Hang's declaration on his first day after arriving on the surface.

He said he would rebuild the entire Wasteland World, ensuring everyone who submitted to him would live a good life.

This Mr. Gu, unlike any governor before him...

At first listen, his declaration seemed full of platitudes, but on closer inspection, does he really have the capacity to achieve it?

If he does, would his future prospects really be worse than being an Alliance Councilman, a channel businessman?

At this thought, Bradford suddenly came to a realization: Eh? Have I been CPU'd?

Chapter 85 - Chapter 85: Chapter 84, An Epic Victory (Please Subscribe!!!)

Chapter 85: Chapter 84, An Epic Victory (Please Subscribe!!!)

Bradford's initial answers did indeed leave Gu Hang unsatisfied, but those last words truly made him reconsider.

They were precisely what he had hoped for.

Initially, Gu Hang had wanted Hodgson to take on the task. That old man, who had lived for a very long time, had even been through the establishment of the Alliance on Rage Owl Star by the first generation of governors. Although not specifically a channel merchant, having lived for so long was wealth in itself.

But now, it seemed that Hodgson had died.

Although he had not yet entered the city to investigate, little Hodgson, that is, Lambert, could no longer wait.

After wrapping up matters in the outer city, he was eager to enter the city. Gu Hang assigned a part of the Marine Corps' elite to him, letting him go ahead to investigate.

The Hodgson family estate was no longer sealed off, the city's nobility no longer saw the need to do so.

However, upon returning home smoothly, Lambert didn't manage to find anything of value.

After capturing Bradford, the man informed Gu Hang: Old Hodgson was indeed dead, killed by Mondok's hand. During the negotiations, Bradford had been involved; he and Norris had both attempted to object, thinking it too cruel.

But they did not succeed in their objections. At that time, Mondok wielded much more power than them, his main support, of course, being the military.

Of course, in the end, they were persuaded and acquiesced to the plan, allowing for the assassination of old Hodgson to proceed, and they helped with the aftermath and participated in dividing the Hodgson family's wealth in Revival City.

In this matter, he certainly was guilty, Lambert's personal bane; but strictly speaking, he wasn't the mastermind, more an accomplice.

He certainly had to pay the price for his actions. Even if his earlier answers had greatly satisfied Gu Hang, it didn't mean that Gu Hang would let him go. His life might be spared for the moment, but the status of prisoner could not be removed just yet. Only after he had committed actions to atone for his sins would Gu Hang consider pardoning him.

Murdering the head of the Alliance Council is a grave sin; linked with the previous collusion with the cult that happened to Senator Wohan, along with Mondok's act of treason outside the city thwarting Gu Hang, the governor... Gu Hang now had a thousand ways to hang the elites of Revival City. When the time comes, it would just be a matter of seeing which hat fits best on their heads; if one didn't fit, there would be another.

There was no shortage of charges. Investigating cases required evidence, quelling rebellion only needed a list.

Bradford's first act of atonement was to help Gu Hang perfect this list, and his own name would also be on it.

Working on this task with him would be Lambert, who had not found his grandfather and was about to receive the tragic news.

Under the drive of hatred, Lambert was unlikely to show kindness or mercy to these former neighbors; at the same time, he wasn't going to allow Bradford, his enemy, to have easy days.

But Gu Hang didn't bother to care about these matters for now, as he believed Lambert would handle it well.

Tomorrow was the day to enter the city. And on this night before entering the city, Gu Hang finally finished dealing with various issues at hand and at last had the time to review the spoils he had gained from a system-level perspective after the last battle had ended.

[Epic Victory, earned 133 points of Grace]

[Lost 13, killed 1097, captured 7388]

[Governor's Infantry Regiment: Lost 13, killed 177]

[Sainte-Lys Nun Association (Allied): Lost 0, killed 169]

[Phoenix Battle Group (Allied): Lost 0, killed 757]

...

This battle actually brought him over a hundred points in rewards!

This was even higher than the profits from the previous ambush against the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, which also happened to eliminate most of the pus-filled creatures in the alien woods.

The key thing was, he actually hadn't anticipated it.

He even considered that the battle might not be considered a war by the system's standards, but rather an assassination or a surprise military operation against a special individual.

Moreover, even if it was judged to be a war, the main combat achievements were made by the stellar warriors. The Battle Nuns were a bit lazy at first, but when those cult members emerged, they got serious and went to work.

But no matter which side it was, they weren't Gu Hang's subordinates. Would the system award points for their accomplishments?

The reality was that it wouldn't, but the value was immense.

Although Gu Hang didn't gain any points for the killings done by the stellar warriors and Battle Nuns, their actions undoubtedly crushed the Alliance Legion. Aside from the fleeing enemies, most of the rest laid down their arms and surrendered, while a few resistors were killed.

And those top-tier fighters surely had no time for taking prisoners. That task was done by Gu Hang's infantry unit. The infantry's 13 casualties and 177 kills happened during this time. And the 7,300 prisoners were also credited to the infantry.

Now, that was something he could score points on.

Although the main battle wasn't won by Gu Hang's subordinates, leading to a low coefficient for rewards, the low losses and high victory had been rated as an epic victory, which added back some of the coefficient.

Moreover, capturing so many people was valuable not only due to the invincible performance of those mighty men and women, but also because of Gu Hang's influence as governor and the demoralization caused to the soldiers by Mondok's execution in midair.

Various aspects and factors combined to make up these 133 points in rewards.

An unexpected joy, so to speak.

Up to now, he had 135 reward points, quite a sum. However, he hadn't yet thought about how he wanted to use them.

In the "Soldier's Badge" system, to modify the over 7,000 captured soldiers? But that would have to wait until he could ensure their loyalty and the political commissars he had placed could exert their influence. Otherwise, after the training and enhancement, if they revolted, it would be troublesome.

The "Technology" system was also something to draw from, producing several powerful items was crucial for the development of his territory, but there was no rush for that either.

How to use these reward points was something Gu Hang needed to ponder.

...

Dawn came, and Gu Hang entered the city.

There was no welcome with open arms, no food and drink offered; the inner-city folks had heard the sounds of battle from outside a few days ago in the early morning, and through

various rumors they knew the governor was coming, and the city's four major gates had already been sealed by the governor...

Though it had only been a few days, the city still had ample supplies and there definitely wouldn't be people starving to death just yet. However, these inner-city people hadn't really heard of the governor's benevolence and good governance. On the contrary, they had fresher memories of the previous governor's terrible deeds.

Regarding Gu Hang's arrival, they were hesitant, doubtful, and distrustful.

Right now, they were hiding in their homes, with doors and windows shut, only peeking through the cracks at the stellar warriors, Battle Nuns, and the passing army on the main roads.

Gu Hang felt the countless gazes from both sides of the streets, but he didn't care.

He led his people straight to the Alliance Council Hall at the city center.

Chapter 86 - Chapter 86: Chapter 85, The Alliance of the Revival City (Please Subscribe!!!)

Chapter 86: Chapter 85, The Alliance of the Revival City (Please Subscribe!!!)

Sitting in the Alliance Council hall, Gu Hang looked around.

The place was constructed to look the part: the circular dome was adorned with many complex reliefs, which seemed to hold religious significance, with the image of The Emperor present everywhere; it also seemed to vaguely recount the grand story of the ancestors forging paths out of the rubble to establish the Alliance.

At the top, there was a small opening covered by a glass dome, allowing daylight to pour through. On sunny days, there was no need for lights to brighten the room.

Below the dome was a long table where the Alliance Councilmen presumably held their meetings.

Above the long table and up five steps, there was a throne-like chair placed on a platform.

According to the original design, this should be the seat reserved for the Governor.

Back when the Alliance was revived, the first Governor must have sat in that elevated position, watching the councilmen discuss and solve various problems arising during the reconstruction of Rage Owl Star. Proposals were brought forth, problems were solved, and plans were implemented one after another...

It must have been a glorious era.

Even now, many people on Rage Owl Star fondly remembered those times—especially after the tenure of the second Governor.

Gu Hang didn't know much about the achievements of the first Governor, nor did he consider himself a successor to the legacy. But that didn't stop him from doing similar things in the same place.

As he sat down, Gu Hang's system pinged with new messages.

[You have occupied the city: Revival City.]

[Revival City's fixed monthly income: 68 points of Grace]

Seeing the city occupied and Revival City included in the system's tally, Gu Hang was initially pleased.

When he first arrived to serve as Governor a few months back, he had been eagerly awaiting this message, but it never came. Today, his wish was finally fulfilled.

However, upon seeing the number 68, Gu Hang's eyebrows furrowed deeply.

That was way too low!

Absurdly low!

The Governor's Camp, which he had built from scratch, combined with the ramshackle Abandoned Cave Society he had taken over, could together provide him with 61 points of Grace.

To reach that figure, the two camps combined barely surpassed a population of ten thousand; so how could Revival City, with its population of nearly a million, contribute so little?

Then, he saw a string of negative effects listed under Revival City in the integrated domestic affairs interface.

[City Standstill: Greatly reduces city income.]

[Anarchic State: Significantly reduces city income.]

Apart from [Anarchic State], there were several statuses with the entry ‘significantly reduces city income’, including: [Restless Population], [Extremely Low Standard of Living], [Hungry City], [Poor Management Level], [Terrible Infrastructure], [Low Population Quality], [Low Public Order], [Insurgents],...

There were also several entries for ‘moderately reduces income’, such as: [Disorderly Market], [Trade Disruption], [Extensive Development], [Post-War Turmoil], [Military Control], [Administrative Disarray], [Grassroots Loss of Control], [Heretic Cultists],...

He didn’t even mention those with ‘minor reduction in income’, as there were plenty of those as well.

Gu Hang was left speechless and choked up.

With so many negative effects weighing down on it, it seemed not so surprising that the Grace income had plummeted to rock bottom...

However, Gu Hang quickly adjusted his mindset.

He hadn’t entirely failed to anticipate this situation.

His previous thought was that even if the city were taken by military means, governance would still be necessary for the system to recognize the city as belonging to him.

The current situation, with a plethora of negative effects stacked on top of each other, which greatly reduced the benefits, probably meant the same thing.

Similarly, this matter could also be viewed in a positive light.

The clear-cut negative effects pointed out to Gu Hang the problems that needed to be addressed.

Tackling them one by one, things would likely improve.

In his view, the debuffs of Revival City could broadly be divided into two categories: development and management issues.

The former wasn’t something that could be resolved instantly. It required an increase in productivity and the restoration of trade routes so that people could be well-fed and clothed, have the energy to rebuild the city, and achieve a better quality of life.

As for management issues, some deep-rooted ones likewise needed time to be gradually dealt with. However, at least a few problems could be solved immediately.

For instance, the biggest debuff: “City Standstill”.

Factories were shut, shops were closed, and the citizens of the city were too frightened and unsettled to even venture onto the streets, whether due to martial law or due to fear and unease.

Unable to work, with insufficient food reserves... This was precisely what Gu Hang needed to tackle right away.

He needed to immediately establish an administrative system, however rudimentary, that could at least function to begin addressing the issue of the city's standstill.

It would be a brand-new administrative team.

He had once hesitated over whether to proceed in this way, but the death of Hodgson extinguished that thought completely.

If there had been a fully supportive elder with a good reputation in the Alliance to assist him, he might have taken over the existing administrative system of Revival City and slowly implemented reforms.

But now?

Forget it.

Using the old administrative system would only bring constraints.

He had won the battle, so why should he entangle himself with the old system of Revival City and the Alliance Government?

Moreover, was there anything good about the old system of the Alliance Government? The previous governors, lacking control, had to coordinate with all parties, various factions, making mutual compromises.

However, Gu Hang didn't have to.

At least, not for the time being.

He saw no need to establish a parliamentary system, where representatives of every faction, industry, and all those with power and influence had to be gathered in one place to get things done.

He decided to abandon the existing system and overturn it, completely rebuilding a highly centralized authority and system to efficiently implement his will.

He would retain the name "Alliance," as it was a necessary political designation to subjugate and rule the settlements beyond Revival City. But apart from that, he did not intend to keep much else.

He would abolish the council entirely, and in its place would be the Alliance Government. The government would consist of multiple departments led by officials who, in the future, would make decisions and guide the city's development.

The old system would be swept away; those who once held power and profited from it would be purged; the entire class of industrialists would be wiped out in one stroke, to be replaced by collectively owned factories under government ownership...

With the old interest groups eliminated, their vacated positions and benefits would become opportunities for newcomers.

The newly-formed interest groups would grow from the new system and would emerge thanks to the Governor. In return, they would also be the Governor's most steadfast supporters.

This process would seem a fierce revolution to some.

Footsteps were heard at the door, and Gu Hang snapped out of his reverie, looking up to see a slightly frail girl in a grey-blue blouse walking in.

Osenia had arrived.

Chapter 87 - Chapter 87: Chapter 86: Am I the Minister of Production? (Please Subscribe!!!)

Chapter 87: Chapter 86: Am I the Minister of Production? (Please Subscribe!!!)

After receiving the instructions from the Governor, Osenia was a bit stunned.

She had only just stabilized her job recently, formed a governmental team, and took charge of managing two camps when she was suddenly reassigned with an order to lead a ten-plus-member governmental team to Revival City.

Shortly after that, she received her appointment from the Governor.

She was to serve as the acting Minister of the Production Department for the Alliance Government.

The experiences of the past few months were all too fantastical.

One moment she was a refugee struggling to stay fed and warm, then somehow, she became the production manager at the Governor's Camp, responsible for overseeing the production work for tens of thousands in two camps, arranging various production plans, and recruitment of personnel. And now, she had suddenly become a 'high official' in the Alliance Government, with nearly a million people in Revival City depending on her for production planning and consumption arrangements!

Initially, just managing ten thousand people, she had no idea if she could do well, only bracing herself for the task ahead.

Fortunately, after that exchange with the Governor, her mind, for some reason, suddenly became clear. While she was still somewhat inexperienced, the various problems that arose could always be swiftly resolved by her.

As her work became more and more second nature, Osenia gradually relieved much of her anxiety and began to dedicate herself wholly to her job.

She found herself loving this work.

On one hand, she was free from worries about food and clothing; on the other hand, seeing those wanderers who had once shared similar experiences with her come to the Governor's Camp and lead lives that weren't extraordinarily good but at least hopeful, with her help, brought her joy.

She did not particularly understand the grand plans and lofty goals of the Governor, but in her view, those people who could work properly, eat well, and live well, were the foundation of this great enterprise.

But now, the scale of responsibility had increased from ten thousand to one hundred thousand. With the increased scale, there would undoubtedly be endless problems to solve.

She was even less sure if she could do well.

It wasn't that she was afraid of losing the Governor's trust by doing poorly. In this regard, Osenia's ambition wasn't very great. What she feared more was that her mistakes could affect the livelihood of a million people.

The hardships endured during her time of displacement, the struggle for survival outside of Revival City, made her acutely aware of just how difficult the ordinary civilian's life could be in this wasteland. Especially for the poor outside the city with no savings at all, their ability to withstand risks was extremely low.

Yes, she was born into a well-off family, but it was precisely because she had seen the light that the suffering in the darkness was all the more deeply etched into her memory.

“It’s because you have this concern that I have entrusted you with this task,”

said Gu Hang, offering her encouragement once more.

“It’s because you care that I can entrust the livelihood of nearly a million people in Revival City to you. If even you can’t do it well, how can I trust those who have not deeply experienced suffering?”

Osenia took a deep breath and firmed her resolve, “I understand, I’ll work hard!”

...

Following that, Gu Hang spoke with Osenia for a long period of time.

Gu Hang fully expressed his expectations to Osenia.

Of course, he wouldn’t let this young lady, Osenia, start from scratch, out of nowhere. Even if Osenia were to do it, he wouldn’t be at ease.

Here, Gu Hang imparted many things.

He told Osenia that the first issue to resolve was hunger. The city’s granaries had been seized, and she needed to ensure that the poor outside the city did not riot out of starvation.

The situation had become critically precarious; those poor people really had no savings, and without distributing food, deaths from starvation were imminent.

Secondly, she needed to urgently restore the production work in Revival City. The small workshops in the outer city had already been taken over, and they could be the first to resume operations; the large factories located within the city would be confiscated from the nobles and parliamentarians later on, and would similarly require immediate implementation of the resumption plan.

This was the most pressing matter.

The rest was to transplant the work-point system into Revival City to serve as a basis for distribution; to clarify the production capacity of various industries in Revival City, formulate production plans, and consider how to upgrade industries; to expand the civil service system, improve administrative efficiency...

With this approach, various problems could be addressed separately and systematically.

...

After grasping Gu Hang’s intent, Osenia set off to work.

However, the success of her work depended on how well another person performed his duties.

That person was Lambert Hodgson, who had been tasked by Gu Hang with the ‘Great Purge.’

To distribute grain from the granary, there had to be grain available; to resume production, there had to be shifts to work.

The previous Alliance Government was a classic example of a small government that didn’t prioritize food security. They didn’t even have an official government granary for strategic reserves.

The city’s food supply was only found in the reserves of food merchants and some factory canteens, which needed to be confiscated first before it could be accessed.

Similarly, to tackle the resumption of production, it was necessary to complete the confiscation of production materials—that is, the confiscation of the major factories.

At that moment, a fire burned in Lambert’s eyes.

Bradford felt a chilling scrutiny from him and said helplessly, “Don’t look at me like that. The Governor sent me to work with you; I am here to atone.”

“Your sin cannot be redeemed,” Lambert said through gritted teeth.

“But that’s not up to you, it’s up to the Governor.”

Bradford retorted at first, but quickly realized he shouldn’t offend Lambert any further.

Even though he had already grievously offended by killing the man’s grandfather, there was no need to provoke further and have this man, who had already invested in the Governor, demand his life vehemently before the Governor—that would be too difficult to manage.

Even though the hope was slim, the best course of action for Bradford was still to try to mend their relationship as much as possible.

He said, “Your anger and your desire for revenge are understandable. I will pay the price for my actions, in fact, I am already paying it. Look, I’ve obediently provided you with lists of names; by arresting those on the list, you can avenge your father and grandfather. Mondok was the main perpetrator and the staunchest member, with deep influence in the military through his family—you can eliminate them all...”

“I am already doing so,” Lambert interrupted.

“And there’s Norris—he’s gathered at least five thousand people in his largest manufacturing factory, preparing for a siege. It looks like he wants to turn the factory into a fortified stronghold, but in reality, he wants to surrender.”

“So what?” Lambert asked.

“So, you don’t necessarily have to assault it by force, which would require you to request more troops and support from the Governor. You could, on behalf of the Governor, agree to Norris’s terms of surrender. I could even act as an envoy to help you negotiate,” Bradford suggested.

“The Governor’s order is to purge all the old nobility,” Lambert remarked.

“I know, of course, I know,” Bradford said with a bitter smile, “but once that old man agrees and he’s in your hands, then you can do whatever you want, can’t you?”

Chapter 88 - Chapter 88: Chapter 87, The Cannon (Please Subscribe!!!)

Chapter 88: Chapter 87, The Cannon (Please Subscribe!!!)

Bradford suggested a cunning plan.

Pretend to accept Norris’s conditions for surrender and then, renege and kill him.

Lambert was somewhat tempted by the plan but ultimately rejected it.

Indeed, as Bradford had said, it would save a lot of effort not to fight at all. A hard assault, with thousands of people, even if they were just ordinary workers armed with light weapons, defending inside a reinforced factory, would require considerable force to overcome and could even result in significant casualties.

But Lambert still intended to do it.

The main reason was that he did not want Gu Hang to bear the name of a traitor.

In private, any means were acceptable, but publicly, as a ruler, credibility was extremely important; it even signified the reliability of public policy and the ease with which it could be believed by the people.

Under such circumstances, one must put on a fair and upright front.

Playing smart here might save a lot of effort in dealing with Norris, but the cost of taking shortcuts now could very well be paid doubly elsewhere.

After making this decision, he even mocked Bradford, saying he could only ever be a merchant and would never understand the grandeur that a politician aspires to achieve in accomplishing great things.

Bradford was left speechless.

And Lambert received additional support for his actions.

He assembled two battalions that had accompanied the governor into the city, and from the captured military supplies, he pulled out about ten heavy cannons and adopted a posture for a forceful attack.

Norris sent envoys to negotiate terms of surrender, but was once again sternly rejected by Lambert.

Lambert demanded that everyone resisting inside the factory surrender unconditionally, lay down their weapons, and await the governor's trial.

This was the final ultimatum, and Lambert would only give them one hour.

The message was taken back inside the factory by the envoys, and everyone fell silent.

An hour later, no one came out to surrender, and Lambert ordered the battle to commence.

He ordered Perbov, who he had brought along for assistance, to command his second battalion to start playing with their newly acquired "toys."

Those were five 155mm howitzers; next door, the sixth battalion, which was also dragged into work, was equipped with five captured artillery pieces as battalion firepower support.

Ten heavy guns fired in unison, with shell after shell being launched into the factory.

With a salvo, thick black smoke billowed from the factory.

The governor's soldiers did not rush in hastily.

With the enemy completely surrounded and heavy artillery at their disposal, it would be foolish to send soldiers in as cannon fodder. They had plenty of ammunition in stock, so they would let the ten cannons fire a dozen or twenty rounds first—after a few hundred heavy shells bombarded them, then they would discuss sending in the infantry to mop up.

In the midst of this, Lambert received additional assistance.

Superior Georgette arrived with six nuns.

...

Lambert had seen the nuns of the Holy Lily of Mercy before.

To be honest, compared to the Phoenixes who always had a grim face and an unwelcoming demeanor, he preferred these battle nuns who always wore a gentle smile.

Although when it came to fighting, the nuns were just as ruthless.

However, despite having seen them before, this was his first time communicating with them, and Lambert seemed somewhat reserved.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Superior Georgette. I thank you very much for coming to our aid,” he said.

Georgette said, “No thanks are necessary; we are all fighting for the Empire. Mr. Lambert, I have heard about the tragedy that befell your family, and I am truly sorry that such a thing happened to you.”

“Thank you. However, I remember that you and your subordinates are supposed to be investigating the traces of the Cult within the city. How do you find the time to participate in the battle here at the factory?”

Georgette replied, “This factory harbors evil. Moreover, the Cultists’ activities may be related to the calamity that has befallen the Hodgson Family.”

Lambert immediately took the matter seriously.

“Can you tell me about it?”

“There is no harm in doing so.”

Following that, Superior Georgette gave Lambert, the descendant of the victim, a rather detailed account of her recent discoveries.

She had investigated the scene of old Hodgson’s death and had found remnants of heretical energy in the Hodgson Family estate.

Therefore, she believed that the assassination of old Hodgson involved the participation of Heretic Cultists.

The other sisters went to investigate other clues, but she came here with six people.

The mastermind behind the assassination plot was Mondok, but that man was already dead; the remaining two participants were here, and she was here to gather information.

After learning of this, Lambert immediately dragged Bradford out.

This guy had not mentioned anything about the Cult when he previously revealed details about old Hodgson's death.

Upon hearing Superior Georgette's questions, Bradford was also baffled.

He had no idea!

He was not lying; with things having reached this point, he was desperately seeking a way to save his own life, hoping for a possible sentence reduction. If he had been aware of the Cult, why would he ever conceal information for those deranged individuals? He would have been eager to betray them in their entirety.

But indeed, he was not aware of this matter. The assassination was Mondok's scheme; Bradford was only involved in the aftermath and the division of spoils. He had not concerned himself with the details of the assassination.

In his eyes, it was not difficult for Mondok, who had control over the Alliance Army, to accomplish this task.

The results proved him right: the Hodgson Family disappeared from their mansion one night.

Upon confirming that Bradford was indeed not lying and that there were no traces of heretical energy on him, Superior Georgette let him go.

Afterward, she turned her attention to the factory area, which was still under the bombardment of artillery fire.

There, the last conspirator involved in the Hodgson assassination plot was located — old Norris.

Within that factory, she could sense the vibrations of Storm Heresy.

This was the energy of heretical sorcery — any extraordinary power not derived from the Divine Emperor and instead solicited through foreign prayers was considered heretical by the state religion.

Even some hardliners believe that self-manifested Spiritual Energy wielders are also heretics and that the world should not tolerate legal users of Spiritual Energy.

And these extremists are often accused by the Empire's Spirit Cultivation Association of heresy themselves; verbal sparring between them is a daily occurrence so much so that physical destruction of each other is not uncommon.

The Order of Merciful Lilies is not one of those extremist factions; otherwise, they would be the first to oppose the Governor himself.

However, the supernatural energy obtained from other extraordinary beings through faith connections and heretical rituals is something that members of the state religion from all factions detest intensely.

————

All five chapters have been posted!!! I hope everyone will continue to support me!

Two more chapters are coming at noon tomorrow; see you then!

Chapter 89 - Chapter 89: Chapter 88, Then You Stay

Chapter 89: Chapter 88, Then You Stay

The disheveled Norris had completely lost his former composure.

He was planning to surrender to the Governor.

In his view, although the resistance formed by the Alliance Councilmen had been disintegrated, the future of the city was now destined to be determined by the Governor.

But for the Governor to enforce his rule, relying solely on himself was definitely not enough; he certainly needed a certain class or group of people to execute his will and implement his policies.

Norris indeed had lost before, but he accepted the loss willingly. He was willing to pay the price and help the Governor rule the city, and in the process of this rule, regain the part that belonged to him.

In his view, this was only to be expected, and the Governor would surely agree. The only thing to consider was how much authority the Governor would be willing to leave him?

It was with such considerations that he had gathered and armed the workers. This was a move to increase the weight of his surrender. In doing so, he declared to others the

strength of his control over the key industrial enterprises of Revival City, thus to gain greater attention from the Governor.

However, after the Governor entered the city, the envoys he sent out were unable to see His Excellency the Governor, let alone discuss any terms.

Then, Lambert showed up with the army and surrounded his fortified factory, demanding his unconditional surrender.

By this time, he was feeling a bit uneasy.

Having Lambert come to handle the siege of his factory was in itself a strong signal.

He was practically Lambert's sworn enemy!

If the Governor intended to accept his surrender, he logically shouldn't have sent Lambert. Wouldn't that be intensifying the conflict?

But he still clung to a glimmer of hope and tried to negotiate, but Lambert was completely impervious and issued the final ultimatum.

When he heard the final ultimatum, Norris still couldn't believe it, "Does the Governor really not want me? I'm the biggest industrial magnate of Revival City! The entire city's cycle of work and production depends on me, countless workers' livelihoods are tied to me! Knowing this, how can you dare let me die?"

Then, when the time for the ultimatum passed, ten heavy cannons fired at the factory.

A round of shells fell, and black smoke rose from various parts of the factory. The 155mm caliber cannons were enough to pierce the factory buildings and create terrifying casualties inside.

The entire factory was filled with wails.

Among them, Norris's top floor office in the main factory building also took a hit. If it weren't for his bodyguard pulling him into the basement when the ultimatum was issued, he would have been reduced to nothing by now.

He was completely at his wits' end, his mind wholly filled with fear.

And he wasn't the only one trapped in fear.

A barrage of cannon fire came down, and the not-so-well-prepared armed workers suffered significant casualties.

If it weren't for a group of individuals in dark blue robes shouting around, maintaining order, perhaps just a few rounds of bombardment would have completely collapsed their morale.

They called on the armed workers to hide in the sturdy factory buildings, using all sorts of rubbish, building materials, and scrapped machinery to construct barriers that could resist the shrapnel and shockwaves of the shells, or to take shelter in the basements, ready to endure the bombardment. Then, when the Governor's lackeys attacked, they were ready to give them a taste of their own medicine.

Inspired by the blue-robed individuals, the morale of the armed workers was somewhat stabilized.

In the basement, watching the blue-robed figures busily coming in and out, his vacant face suddenly showed a trace of life.

"Right, right, right... I'm not done for yet... you! Stop!"

Norris grabbed one of the blue-robed individuals.

"I'm your most important collaborator, you have to protect me! I want to leave this place, I want to..."

He was cut off by a gust of air that pushed him away.

The man in the blue robe stared at him and said, "Coward, if you want to escape, then go by yourself. We are staying here to fight."

His gaze was filled with zealotry.

Norris shouted, "You're all going to die!"

The man in the blue robe looked even more scornful, "True believers of the divine do not fear death. We are going to teach those governors' lackeys a profound lesson!"

"You're insane!"

The blue-robed man ignored him and ran upwards.

Within the bustling factory, where everyone was prepared to resist to the end, Norris was like an abandoned old dog, filled with despair.

...

In another underground chamber of the factory, the Primal High Priest Cui Kao was also present.

By his side were two men in grey and white robes. Their attire was very similar to that of the Howling Wind Divine Envoy Gu Hang had encountered in the alien forest.

They were indeed two Divine Envoys from the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect, their ranks equivalent to that of Howling Wind who died at the hands of Gu Hang, they were another two of the twelve Divine Envoys.

The Shadow Wind Envoy was a corpulent woman, her fat body not even the loose robes could hide; the Gale Envoy was a very muscular man.

“Has the ‘Storm’s Blessing’ already been planted?” Cui Kao asked.

Both Divine Envoys bowed, “We have followed the sacred decree, it has all been planted.”

Cui Kao’s expression carried pity, “The children of god will return to the Divine Realm. Then we too shall leave, there are greater plans awaiting our dedication.”

Excitement was evident on the faces of both Divine Envoys.

The Shadow Wind Envoy’s voice even trembled with excessive rapture, “I can barely wait to see the storm descend.”

The Gale Envoy beside her was much calmer, “Do not indulge too much. The plan was forced to launch early due to the governors, we do not have as much certainty.”

“That’s being too cautious!” The Shadow Wind Envoy was interrupted at her climax, showing displeasure, her shrill voice rising, “We could have offered this city to the storm long ago, but it’s all because...”

At that point, she abruptly stopped talking. She saw Cui Kao’s gaze turned towards her.

“This is the will of the storm,” Cui Kao said with a smile at the corner of his mouth, “Shadow Wind,

Chapter 90 - Chapter 90: Chapter 89, Ground Assault

Chapter 90: Chapter 89, Ground Assault

Gu Hang suddenly felt a palpitation.

He stood up from his seat, walked over to the window, and looked out.

From here, he couldn't see the specific situation on the battlefield, but the sound of heavy artillery, nonetheless, carried over half the city.

He already knew that Georgette and the Battle Nuns had rushed over there, and in theory, there shouldn't be any problems.

However, Gu Hang couldn't ignore the unease he had felt before.

As a Spiritual Energy user, his intuition often concretely forewarned that something was about to happen.

Even as the artillery roared on, Gu Hang never felt at ease.

Instead of agonizing over it here, it would be better to go there in person and investigate.

Gu Hang made his move.

As he did so, he sent out a message, hoping that the Phoenix Battle Group, which was resting somewhere in the city, would also hurry over as soon as possible.

This was still a mission request, in his words, it was that Superior Georgette might run into trouble.

Believing in the past that Commander Matins, who had... oh, not that, who had fought side by side with the Superior, would surely not sit idly by.

After all, they were idle anyway.

...

Gu Hang hurried over at high speed, his mind made up, and he soared into the air.

That's the benefit of being a Spiritual Energy user.

By the time he arrived at the scene, Lambert, Perbov, Georgette, and others had already been carrying out the ground attack for quite a while.

The previous rounds of artillery fire had sent over a hundred heavy shells into the area. The entire factory district wasn't reduced to complete ruins, but it wasn't far off. According to their assessment, under such conditions, the non-professional soldiers and mere workers who had been temporarily armed inside would not only have suffered heavy casualties, but their morale was likely almost collapsing.

What followed was for the infantry, led by the Battle Nuns, to enter and clear the battlefield. The dead were ignored, the living were pulled out as prisoners and thrown

into the POW camp, and what to do with them afterward was not the army's concern; those who resisted stubbornly were, of course, to be killed on the spot.

In Perbov's opinion, this should be an easy operation.

Indeed, all fears stem from insufficient firepower.

Without the kind of heavy artillery that could directly damage concrete and cement structures, relying solely on the 60mm mortars, hand grenades, rifles of the past... even if the opponents were just some armed workers, it would probably cost many lives to take down this factory complex.

But now, with just ten 155mm heavy howitzers they had captured, the battle became so much more comfortable to fight.

Who the hell would willingly sacrifice their life to charge trenches if you can blast with heavy bombs first, bombarding their mother's for several rounds, and then have the infantry sweep the battlefield afterward?

No wonder they say artillery is the god of war.

However, before they went in, Georgette issued a warning to him and the commander of the 6th battalion.

"Don't let your guard down, there's a tough enemy inside."

"A tough enemy?" Perbov was a little skeptical at the time. What kind of enemy could be tougher than a 155mm howitzer?

Then he remembered the heroism of the Phoenixes and the Sisters of Saint Mercy on the battlefield.

Uh... if there were enemies of that caliber, then it might indeed be a problem.

If someone else had said it, he might not have believed it, but the speaker was the gentle and formidable Superior.

So, he decided to believe her.

Perbov consulted with the commander of the 6th battalion and decided not to blindly throw all their forces into the fray. Although they only had a total of six hundred men, which seemed insufficient for such a large factory complex, they preferred to proceed slowly and cautiously.

Each of them sent out a company to advance first.

As the companies entered, they moved forward in squads, each responsible for clearing sections; the squads maintained a broad distance between them, and each was divided into teams of three to sweep through the half-ruined complex.

At the officers' request, the soldiers crept forward with waists bent, using the ruins as cover. It was slow and cumbersome, yet very solid progress. They would not advance until they had thoroughly confirmed the safety of an area.

Indeed, there were enemies.

And these enemies had a very strong will to resist.

Those clad in workers' attire and wielding weapons only slightly better than iron pipe rifles emerged from the ruins.

When they popped up, they were usually only thirty to fifty meters from the searching soldiers—not far at all.

Upon their emergence, they unleashed a volley of bullets at a squad of infantry with the weapons they held.

The soldiers reacted quickly, dropping to the ground and seeking cover. The armed workers' marksmanship was not very good, and most of their shots went wide. Even if a bullet did hit, the plastic-steel armor being worn could save a life.

While one squad was suppressed, another team of three not far away would immediately counterattack.

Comparatively, Gu Hang's soldiers were far superior in marksmanship to the armed workers. The performance of the G9-type assault rifles was also much more reliable than the weapons in the hands of the armed workers.

A burst of fire from the group of three was enough to kill all the emerging armed workers.

Having completed the kills, they did not lower their rifles but continued to aim at the location, signaling to the squad that had been suppressed earlier with tactical gestures.

The three quickly got up and moved toward the location of their slain targets.

They needed to confirm the results and see if any enemies remained. If any were found alive, they would finish them off with a coup de grâce. The three who had made the kills provided fire cover. If any enemy appeared, they would strike with immediate firepower.

Not far away, Georgette, who was just about to intervene, lowered her gun.

Even she looked somewhat astonished.

The performance of these soldiers somewhat exceeded her expectations.

Previously, she hadn't paid much attention to the combat readiness of Mr. Gu's ordinary infantry. Though the individual equipment they donned looked similar to that of the Imperial Regular Army—G-type rifles, plastic steel vests—these were only considered the most basic of cannon fodder gear.

Ideally, a squad should be equipped not only with mortars but also might need several LR-type laser guns, HS-type electromagnetic rifles; fragmentary grenades alone might not be enough, and if they couldn't come up with thermobaric bombs or compressed energy grenades, the least they could do was bring more rocket launchers.

Even purely as light infantry, the equipment of Mr. Gu's troops fell somewhat short.

But this was understandable, forgivable, and even commendable. At the very least, His Excellency the Governor was making an effort to align his armed forces with those of the Star Realm Army. What more could be asked of him?

However, when actual combat commenced, the soldiers' combat discipline and performance were eye-opening.

Although their equipment was lacking, their training level was straight out of the Star Realm Regular Troops' playbook.

Such a force demanded Georgette's respect.

With their help, she felt that she and her sisters could afford to relax a little.

But just as she thought this, something unexpected happened!

Chapter 91 - Chapter 91: Chapter 90, Corpse Bomb

Chapter 91: Chapter 90, Corpse Bomb

Through Georgette's keen eyes, the governor's soldiers who had just killed those few enemies had performed very well. The bullets were accurately and meticulously sent into the heads and chests of those armed workers, two rounds each.

The virtually unprotected enemies, once hit in their vital spots by G9 bullets, were undoubtedly dead.

Confirming kills was a necessary tactical move, and Georgette would not interfere. In fact, her gaze had already moved on.

The resistors popping up here and there, though scattered, were indeed numerous. The armed workers who survived the bombardment were now using the ruins of the half-collapsed factory as cover and positions, launching counterattacks as the governor's soldiers approached.

The soldiers' advance was impeded, and they too had to find cover to return fire.

But, as Georgette had just witnessed, in most cases, the governor's soldiers gained an overwhelming victory by virtue of their superior soldiering and equipment advantage.

There were of course some losses, but not significant; on the other hand, the emerging armed workers suffered even heavier casualties and injuries.

And if there was a spot where a larger group of armed workers gathered, fighting prudently and exposing only their gun barrels for the barrage, Georgette wouldn't waste time, and she and her sisters would go straight in.

To her, all the armed workers mingled with heretics were detestable traitors.

However, just as she set her sights on a spot of stubborn resistance, the area she thought was resolved and safe suddenly changed!

Georgette sensed an intense surge of Storm Heresy there.

Her expression shifted and she immediately warned, "Danger! Get away from there!"

But by then it was already a bit too late.

The bodies of the dead armed workers, like a cluster of corpse bombs, exploded on the spot. Their flesh flew in every direction, as if their bodies had been embedded with a compressed air bomb.

The soldiers who heard the warning but didn't grasp where the danger lay were blown meters away by the sudden burst of compressed air. Their limbs were twisted upon landing, the force of the blast damaging their innards; sharp air blades tore open the unprotected parts of their bodies, shredding faces, limbs, and throats to a pulp.

Georgette immediately started shouting again, "Don't go near the enemy's bodies! They'll explode!"

This accurate information, along with the just-witnessed scene, was observed by the other soldiers nearby and then rapidly spread outward.

The governor's soldiers became much more cautious in their actions.

The gruesome fate of their comrades killed by the corpse storm bombs taught them a severe lesson. They altered the conventional tactical requirements, no longer approaching for close confirmation after a kill; instead, they would shoot from a distance if it was convenient; if not, they'd leave it be.

This way there was no worry about approaching bodies being as dangerous as approaching landmines, but the enemy soon came up with new tactics.

Some people in blue robes emerged beside the armed workers. The power of Storm Sorcery pulsed through them.

In Georgette's eyes, these people weren't very formidable sorcerers, but they were numerous and cowardly. What they were doing wasn't using sorcery to strike directly at the governor's soldiers or the Battle Nuns, but instead, they were stirring up winds that carried the bodies of the gunned-down workers onto the soldiers' positions.

These bodies, like compressed air cannonballs, caused a lot of trouble for the soldiers.

The potency of these wind-delivered bombs might not have matched a 155-caliber howitzer, but their precision was key.

Some soldiers ducked behind slopes formed from collapsing walls or found small recesses. A gust of wind, spinning as it blew, brought a body right in.

The soldier had seen it in advance and firing at the body to break it up was useless, so all he could do was run out. The corpse bomb exploded, killing three.

This position, which had seemed like a good cover, now appeared to be unsafe.

In fact, nowhere was safe then.

The soldiers' progress was hindered by the undead bombs.

Even with the support of the Battle Nuns during this time, the problem was only somewhat alleviated.

The Battle Nuns could snipe those in blue robes from a distance, but those targets needed to expose themselves. Hidden behind possibly a few meters thick of building rubble or in shell craters, even the fiercest grenade gun couldn't penetrate.

After all, they could send over the bodies with the wind, no need to show their heads.

In such a situation, Georgette made up her mind.

“Sisters, for The Emperor! Follow me in the charge!”

She leaped out, and her sisters followed suit. Her ‘Sacred Gold Halberd’ was a transcendent weapon blessed with divine powers; the other nuns didn’t have anything as formidable, but there was no need, whether it be ordinary combat blades or grenade guns, they were enough. Instead, it was the Battle Nun Superior’s Sacred Gold Halberd that dealt devastating damage.

Compared to the weapons in their hands, their defensive capabilities were equally despairing.

After they began their charge, their bodies were completely exposed and naturally suffered concentrated gunfire from the armed workers.

But the ability level of the armed workers wasn’t up to par, while the nuns of the Holy Lily moved quickly and agilely, causing their hit rate to plummet significantly when combined.

Even if they were hit, their power armors didn’t suffer much damage.

The Holy Lilies advanced unstoppably, and as they charged, the grenade guns in their hands fired away.

Simultaneously, the soldiers from the governor’s army also intensified their firepower projection as cover, suppressing the enemy and inflicting causalities.

The nuns successfully broke into the enemy ranks and began to eliminate the opponents at close range.

Their target, of course, was not the ordinary armed workers but the blue-robed Cultists who acted as ‘cannons,’ launching the mortals as projectile bombs.

Their appearance dealt a devastating blow to the enemy. Whenever a Battle Nun approached an entrenchment, the cover lost its protective function, and the grenade gun could annihilate a cluster of entrenched enemies. Even at close enough proximity, the blades in their hands became more efficient than gunfire.

However, killing those enemies was never the biggest problem the nuns faced.

It was the exploding corpses.

Even the nuns clad in power armors didn’t want to take a close-range blast from a heresy bomb.

The nuns had the ability to counteract spells, but for one, they had to be relatively close to the caster; secondly, the explosion of the corpses didn’t seem to be a casting process. Or

rather, the casting process was already completed, and all that was lacking was a method of detonation. That was a very subtle action, not easy to suppress.

The nuns could only counteract spells, but not nullify all supernatural powers in an area. There was an essential difference between the two.

The shockwave of the Storm Sorcery bombs, if too close, could damage the power armor; a few more hits, and cracks might appear, leading to a drop in defense capabilities, resulting in casualties.

That's why, after killing at close range, they would quickly distance themselves to avoid getting blasted. As long as they increased the distance, the impact's strength weakened, and the damage remained within a tolerable range.

Even because of this, they might only get close enough to slaughter the blue-robed Cultists and then leave the armed workers, who would be used as undead bombs, alone, or wait to deal with them from a safer distance.

Mere armed workers who would explode upon death were not much trouble, but those blue-robed Cultists were.

Chapter 92 - Chapter 92: Chapter 91, The Storm Trap

Chapter 92: Chapter 91, The Storm Trap

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The Battle Nuns were on the right track.

The factory, already blasted into ruins, was of little value to shell anymore. The half-destroyed ruins provided better cover for survivors and were sturdier than a normal factory building.

To take it down, it still relied on the infantry assault.

If it had only been the armed workers as the opponent, two infantry battalions would have been more than enough to handle it. The number of armed workers still alive wouldn't be that large, and they lacked heavy weaponry as well as military skills. Even if they seemed fearless in the face of death, it was just a matter of time before all were killed.

With the skills of the governor's soldiers, even in the bloodiest of close-quarters battles, the actual losses would be quite limited.

They just needed to kill those in the blue robes.

And that's exactly what the nuns were doing.

Indeed, they were doing it well, with courageous actions, leading the soldiers to start advancing again.

Moreover, after getting a clear picture of the situation on the battlefield, the commanders of the 2nd and the 6th battalions participating in this fight also planned to increase the frontline soldiers. Thus, four infantry companies were thrown into the frontlines of battle, including the only company with a special number in the entire troop–Abandoned Cave Company.

With the Battle Nuns systematically striking and eliminating the blue-robed in large numbers, without the 'artillery' support, the remaining armed workers found it extremely difficult to continue their desperate resistance.

The situation tilted back in favor of the governor's soldiers.

Under such circumstances, the battle should have been drawing to a close.

...

After Gu Hang arrived at the scene and briefly met with Perbov, Lambert, and others commanding the outskirts, he used telekinesis to lift his body high and survey the battle from above. The situation seemed approximately as described.

By rights, this should have eased his worries significantly.

The nuns of Saint Mercy Lily were putting in a commendable effort against the Heretic Cult; the soldiers, accompanying the battle, were in high spirits. Although there were some casualties, it was entirely within the acceptable range.

Although a factory was wrecked, this should be the only place within Revival City still capable of mounting a large-scale armed resistance. Once this was over, the job would be considered done. This show of force was a warning to the remaining Alliance elites, leaving them with no chance to resist, trembling under the slaughter wielded by Lambert.

However, Gu Hang felt a sudden surge of unease at that moment.

It was as if a great disaster was about to take shape right before his eyes.

He directly activated Spiritual Vision to inspect the entire battlefield.

Gu Hang saw many specks of Storm Heresy reactions.

Those armed workers had been preemptively implanted with some kind of heretical power that could be detonated after death, or even while they were still alive.

The specks of Storm Heresy that Gu Hang saw were likely these, under normal circumstances.

As for others that were strong or weak, those had to be the cultists in blue robes who had exposed themselves. They were being fully assaulted by Saint Mercy Lily and were dying fast.

If things continued at this rate, in a few more hours, before the sun set, the entire factory area would be thoroughly cleansed.

In conclusion, at a glance, Gu Hang didn't see any problems.

So what was that earlier feeling of unease all about?

Could it be that it wasn't a spiritual warning at all, just his brain glitching from recent exhaustion?

Thinking this, Gu Hang felt somewhat relieved.

Of course, that would be for the best.

“`

Otherwise, if there really were a crisis, then that would be troublesome.

With that thought, Gu Hang took another glance at the battlefield.

Still no problems... Wait a minute?!

Gu Hang furrowed his brows deeply.

It wasn't that he saw anything new, but he realised he might have missed something.

The dots of light that symbolised Storm Sorcery seemed a bit too numerous.

According to the reports from Perbov about the previous state of the battle, even if any armed workers died, their bodies would be used as land mines and fired out as cannon fodder.

The corpse bombs that were used up, of course, shouldn't still have light dots.

And when the nuns of Saint Lily started to show their power, targeting those blue-robed Cultists, the soldiers followed suit, dealing with the remaining armed workers.

Without the control of a sorcerer, the dead bodies wouldn't detonate on their own. But even so, the soldiers kept their distance from those bodies that hadn't exploded, ensuring they wouldn't be blown up by some Cultist sorcerer who hadn't been eliminated in time.

The problem of how to deal with these remaining bodies would be troublesome, but at least for now, they didn't pose a threat to the battle.

However, the number of light dots that Gu Hang saw didn't quite match the number of workers the soldiers had killed and those who were still stubbornly resisting in the center of the ruins.

Moreover, many of the Storm Heresy light dots overlapped with the positions of the soldiers.

He had thought before that it might be the soldiers accidentally getting too close. But upon closer observation, it became clear that the soldiers had no idea they were standing next to the bodies of armed workers.

It was normal for one or two people to be careless, but for so many to be overlapping was anything but normal.

Did they have a death wish?

Impossible.

Considering the previous situation, Gu Hang was startled to realize: Were those the bodies of the workers who had died in the bombardment, buried under the factory ruins, triggered by hundreds of previous shellings?

They were implanted with the energy of Storm Sorcery just like the others and could also be used as corpse bombs.

It was just that because of the previous shelling, a large area of the factory buildings had collapsed, burying many bodies or even living people under the debris.

But being buried didn't mean they were no longer a threat.

What if these thousands of corpses were to detonate at the same time beneath the rubble?

It would be like thousands of compressed air bombs exploding underneath, releasing shockwaves and air pressure that would blow the seemingly solid and stable semi-ruined site into the sky.

For those deeply entrenched within, the consequences would be catastrophic.

The four infantry companies of the 2nd and 6th battalions would probably be annihilated, not to mention even Georgette's six Battle Nuns, who might suffer greatly from this one wave.

After understanding the risk, Gu Hang didn't even have the time to communicate with Perbov, Lambert, and others.

His order, transmitted through the means of spiritual energy shaking, resonated across the entire battlefield:

"I am Gu Hang, I command everyone to cease fighting and evacuate the factory area."

"Repeat, evacuate the factory area immediately!"

To prevent Georgette, who was not his subordinate, from misunderstanding his orders, he specifically pulled a spiritual energy communication line to her, sending his voice directly into her ears: "This place is likely a trap, evacuate first, we can make long-term plans later!"

Chapter 93 - Chapter 93: Chapter 92, The Mother Superior, Please Expedite

Chapter 93: Chapter 92, The Mother Superior, Please Expedite

The soldiers under Gu Hang's command, of course, obeyed the order.

Though they did not know why, they still followed Mr. Gu's command and retreated.

Of course, they didn't just foolishly turn and run. Some provided fire cover, while others established defensive lines to prevent the armed workers from taking the opportunity to attack and inflict unnecessary casualties.

As for Georgette, she didn't understand why they had to retreat when she first heard Gu Hang's voice. In her view, they were on the verge of winning the battle; retreating now would not only risk throwing the victory away, but at the very least, it would give the Cultists a chance to breathe, something she did not want to see.

But she couldn't just continue the attack with her six nuns either. Seeing Mr. Gu's soldiers retreating, she, reluctant as she was, had to fall back as well.

The enraged Battle Nun was prepared to retreat and then confront Mr. Gu for an explanation.

However, the subsequent information that reached her ears about Gu Hang's judgment that this was a trap immediately put her on alert.

She hadn't noticed anything, but that didn't prevent her from taking the warning seriously. Mr. Gu was a Spiritual Energy practitioner; perhaps he could see something she couldn't?

She beckoned, signalling her sisters to retreat with her.

However, the enemy also realized the intentions of Mr. Gu's troops and the Saintly Lilies' nuns to retreat.

The surviving armed workers, like madmen, leapt out from their cover and began to pursue fiercely. They continuously fired their weapons while moving ceaselessly.

By the look of them, it seemed they were not expecting to cause much damage with their light arms, but rather, even in death, they wanted to deliver their corpses closer to the nuns and soldiers.

This level of coordination and morale could not have come from ordinary workers; madness was evident in their eyes, and not a glint of reason remained.

Indeed, they could not live much longer; even the Battle Nuns and Mr. Gu's soldiers, still retreating, maintained good organization, and the rearguard soldiers and retreating nuns took out these rashly exposed armed workers.

However, behind those armed workers, a figure clad in grey-white robes, corpulent, quietly emerged from the ruins.

She didn't move forward or expose herself within the firing line.

She opened her arms, palms to the sky, and the power of the storm began to radiate out from her as the center.

It was as if a pervasive breeze wafted through. The corpses of the workers that the 'breeze' touched, even those buried under the rubble, all underwent some change.

Georgette felt intense Storm Heresy energy being activated on the previously silent corpses under her feet and all around.

The bombs were not yet exploding, just activated.

Afterward, all they needed was a ‘spark,’ and these corpse bombs would naturally detonate.

Georgette knew she couldn’t escape.

Before the enemy could detonate the trap, everyone was already out of range from escaping the trap’s reach.

But as the enemy activated the corpse bombs, it also revealed their position.

She stopped in her tracks, powered up forcefully, and charged toward the source of the Storm Heresy energy. She leapt into the air, the power pack on her back spewing flames, propelling her to extreme speed in an instant.

On the way, her grenade gun was continually raised, but the strong Storm Heresy energy target she sensed never appeared in her field of vision.

She could only clench her teeth and continue the sprint.

In these brief moments, a bit of sentiment crossed her mind:

The sisters who followed her had just retired from a grueling war. The Order stationed them aboard the Quintet Starship as members of the national religion, intending to provide them a quiet place to recuperate for two years.

Obviously, staying in orbit around Rage Owl Star, the Quintet should’ve encountered no trouble. They could’ve spent two peaceful years in the ship’s small chapel, soothing their weary hearts from years of constant war.

It was well-meant, but Georgette didn’t quite appreciate it.

Aboard the starship, her demeanor was calm, but her heart struggled to settle. Accustomed to life on the battlefield, she felt oddly uneasy in the calm.

Upon hearing that Rage Owl Star was plagued by a cult, she couldn’t wait to bring her sisters to the surface and join the battle.

In her opinion, it was a waste to be donned in armor blessed by the Emperor and possess strong powers but not use them to vanquish the enemies of the Emperor, instead cultivating oneself within the starship church.

But what she didn’t expect was that this decision would lead her sisters, who could have rested safely, into a desperate situation.

She herself might survive the upcoming explosion due to her own strength, but her sisters would certainly suffer casualties, possibly even total annihilation.

They had survived battles far more difficult and terrifying than the minor skirmishes on Rage Owl Star, but now they might die or be injured here because of her orders, stepping into a trap...

It's pathetic how a slip in the gutter could cost blood.

If she couldn't stop this explosion, she might live with regret for a very long time.

But, no matter how fast she moved, it seemed too late.

She could already feel the spread of the Storm Heresy's power, activating more and more corpse bombs. The explosion was likely to happen in the next moment.

However, at that moment, everything came to a sudden stop.

Those corpse bombs were not further activated, nor did they explode.

Then, from the center of the Storm Heresy, she heard a sharp, exasperated voice: "You deserve to die!"

A wind bullet shot out from that point, aiming for the sky.

Georgette's gaze followed the wind bullet upwards, and she saw a man dressed in a golden nobility robe, floating there.

Just as the wind bullet was about to hit, it suddenly dissipated, leaving only a gust of wind that whipped his robe and black hair fiercely about.

The man's eyes shone with blue Spiritual Energy, and his target was none other than the cult leader.

Georgette realized that Mr. Gu had used some kind of Spiritual Energy technique to cut off the cult leader's control over the corpse bombs and stop the imminent explosion.

It was then that Gu Hang's voice reached her ears: "Battle Nun, please eliminate that heretic quickly."

"Yes!"

Georgette hadn't wavered with the change in the situation and now felt even more invigorated by Gu Hang's words. She maintained the acceleration provided by her jetpack's flame spray and moved as fast as possible toward the cult leader.

The few surviving armed workers tried to stop her.

Their guns posed no threat to the Battle Nun, so they could only hope to get close enough for the sorcerer to detonate the Storm bombs within them, using this method to hinder her.

“Don’t hesitate, charge with all your might.”

Gu Hang’s voice sounded again.

Georgette now had complete trust in Mr. Gu.

She didn’t bother with the armed workers, only executing them with a bomb gun when convenient.

And indeed, those armed workers didn’t manage to explode.

All the detonation signals sent out by the sorcerers were intercepted by Gu Hang!

————

We’ve hit a thousand subscriptions! Adding an extra chapter!

To be honest, I’m not very satisfied with this result, and I’ve been criticized quite harshly, leaving me feeling somewhat down.

Chapter 94 - Chapter 94: Chapter 93, I underestimated you guys

Chapter 94: Chapter 93, I underestimated you guys

Watching the armed workers who were supposed to act as bombs to hinder her actions collapse around her without a single explosion, Georgette felt overwhelmed with gratitude towards Gu Hang.

She had seen more powerful spiritual energy users before, many in fact.

In her opinion, Mr. Gu’s spiritual energy was excellent, but that was about it; he was not at the level of a master.

Yet today, the spiritual energy control he displayed was enough to amaze anyone.

That method that could sever the sorcerers’ extension of spiritual energy was truly magnificent!

It was Georgette's first encounter with such spiritual energy abilities. Her understanding of spiritual energy wasn't profound, but she saw Mr. Gu's actions as decisive.

And she, of course, wasn't going to squander the opportunity created by Mr. Gu.

She had already sprinted to a position where she could see the Cult leader.

The sight of the Divine Envoy wearing a grey robe and being extremely obese made Georgette feel sick.

Her bomb gun fired two bullets at her, barely repelled by the Storm Shield.

Gu Hang had the ability to weaken the Storm Shield, aiding Georgette's two bullets to directly attempt to assassinate the cult Divine Envoy. But he did not bother to do so.

His most important task now was to intercept the sorcerers' signal to detonate the corpse bombs, and not a single one could slip through. Interfering with the Storm Shield was considered superfluous, unnecessary.

After all, it would only let that fat woman Divine Envoy live for two more seconds.

Incensed, the Battle Nun had arrived right before her. The "Sacred Golden Halberd" was raised high!

The Shadow Wind Envoy's face showed terror. She tried to unleash a gust of hurricane energy in front of her to blow the Battle Nun away, but after the sorcery took form, it was merely a breeze.

At such a close range, the nun's ability to suppress spiritual energy was fully utilized. The spells that were actively released were hindered by her, failing to have their intended effect.

Immediately after, the "Sacred Golden Halberd" came slashing down. The Storm Shield dissipated like real air; following that, the Shadow Wind Envoy's sinful and ugly body was cleaved from head to toe, vertically split into two halves.

...

The greatest threat had died, but that did not mean everything was over.

Theoretically, as long as a single sorcerer nearby was still alive, the danger persisted.

The Battle Nun understood this. After slaying the strongest grey-robed cult leader, she didn't pause for half a moment and immediately targeted the ordinary Blue-Robed Sorcerers nearby.

One shot from her bomb gun meant one life lost.

At the same time, the soldiers who were in the process of retreating, along with six other nuns, turned back and joined the fight.

During this process, Gu Hang's figure was always floating in mid-air.

The soldiers in battle occasionally looked up, gazing at their governor with eyes full of reverence.

They didn't quite understand what Mr. Gu had done, but through the messages conveyed by their officers, through the encouragement shouts of the battling nuns, they still knew that just now, the situation was extremely critical and Mr. Gu had saved everyone's life.

The Battle Nuns also frequently looked up.

They knew a bit more about what had just happened, and their gaze at the moment was even brighter.

Gu Hang, flying in the sky, could feel the gazes from below.

However, he did not pay too much attention to them.

Half of his focus was now on the battlefield, remaining vigilant for any signals indicating corpses being triggered to explode. Although the fat Divine Envoy had died, hence no one could activate all the Storm Bombs at once, scattered detonations by those Blue-Robed Sorcerers were still a possibility. Since Gu Hang was already there, he intended to prevent them from succeeding as much as possible.

As for the other half of his focus, it was spent pondering over the entire situation.

The infiltration of Revival City by the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect was more severe than he had anticipated.

After taking over Revival City, a plethora of debuffs related to the current condition of the city had popped up on his system interface. Among them, there was one called "Cult Rampant", but this was categorized as 'moderately decrease benevolence income', which was negligible compared to the numerous 'significantly decrease' and 'greatly decrease' debuffs above it.

For this reason, Gu Hang had slightly overlooked this issue.

Even before, when the Alliance Government, under his pressure, had conducted a comprehensive investigation of the Cult, forcing members of the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect to launch an ambush to assassinate him, Gu Hang had even made a misjudgment:

these people didn't wield much influence in Revival City, and having been dealt with severely, they were resorting to desperate measures.

Gu Hang knew they still had forces in Revival City, but he thought they were inconsequential, nothing more than a minor nuisance.

And yet, they had managed to cause him such a huge problem here!

Even Battle Nuns, experts in combating Heretic Cults, almost capsized in this gutter.

"I underestimated you..."

Gu Hang thought to himself.

This was not a trifling matter, but a serious internal threat.

Especially the Storm Bombs implanted inside human bodies, this technology was perfect for terrorist attacks.

The Cult followers even concentrated people in the industrial district, preparing for a significant strike.

If they realized this approach wouldn't work and decided to brainwash ordinary people to become human bombs in crowded places, factories, or on military routes, that would indeed be a significant headache.

Gu Hang realized that if he did not thoroughly deal with these people, he could not expect to live in peace.

A deadly animosity had been forged between the two sides.

As for how to catch them?

Firstly, finding clues and investigating was the standard method. During the fight, the Nuns had deliberately spared the lives of a few Blue-Robed Sorcerers.

Getting fanatical Cult members to talk was no easy feat, as they likely feared death little. However, Georgette also mentioned they had some special methods in this regard, and Gu Hang chose to trust her.

Secondly, there were some unconventional methods: a city-wide rigorous screening.

In this respect, it was perfect for Osenia to cooperate.

The outer city was the main concern since its residents were poor and lacked savings. After Lambert had taken control of the city's food warehouses, Osenia was to immediately

go to the outskirts to distribute food, preventing chaos caused by starving people while also encouraging them to return to their jobs and resume production as soon as possible.

Now, it's just a matter of having Osenia include a Cult screening during the food distribution process.

But there were complications with this plan. Without technology to simply poke someone's throat and determine if they were a Cult member, figuring out how to screen for Cult followers was indeed troublesome.

Chapter 95 - Chapter 95: Chapter 94: Why Take Advantage of Me

Chapter 95: Chapter 94: Why Take Advantage of Me

After the battle had completely ended and it was confirmed there were no enemies left, the soldiers withdrew from the area.

As long as no one interfered anymore, the storm heresy contained in the bodies of the armed workers who had died in the rubble would gradually dissipate on its own and not last very long.

Of course, these activated storm bombs were very unstable entities. It was not ruled out that they might explode for some reason before their energy was completely dissipated.

Meanwhile, Gu Hang also had to be vigilant against the cultists returning to retrieve and make use of the bodies again.

Therefore, a company of soldiers would be stationed nearby, put up a cordon, and completely lock down the vicinity until the problem here was resolved.

Actually, the best way to deal with this was to have specialized personnel safely handle the energy contained in these bodies. Gu Hang had this capability, and so did the Sisterhood. However, there were simply too many things to handle inside Revival City now, and there was no time to waste here dealing with the bodies and aftermath.

Gu Hang himself needn't say much, he was incredibly busy, from civil affairs to economic production to military governance, all required his attentiveness; the sisters of Sainte-Lys Nun Association still had to further trace the trails of the cult, it was certain they had done more than just the incident at the Norris Factory, and surely had plots elsewhere.

So, they could only be left here.

The factory had already been bombed to ruin by earlier artillery fire, and as long as there were no people inside, even if all those storm bombs exploded and blew the ruins to the sky again, it didn't matter too much.

Next, Gu Hang needed to find Georgette again to have a good talk about pursuing the cultists.

However, before Gu Hang could find her, Georgette sought him out first.

"Your Excellency the Battle Nun, your timing is perfect, I... uh..."

Gu Hang's words were choked back by a hug.

Georgette hugged him tightly and whispered in his ear, "Thank you, Mr. Gu, without your help, my sisters would have suffered great losses, and I might have been lost in self-blame and regret for a long time."

Gu Hang didn't know where to put his hands at that moment.

They felt uncomfortably firm everywhere.

All he could say was, "Uh... we are allies, after all, it's what I should do. We need to continue working together to eliminate those who have betrayed the Divine Emperor."

"Yes," Georgette released him, "but I still need to thank you, this is a blessing from The Emperor."

Having said that, she kissed Gu Hang on the forehead and then turned and left.

As Gu Hang watched Georgette walk away, a thought suddenly popped into his mind:

"Blessing is a blessing, but why did you have to take advantage of me?"

...

[Tremendous Victory, Earned 221 Blessing Points]

[Losses: 154, Enemies Killed: 5073, Prisoners: 9]

[Governor's Infantry Regiment: Losses: 154, Enemies Killed: 4488]

[Sainte-Lys Nun Association (Ally): Losses: 0, Enemies Killed: 585]

After the battle had ended, as usual, Gu Hang saw the operational statistics within the system interface.

The bounty of blessing points was quite good, even more so than the rewards from resolving the battle in the outer city.

Almost capturing an entire Alliance Legion yielded only 133 blessing points. Now, by eliminating four to five thousand adversaries, the score had gone over two hundred.

The discrepancy possibly lay in the fact that the action to capture the Alliance Legion was basically picking low-hanging fruit, as the main issues had been dealt with by the allies, resulting in a lower coefficient for earning blessing points.

This current battle, though the Battle Nuns' help was significant, the main problems were still resolved by Gu Hang's own subordinates.

The bombardment from the heavy artillery was the most significant source of damage in this battle. Without the several hundred shells fired by those ten heavy guns, a direct attack on the factory would likely have failed, even if two entire infantry battalions were deployed.

The offensive side attacking the defensive side is inherently at a disadvantage, not to mention a troop difference of 600 vs 5000, almost tenfold.

However, the firepower gap brought by heavy artillery compensated for this issue.

Afterward, the help from the Battle Nuns was significant.

But despite that, during the attack, both the 2nd and 6th Battalions suffered considerable casualties. The companies that took the lead in the charge were essentially wiped out, and with the subsequent troop deployment, the total losses amounted to 154.

These casualties were quite disheartening.

Since Gu Hang pulled out his troops and began his campaign, this was the battle with the single largest number of casualties.

However, thinking coldly, the cost-benefit ratio was still acceptable.

After acquiring the entirety of Revival City and offering proper treatment, Gu Hang would be able to easily replenish manpower from the outskirts of the city; training more than a hundred soldiers to T5 level is merely 1 point of divine favor, effectively free; and the weapons and equipment could be completely replenished from the current military production capacities of the Abandoned Cave Society.

By now, Gu Hang's current points of divine favors had reached 356.

Wealthy!

Satisfied, he closed the battle settlement page and turned his attention to the new changes in his personal information on the [Hero]interface.

There was an additional item:

[Blessing of Sainte-Lys (15 days): Slightly increases spiritual and physical attributes, diminishing over time.]

After receiving ‘The Emperor’s Blessing,’ Gu Hang felt a warmth in his body.

He found it peculiar, but it wasn’t uncomfortable; and now, upon checking, getting kissed actually came with such benefits?

Gu Hang was already contemplating how to get kissed every 15 days.

No other intentions, purely for the buff increase!

…

After the small interlude, everyone went back to their respective tasks.

The Sisterhood continued their pursuit of the Cult.

Old Norris was dug out, this guy actually survived.

The cultists didn’t silence him, probably because they felt it unnecessary. If the Storm Trap in the factory area had been triggered, not even the nuns in their power armor might have lived, let alone Old Norris.

He had been hiding in an underground chamber all the while, and during the final stage of the bombardment, the entrance was buried under the rubble, trapping him inside. It wasn’t until the soldiers were cleaning up the area that they heard his cries and dug him out.

However, his subsequent fate might be quite grim.

The Sisterhood would catch him and inquire about his dealings with the Cult. The interrogation process by the Sainte-Lys, though, probably wouldn’t be as gentle as the smiles on their faces. Certain special methods would ensure they got the answers they wanted, but these methods probably weren’t too kind to the interrogated’s brain.

Once the Sisterhood was done questioning him, Norris would be handed over to Lambert, the head of the ‘Alliance Rectification Committee.’ Then Lambert would get his revenge.

Beyond Norris as an important source of intelligence, the Sainte-Lys nuns also captured several living Blue-Robed Sorcerers. These individuals, likewise, were sources of intelligence, with the hope of extracting some information from them.

Furthermore, with Lambert clearing Norris, the most significant obstacle, the cleansing of other elites within the city would become easier, and it's likely no one would be able to resist anymore.

Currently, it seems the elites of Revival City are deeply intertwined with the Primordial Wrath Owl Sect. The Sisterhood should be able to find some breakthroughs here as well.

A two-pronged approach.

The conventional path of pursuing the Cult handed to the Sisterhood, and Gu Hang started focusing on citywide screening to catch cultists.

That's what Osenia was doing.

Chapter 96 - Chapter 96: Chapter 95, The Governor Can't Come for Nothing, Right?

Chapter 96: Chapter 95, The Governor Can't Come for Nothing, Right?

The reason for having Osenia handle the city-wide screening wasn't to have the girl investigate cases.

That wasn't her specialty.

In reality, Gu Hang hoped that she could distribute grain throughout Revival City to ensure the welfare of the citizens, and, by the way, take care of this matter as well.

But with this city-wide screening, Gu Hang didn't hold much hope; it was just something done incidentally.

Mainly because there wasn't a particularly effective method of screening.

Cult members wouldn't admit to it if you simply asked them whether they were part of it or not.

He had also told Osenia that this task was to be done conveniently, and the main focus should remain on ensuring people's livelihoods.

The army that had entered the city with Gu Hang had already taken control of several grain warehouses.

However, it was at this time that bad news arrived:

The city's grain reserves were not plentiful.

If one considered regular consumption for a population of a million people in the city, there was roughly only a fifteen-day supply.

For a city that primarily relied on imported grain for trade, such a level of grain reserve was dangerously low, as if the previous Alliance Government had no understanding of the importance of food security.

But from another perspective, it made sense.

After taking over the grain warehouses, Osenia had included the poor of the outer city in her calculations of consumption at the same per capita standard as at the Governor's Camp and Abandoned Cave Society; but before this, the Alliance authorities might never have counted it like that. They probably only saw the hundred thousand people within the inner city as proper citizens; the poor in the outer city? They were left to fend for themselves.

Of course, the supply of food for the outer city residents definitely came from these warehouses—how else would they survive? They certainly couldn't live on tree bark for eight or nine hundred thousand people.

It's just that the outer city residents didn't consume as much as the standard per capita consumption calculated by Osenia. Eight hundred thousand to nine hundred thousand people might only consume the equivalent of three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand people/day/grain consumption.

On average, they could only eat one-third to one-half of the food daily, so malnutrition was normal. And since this is an average, it means that some residents of the outer city could eat their fill while others might go without food for two days in a row.

This situation aligned with the actual conditions in the outer city of Revival City. Having survived in the outer city for a few months, Osenia was very clear about how the residents lived there.

By such standards, a fifteen-day supply of food could be stretched to reserves lasting thirty to forty days.

But Osenia decided not to calculate it this way.

She would provide the outer city population of Revival City with a standard portion of food.

Otherwise, if we were hungry before the Governor arrived and remained hungry after he came... then what was the Governor's visit for?

During this current phase, increasing the ration distribution to ensure everyone could eat enough was an important step in establishing loyalty to the Governor.

The inner city residents are indifferent to the new Governor?

Let them be indifferent. Do they really think it's still the era of the Alliance? When only the inner city residents counted as people?

In the long conversation between Gu Hang and Osenia, they had made it clear that the greatest treasure of Revival City lay in the hundreds of thousands of residents in the outer city. As long as they wholeheartedly supported the Governor, everything else would be a paper tiger.

The elite could be overthrown, their production materials confiscated. Gu Hang didn't need their support to rule;

The relatively well-off inner city residents, no matter if they harbored resentments, just needed to behave and work diligently. If they dared cause trouble, there were ways to deal with them;

The vast number of impoverished people in the outer city would see an improvement in their living conditions. They would live better lives under the Governor's kindness and quickly return to the factories and their jobs, glowing with dedication for the Governor's cause.

Of course, distributing only food would not suffice. Or rather, the distribution of food is the foundation of solidifying the rule of the Governor, the price paid; beyond that cost, how to steadily reap rewards is where the real challenge lies for Osenia.

Osenia was well aware that simply opening the granaries was no proof of her abilities.

As if anyone couldn't do the same.

Along with providing food, she had to make it clear to the residents that this was a favor from the Governor. Only then would the true value of distributing the grain be realized.

At the same time, she had to anchor a principle from the outset: she couldn't allow people to live on handouts.

She didn't plan to define this batch of food as mere relief or welfare.

Whether Revival City was seen as impoverished or wealthy depended on the perspective. To say it was wealthy would mean considering only the Inner City people. Indeed, by the standards of this wasteland, they were quite well-off. Their wealth, however, was built upon the exploitation of the tens of thousands of people in the Outer City who were treated as if they were less than human.

But now, Osenia intended to treat the eight or nine hundred thousand people in the Outer City as human beings, which immediately added a significant burden.

By such a standard, it was impossible to consider the city wealthy.

The reserves of Revival City now could not support high welfare.

Osenia would provide the Outer City residents with the opportunity for a normal life, but what she could offer was just the opportunity and platform. If they wished to live decently, it would still depend on their own hard work.

Of course, this wouldn't be as generous as directly distributing food, but Osenia would rather sacrifice a bit of the benefit of bestowing favors to ensure that Revival City's finances were on a relatively healthy path.

Moreover, there was no doubt in her mind that the Outer City residents were willing to work hard. Having lived in the Outer City herself, Osenia firmly believed this.

In regard to this, Osenia had roughly established a temporary system.

She would indiscriminately distribute food to the residents outside the city but only enough for a few days, and just one-third of their ration to ensure no one would starve to death.

For those who wanted more, they would have to purchase it.

The government grain sale outlets that were set up would sell grain at an affordable price, and purchases would be limited to a certain quantity per person. The government would strictly crackdown on any gang activities involving buying up grain using others' quotas for hoarding.

For a considerable time to come, the grain industry would become a state-run industry, and the Governor's Government would go all out to ensure the stability of grain prices. Private individuals were not to intrude into this industry for the time being.

As long as the Outer City residents had access to a stable and affordable grain supply, their basic needs would be ensured.

Of course, a considerable number of Outer City residents had no savings at all. Recently, due to the war, they were unemployed and had no means of livelihood.

Osenia also had corresponding measures.

Following the regaining of control over the factories, workshops, and shops, as they reopened, they would absorb the unemployed. Wages would be settled daily in the form of “grain tickets,” which could be directly exchanged for food.

Osenia considered introducing a work-point system but decided against promoting it in Revival City for the time being.

With just a handful of administrators on hand, she was in no position to implement a work-point system to replace the existing currency system.

Such upheaval would require a stronger administrative capacity and grassroots control to carry out.

In fact, even just distributing grain and promoting the resumption of work and production, she and her dozen subordinates were not up to the task.

Fortunately, the military would be there to assist her.

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Adding one more update!

Chapter 97 - Chapter 97: Chapter 96, The Wind Rises

Chapter 97: Chapter 96, The Wind Rises

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The 3rd Battalion of the Governor’s Infantry Regiment will be responsible for food security, and incidentally, for the safety of Osenia herself.

Of course, relying solely on an infantry battalion is certainly not enough.

And at this time, the work that Yan Fangxu had been doing finally paid off.

He had not shown his face in Revival City because he was with the 4th Battalion and the fifty political commissaries drawn from various teams, still entrenched in the prison camps outside Revival City.

With a shortage of manpower in Osenia's area, she made a request to the Governor. Gu Hang turned his head and asked Yan Fangxu about the training status of those prisoners.

It had only been a few days; naturally, more than seven thousand prisoners could not be reorganized so quickly.

However, their training level was sufficient. Although it did not meet the T5 standard produced by the system, they were after all formally part of the previous alliance's regular army.

The main issue was their reliability.

But if manpower really needed to be drafted, it was not impossible.

Yan Fangxu selected seven companies that had shown the best performance to date.

Within these seven companies, the political commissars deployed had already succeeded in establishing branches of the Soldier's Committee and had done very good ideological work.

And those who were put into practical action immediately faced their first test.

...

Osenia seemed rather overwhelmed.

The administrative team she led had virtually no control over the suburban areas outside Revival City.

Everything had to start from scratch.

It was also difficult to establish control quickly.

So how was Osenia going to spread the word about distributing food at set times and places?

She resorted to a crude method.

She got hold of several tricycles, fitted them with loudspeakers, recorded the messages for food distribution, and had them drive around the city ensuring the message could be heard everywhere.

The work of cult screening issued by the Governor, in Osenia's understanding, was something that needed to be done, but the priority was not as high.

Of course, she knew that if cult members were not caught, they would cause trouble and make mischief. But relatively speaking, if the people in the suburbs had enough to eat, it would not be so easy for the cult members to stir up trouble; the difficulty would increase.

Who would follow a cult when there are prospects for the future?

Of course, screening work still needed to be done.

Three nuns had been assigned by Georgette to assist with the final processing of the screening work.

But clearly, relying on three nuns, it was impossible to screen hundreds of thousands of people.

Amidst her busy schedule, Osenia found time to create a registration form.

When collecting food, the public needed to register their personal information, which had to be cross-verified with the information provided by others.

The hope was that through this method, it would be possible to identify any recent abnormal behaviors, people living in close proximity whom their neighbors didn't recognize, or even more directly, to report those suspected of being cult members.

Those identified as anomalies would be subject to further scrutiny, and ultimately, by the last check, the nuns would be directly involved.

This was the best solution Osenia could come up with under the limited conditions and time.

Her core focus, however, was still on food distribution.

However, just as the tricycles with loudspeakers were spreading the word everywhere, and the food distribution points guarded by teams of soldiers scattered around the suburbs were set up, waiting for the food to arrive so that the work could proceed smoothly,

news came that the convoy transporting food from the inner city had been ambushed.

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When Osenia heard the news, she felt as if she'd been struck by lightning.

If there were problems with the food transportation, it could lead to a major crisis.

The people's sense of anticipation had already been built up by the continuous mobile loudspeaker propaganda. According to front-line reports, many citizens were already queuing up at the distribution points, waiting for the arrival of the food.

Now, what could she do if the food ran into trouble halfway?

Was she really going to tell the starving people lined up for their meal that the food was gone?

Wasn't that nonsense?

It was likely to spark a riot on the spot!

Osenia was somewhat panicked.

Her experience wasn't expansive. In her past managerial roles, she had done well, typically identifying problems, pondering solutions, and finding ways to get things done. Usually, if she followed her own plan, issues would be resolved.

But she had never encountered a sudden, large-scale emergency like this, one that could completely collapse if mishandled. Panic was natural.

However, she quickly forced herself to calm down, "Osenia, Osenia, don't panic, think of a solution... just like before..."

Regaining her composure, she began to think.

Managing the food distribution for the vast population outside the city was a very complex process.

First, she had chosen six locations in the outer city as warehouses to serve as distribution hubs. The food transported from the main warehouses in the inner city would first be delivered there. Then, each distribution hub would correspond to about ten specific food distribution points. The food transported to the hubs would be further distributed to these points. Citizens could register there and directly receive food after confirming their identities.

The security issue was quite tough. The forces Osenia could enlist included seven companies provided by Yan Fangxu and the third battalion sent by the Governor's Camp, adding up to a total of ten companies.

A company would be responsible for each distribution hub. They had to garrison the hubs to ensure the safety of the food upon arrival; they also had to monitor each food distribution point and provide immediate support in case of emergencies.

In addition, there were two companies mainly responsible for escorting the food shipments. Each of the six routes needed a platoon to accompany the convoy.

The last two companies were pulled out to act as clerks. They would be dispersed among all food distribution points, serving as guards while also handling personnel registration and the actual food distribution tasks.

When there weren't enough clerks, soldiers would fill the gap.

Now, the problem was with the food transportation route.

Currently, the news Osenia had was that a mob, armed with weapons, emerged from the complicated environment of a slum as the convoy passed through, launching an attack on the team. The outcome of the battle was still unknown.

All six food transportation routes had almost simultaneously been attacked.

After clarifying the situation, she may not have been completely composed, but she still issued one firm order after another.

"Immediately send a telegram to the Governor, report our situation, and request support. We need loyal and reliable troops to help."

"Immediately command all companies stationed at the food distribution hubs to deploy in full force, support their respective food convoys, and eliminate all armed militants."

"Teams established at the sixty food distribution points are not to move. They must focus on the situation of the queuing citizens, with appeasement as the highest priority. Use of force is not permitted unless absolutely necessary."

"Contact Captain Yan Fangxu. I need him to prepare the military rations from the prisoner camp... I fully understand those supplies are critical, they determine the stability of the prisoners. I hope we won't need them, but if any food transportation route indeed encounters issues, we need those supplies for emergency use. Also, inform him not to worry, as I've already arranged for supplies from the Governor's Camp's starch block factory. A convoy carrying a hundred tons of food is on its way, which can replenish the military's needs. Our synthetic starch factories are also operating at full capacity."

The clerks receiving her orders went off to carry out their tasks.

Osenia, while pondering whether there were any issues with the orders she'd issued or if anything needed to be added, looked out the window.

It had started to get windy outside. The houses in the slum, built haphazardly, creaked in the wind.

Looking at the gusty wind, Osenia's worries deepened.

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One more chapter to go, it'll be late, not finished yet...

Chapter 98 - Chapter 98: Chapter 97, comrades, charge with me!

Chapter 98: Chapter 97, comrades, charge with me!

"Hurry, hurry, hurry! Move faster!" Kodi shouted loudly.

At his side, two infantry platoons moved quickly. These soldiers, still in the uniform of the Alliance Legion, had now become reliable troops.

Although they were not as dependable as Kodi's old unit, he believed that with his efforts over these days, they should be willing to fight for the governor.

Besides, today's mission was for Revival City.

Kodi came from Abandoned Cave Society and was among the first batch of soldiers to heed the call and join under the governor's command; Perbov was his former superior.

When Perbov was ordered to form the 2nd Battalion, Kodi was promoted too, assuming the role of squad leader. After the battle for Revival City concluded, he was elected as a political commissar, donning a black coat, a red military cap, and epaulets, looking stylish and domineering, a striking contrast to the ordinary soldier's attire.

It's hard to say how much the clothes had played a part in Kodi's willingness to take on the role of political commissar back then.

Of course, he understood the responsibilities that came with his position more clearly.

To be honest, even after a half-day of lessons on loyalty to the Empire, loyalty to The Emperor given by the nuns of the Holy Lily, followed by a heartfelt half-day lecture from the governor himself, he was still not very clear about what exactly a political commissar should do.

The so-called 'forcing a duck onto a perch' was just like this.

When he first arrived at the company, facing over a hundred unfamiliar faces, Kodi was nervous.

But his crisp uniform, the bright red cap, and epaulets forced him to straighten his chest firmly and quickly assume his role.

During these days, he had made contact with every soldier. He now knew everyone's name, their past, and their reasons for enlisting.

In his view, he didn't have any special methods. He chatted with everyone, understood what they were thinking, then shared his own thoughts with them.

Why enlist as a soldier? Because we want to change the world. No one wishes to live in this disordered, chaotic wasteland world filled with death and hunger. Now, a savior has descended from the heavens, the governor himself, and we must seize this opportunity. This is the only chance to change our fate and, by extension, the fate of the entire world.

Why say so? Kodi used his hometown, Abandoned Cave Society, as an example.

The people of Abandoned Cave Society once lived a life far worse than that of the citizens outside Revival City or you soldiers of the Alliance. But now, Abandoned Cave Society has warmed and fed its inhabitants without question. Everyone lives in solid concrete houses with jobs and industries, and the roaring heavy machinery is producing hope in bulk.

Those plastic steel alloys, those machines, engines, car bodies... As these items increase, it signifies that people's lives are getting better and better.

Abandoned Cave Society has undergone an earth-shaking transformation. And why have they come to Revival City? It's because they want to help the governor bring the same drastic changes to Revival City.

Kodi had spoken these words to almost every soldier in the company during these days.

He did so tirelessly, his words sincere.

He then established a Soldiers' Committee, allowing everyone to share their thoughts, where he either facilitated discussions or provided answers. Then he selected the most suitable dozen or so soldiers, those with the most progressive and firmest thoughts, to assist the squad leaders in their work.

As a result, a special piece of information came to light at that time. A soldier mentioned that before he enlisted, there was an underground passage from the inner city to the outer city where he lived. He had stumbled upon it accidentally and knew it was being used for smuggling. He didn't dare divulge it earlier because someone who discovered it with him vanished into thin air just days later for talking too much.

But now, he had the courage to speak up.

Kodi then passed this information to his former superior. Perbov really made a catch there, apprehending what was said to be a high-ranking official of the Alliance.

Of course, that was just a minor incident, and Kodi didn't pay too much attention to it, instead continuing to focus on constant conversations and interactions with the soldiers.

He didn't feel like he was doing ideological work; he was simply conveying his own thoughts to every soldier in the most sincere and earnest way possible.

Then, in a daze, he received Captain Yan Fangxu's commendation, saying that his and his unit were the best at ideological work and were awarded a silk banner.

When he brought the silk banner back, it was met with the cheers of the entire unit.

This might have been that sense of team honor that The Governor had talked about during training.

When Captain Yan Fangxu announced the need to select a unit to undertake the task of food distribution, he communicated with the company commander at the earliest opportunity, eagerly volunteering for the mission.

During the mobilization, he made it clear to all soldiers.

"This is a great deed, distributing food to the whole city, so that no one has to go hungry; there are rebels and cult members in the city, they are very bad, and they may very well cause chaos. Their objective is to oppose The Governor's rule using the hunger and death of countless innocent civilians."

What we need to do is to protect the food, defend our achievements, and crush the schemes of these traitors and cultists.

The soldiers fully understood the objective of this battle and their morale soared.

This gave Kodi a new insight: The Governor had said that warriors need to know what they are fighting for.

And just now, they had received new orders: The convoy responsible for transporting food had been ambushed while delivering to Distribution Point 2, and they needed their support.

Without a second thought, after communicating with the company commander, the commander took a platoon to continue securing the distribution points where civilians were already lining up. He, on the other hand, took two platoons, about sixty soldiers, to support the transport convoy.

By the time he arrived at the scene, he found that the fighting was still ongoing.

The attackers had not yet succeeded.

The soldiers guarding the food trucks, wearing different uniforms from theirs, must be a platoon from the 3rd Battalion of the Infantry Regiment. They were fighting the enemy by using the vehicles and two outward-facing houses as cover.

They were under some pressure as many rioters in various clothes, armed with a mix of crude and sophisticated weapons, were besieging them, numbering at least a hundred.

Seeing this, Kodi was much relieved.

Thank goodness, the situation hadn't escalated to an unmanageable level.

He could tell that the comrades from the 3rd Battalion, although lacking heavy firepower and having to protect the grain trucks to avoid breaking through, were at least holding their ground solidly. Those rioters were not able to break through either.

But getting a bit closer, he noticed that his previous assessment might have been a little off.

The casualty rate among the 3rd Battalion's comrades was unusually high.

At this point, he saw among those rioters a few individuals who were clearly different from the rest. They weren't holding weapons, but instead, white mists were condensing in their hands.

Once thrown, these white mists caused compressed air explosions, the impact of which was nearly equivalent to that of a grenade's explosion; the scattered wind blades also resembled shrapnel wounds.

Those must be the so-called cultists.

Kodi hesitated no longer and shouted, "Support our comrades! Warriors, follow me in the charge!"

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Comrades, charge! Let's get those monthly tickets!

Chapter 99 - Chapter 99: Chapter 98, Tactical Interweaving

Chapter 99: Chapter 98, Tactical Interweaving

In the midst of the battle, getting flanked was disastrous.

After the militia behind the rioters were attacked by Kodi's two infantry squads advancing from two directions, they could barely put up any effective resistance.

If it weren't for the fact that Battalion 3, facing them head-on, wasn't quite sure what was happening behind them, and prioritized the protection of the food transport convoy without coordinating an attack from the front as well, the rioters would have collapsed even faster.

But even without that, there was no big problem anymore.

Objectively speaking, Kodi felt that the military skill level of the troops he was now leading still fell short of his old unit's, but they were a bit better than the mob and better armed too.

At least it wasn't just rifles with iron barrels anymore.

Meanwhile, after realizing that the cultists capable of unleashing Storm Bullets were the most significant threat among the enemy, he paid special attention to those two foes.

He singled out some of the most progressive-minded and combat-ready soldiers under his command, and personally led them to target those cultists.

Siege warfare had to be fought in this manner.

And after he definitively led his men to kill those two dark mages, the battle was no longer in doubt.

The remaining rioters were either killed or fled.

Kodi didn't pursue them but instead drew his troops closer to the food transport convoy.

The soldiers responsible for the convoy remained very cautious and did not allow them to get close. Only when Kodi showed his face and the soldiers opposite recognized a familiar figure did they lower their guards.

After exchanging secret signals, Kodi left behind a squad, along with the seventeen surviving members of the original convoy crew, took the wounded, and headed for their designated Distribution Point No. 2.

First, ensuring that this batch of food could be delivered, they could also ensure the normal operation of about ten food distribution points associated with Distribution Site No. 2.

After that, the two squads from that place and the convoy responsible for the escort would be as secure as possible.

As for Kodi himself...

He adjusted the brim of his cap, listening to the intense gunfire coming from a distance.

His battle was not over yet.

“We continue to advance! There are more comrades who need our support!”

“Yes!” the soldiers had just won a victory, and their morale was high.

...

Kodi quickly led his troops to a new battlefield.

The situation here was much more problematic than the one he had just resolved.

This place should be on the transport route of Distribution Site No. 3. A mob had overtaken the convoy. The number of rioters was more than before, probably reaching two hundred, and there were more cultists among them. At a glance, Kodi spotted five.

He knew how troublesome it was to deal with these magic-wielders. Bullets hitting their Storm Shields would require emptying at least three magazines before penetrating, while one Storm Bullet from them was like a hand grenade. Besides, many armed rioters provided them with protection.

Looking at this, the infantry squad responsible for escorting the food likely met their doom. Whether they were completely wiped out or routed with some turning to desertion, they could no longer be relied upon.

Similarly, two infantry squads had come to support from Distribution Site No. 3. Kodi recognized the leader, also a ‘Red Hat’ political commissar.

But the enemy they faced was too strong; they couldn’t break through at all.

All they could do was maintain the line, ensuring the enemy couldn’t break out.

But without a numerical advantage and with the help of the cult mages on the enemy side, they hesitated to use the mortars they had for fear of destroying the food.

In this situation, their line was somewhat precarious.

Kodi immediately led his troops and pushed to the front.

His arrival with several dozen fresh troops greatly eased the situation.

In the midst of the fight, Kodi found another Red Hat.

“Tadeusz! Tadeusz!”

“Kodi?”

The red-hatted one turned his head, looking somewhat surprised.

Kodi had no time for pleasantries, he immediately stated his purpose, “We can’t keep fighting like this, we need to bring our guns into play!”

“But those supply wagons...”

“Stop worrying about that! Win the battle first, then worry about the food!” Kodi said as he pointed outside, “Look over there! Someone is pouring fuel; they’re going to burn the supplies! We can’t let them succeed!”

Having said that, he fired a burst of bullets in that direction, killing the fuel pourer, then quickly pulled his head back in.

“Okay!” The political commissar named Tadeusz also made up his mind. He crouched down, retreated, and began to issue orders.

Soon, the mortar teams from three platoons were in place.

The firepower suddenly increased significantly.

When Tadeusz returned, Kodi continued, “It’s still not enough, we need to figure out a way to handle those sorcerers.”

“Do you have a plan?”

Kodi grinned, showing his teeth, “Nothing particularly good, just fighting desperately. Dare or not?”

Tadeusz hesitated for a moment.

Kodi patted his red armband and asked, “What’s the matter? You’re a political commissar, why the hesitation?”

“Let’s do it!” Tadeusz clenched his teeth.

“That’s more like it!”

The two quickly formed a small squad.

Seventeen men, assembled into two spearhead teams.

They each led a team, dividing into two groups, and began to advance from the outer flanks.

About ten minutes later, Kodi’s team was in position.

He estimated that there were two minutes left until the agreed time to launch a joint attack.

He strictly ordered the soldiers not to show their heads, patiently waiting.

The enemies seemed to sense that the frontal firepower had weakened somewhat. They became restless, sent out some men, and tentatively launched a counterattack.

Seeing this scene, Kodi worried whether the frontal defense, having lost almost a fifth of its manpower, would hold.

But thankfully, it held for those two minutes.

When the time came, the multiple mortars fired simultaneously; the previously silent and repositioned machine gun squads also unleashed powerful fire.

The soldiers also courageously raised their heads and began to shoot with full force.

In that instant, the volume of firepower from the entire troop increased several-fold.

The armed thugs who had seized the convoy were suppressed momentarily. Even the several sorcerers didn’t dare to show their heads recklessly, for even with Storm Shields, as mere wearers of blue robes, they weren’t at the level of the gray-robed or the Divine Envoys. Too many bullets could still shatter their shields.

And it was at this moment that Kodi bellowed, “Charge, charge, charge! It’s our turn to go! Don’t waste the opportunity our comrades have created for us!”

With that, he was the first to rush out.

————

It’s a bit tough, no drafts saved, wanted to post more but didn’t finish writing... more to come this afternoon or evening.

Chapter 100 - Chapter 100: Chapter 99, Kodi’s Death

Chapter 100: Chapter 99, Kodi’s Death

Kodi’s actions had obviously attracted a lot of attention.

But due to the previous detour and interspersion, he had secured an advantageous terrain. When he burst out, many of the enemies were facing away from him, and there were no covers in between to protect them.

Seizing the moment, Kodi and his subordinates killed a significant number of enemies with fierce gunfire.

This even included two enemy mages.

One mage was killed by a volley of bullets before he could react, as he failed to adjust the direction of his Storm Shield; the other did manage to react but was taken down by concentrated fire from several soldiers.

In a matter of seconds, multiple soldiers had emptied a magazine, shattering the Storm Shield and killing the person within.

Lower-level enemy mages, with insufficient strength, could be broken and killed by ordinary bullets.

But afterwards, when the enemies recovered from their initial shock, Kodi and his team’s situation deteriorated.

Especially since this flanking charge had depleted their ammunition after eliminating a number of enemies. Some soldiers were positioned to ensure their magazines still had firepower, but a lull in firing was inevitable for the others while reloading.

Not only were they taking incoming bullets, but also a wind spell from an enemy mage was hurtling towards them.

One soldier was hit in the leg and fell to the ground, only to be further struck by multiple bullets, which ended his life;

The wind spell went off-course, exploding at the edge of their formation, but still claimed the lives of two soldiers.

Despite Kodi's best efforts to lead the team to cover, by the end of it, only four remained by his side.

This was within his expectations, and Kodi remained calm.

Frontal firepower drew attention while he led a squad on the flank, striving to inflict maximum damage and continue drawing focus.

Next, it was up to Tadeusz.

Leading another squad, the time had come for them to launch their assault as well.

The number of enemy mages left among their foes was down to three. If Tadeusz could achieve results similar to Kodi's squad, they would have little trouble winning this battle.

It was best to also ensure as many survivors as possible to retain their fighting strength.

If they, Kodi and Tadeusz, could then drive their troops like steel nails into the enemy's rear, with the front-line troops launching an attack under covering fire, they would be able to achieve a victory against the odds, taking back the supply carts from the Cultists and rioters!

As he thought this, Kodi heard gunshots and screams not far away.

Tadeusz had launched his attack as planned!

But the next moment, Kodi's brow furrowed tightly.

The sounds seemed off.

Too distant.

He couldn't help it and glanced sideways, only to see an unfavorable situation.

It appeared that Tadeusz had been exposed before they could initiate their planned assault and was now under enemy attack, caught in disarray.

Kodi realized he couldn't just wait for the outcome.

He looked to the four soldiers on either side of him.

Their expressions were somewhat panicked.

Even though they were chosen as the most excellent and steadfast warriors, they were essentially trapped deep within enemy lines, surrounded by adversaries, and morale was inevitably shaken after nearly half their team had just been killed.

Kodi knew he needed to say something, “We’ve come this far, we must disregard life and death. Do we even have space to retreat now? Victory is our only path!”

“Let’s go! Take down the remaining enemy mages, victory belongs to us!”

With that, he charged out of the cover.

The remaining four soldiers, either genuinely moved by his words or simply acting on instinct, followed closely behind.

One soldier stayed in the rear to provide covering fire, striking at the enemy attempting to attack his comrades, while the other three, under Kodi’s leadership, attacked the sorcerer who was advancing on Tadeusz with his back turned to them.

The sorcerer was instantly trapped in a dire situation, with enemies in front and behind, and no possibility of dodging to the side, as it would expose him directly to the firepower from ahead.

The overwhelmed sorcerer was shot dead.

But the remaining two sorcerers were a tough problem.

The pair, back to back, were behind a pile of rubble from a blasted building. The shattered construction debris served as cover, shielding them from direct gunfire; whether it was Tadeusz’s side or Kodi’s, they could only attack the enemy directly facing them, and the enemy’s Storm Shields were also open towards them.

What made things even more difficult was that around these two sorcerers, there were a significant number of armed thugs guarding them. Their fire was mainly directed towards Tadeusz’s side, suppressing the commissar from advancing.

Quickly assessing the situation, Kodi took two actions.

A grenade, with its pin pulled, was tossed toward the enemy by him.

The explosion of the grenade killed several armed hooligans and also caused the two sorcerers’ Storm Shields to tremble violently.

Then, anticipating the enemy’s counter-attack, he dodged to the side, indeed avoiding an incoming wind shot.

The wind shot sent the two warriors beside him flying.

Kodi, half-crouching and kneeling on the ground, endured the pain of a blade of wind slicing off a piece of his facial skin and, in an awkward pose, fired ferociously at the sorcerer facing him.

The already quaking Storm Shield, under the fierce fire of the G9 rifle, flickered incessantly, clearly on the verge of collapse.

The sorcerer, along with several surviving armed thugs, had their attention completely drawn by the man in the black coat and red hat.

Bullets flew at Kodi fiercely, forcing him to hide. He was shot several times in the torso, but fortunately, the hard plastic vest he was wearing under his coat protected his vital parts; being shot in the shoulder, in the leg, or even having an ear shot off... these were all minor issues now.

The gunfire he drew away created an opportunity for the two surviving soldiers.

Both of them fired all the bullets in their new magazines at the sorcerer. Even if only half the bullets hit their mark, they were enough to shatter the Storm Shield.

The one a bit further away, who had run out of bullets in his magazine and wanted to duck back to reload, was hit in the head by a bullet and died instantly.

The closer one, the last remaining soldier, dropped his rifle and threw a grenade.

But the grenade didn’t have the desired effect, as it was blown away by an evil wind.

The sorcerer with the broken shield was terrified at this moment.

He had been distracted by the man in the red hat and had almost been swept away by this assault.

Restarting his Storm Shield would take time, and if a grenade was lobbed at him, he feared it would be the end for him.

Enraged, he even summoned another wind shot, hurling it at the soldier who was trying to reload to attack him, sending his body flying like a torn rag, only then feeling relieved.

Having dealt with this one, he could finally shift his target and deal with the red-hatted man who was barely clinging to life.

Huh?

Where was that red hat?

Looking up again, he saw the red-hatted man, dragging a wounded leg, climbing on top of a piece of building wreckage that served as cover and jumping down.

On his person, two grenades already had their pins pulled.

The sorcerer’s eyes widened, but by then, it was already too late for any action.

With a thunderous explosion, the shockwaves and shrapnel from the two grenades took the life of the Storm Shield-shattered sorcerer and, by chance, the life of the other sorcerer facing Tadeusz’s squad with his back to Kodi.

It also took Kodi’s life.