Governor 831

Chapter 831: Accompany Me to Starfire

"Lord Taishi, we couldn’t find Sifleg, he’s already fled."

Hearing the report, the Battle Group Leader of the Dragon King’s Spear Chapter, Tai Shichen, turned around, slightly surprised.

Beside him, his Fourth Company Leader, Ricardo Lazio, crossed his arms and said, "That traitor sure ran fast."

Tai Shichen waved his hand, saying, "Without a trial, it’s hard to say he’s a traitor."

"What’s wrong with calling him a traitor when he fails to show up after being summoned? Moreover, he actively spread the Void Parasite into the remaining Empire World, directly causing the death of billions across multiple worlds!"

Upon hearing this, Tai Shichen nodded slightly, "He’s not wrong in saying that. Issue an order across the entire domain: in the name of the Dark Side Expeditionary Command, strip Sifleg of his title as Judge, and put out a red alert for him throughout Empire territory. He’s at least guilty of defying military orders and must be brought back for trial by the military court. Anber Long, you handle this matter."

The one referred to as Anber Long was the person who came to report Sifleg’s escape.

He came from the Military Intelligence Division of the Alliance military, and before the main forces of the Alliance’s Western Expedition Army entered the Forward Cosmic Domain, he had already arrived.

His mission was to gather as much military intelligence as possible, contact local forces, and gain their support for the Alliance before the full-scale recovery operation in the Forward Cosmic Domain began. Ideally, when the Dark Side Expedition arrives, they will offer no resistance and peacefully submit to the Dark Side Control Committee.

Even if there isn't widespread submission, it's crucial to clarify the attitudes and tendencies of many local forces. Identify the staunch opposition that must be decisively subjugated; the fence-sitters who will naturally switch sides once the opposition is defeated; the friendly factions that can smoothly take over planets with a little support; and the places under severe influence of Chaos or Aliens that require full assistance...

This intelligence must be gathered as thoroughly as possible before the Dark Side Expedition officially hits the Forward Cosmic Domain to significantly reduce the difficulty of the expedition.

It was during his intelligence gathering that he realized the problem with Omgeria.

On one hand, he tried to develop connections among Sifleg's subordinates to persuade him to abandon his 'smart' idea, emphasizing that the Alliance was almost here, and even if the Green Skin Orcs spread out, the Alliance military would soon stop them. On the other hand, he quickly reported the situation, hoping the Alliance army would come over as soon as possible to solve the crisis here.

These two objectives had mixed results.

The intelligence he sent back even caught the attention of Gu Hang. Following Gu Hang's orders, despite the Western Expedition Army not being fully prepared, a unit was dispatched ahead into the Forward Cosmic Domain to specifically address the battle in the Omegilia Star Realm.

And the Commander responsible for this task was none other than the Battle Group Leader of the Dragon King's Spear Chapter, Tai Shichen.

The entire Dragon King's Spear Chapter set out, accompanied by several army groups and the Alliance Fleet, into the Forward Cosmic Domain, arriving next to the Omegilia Star Realm in the Wangyue Star Domain.

Upon arrival, after clarifying the current situation in Omegilia, Tai Shichen realized that the forces at his disposal were insufficient to resolve the conflict here.

Whether it's the Insect Swarm or the Beastmen, either side's assembled army was beyond what his own troops could contend with. Now, recklessly entering Omegilia to participate in their chaotic battle would be suicidal.

Fortunately, the Dark Side Expeditionary Command as his superior didn't issue him any particularly difficult orders.

After discussions with his company leaders, upper echelons of the Battle Group, and the navy and army commanders of the Expeditionary Force, they reached a consensus—around the Omegilia region, the current expeditionary forces could only assume a defensive stance. Controlling the internal issues of the star domain, preventing them from spilling over, would be the utmost effort, with no possibility for proactive attack.

To actively intervene in Omegilia, at least one-third of the total Western Expedition Army's troops would be needed.

Yet strongly advised against doing so.

Such forces would barely allow a foothold inside Omegilia, turning a two-way battle into a three-sided melee. For humanity, if they can't swiftly and thoroughly quell the alien threat within the star domain, rashly joining the melee is meaningless, only leading to needless casualties.

At this point, it's best to gather over 70% of the Western Expedition Army's forces and prepare for war, charging into the Omegilia Star Realm while delivering a fatal blow to both the Green Skin Orcs and the Insect Swarm. The key to victory lies in eliminating the surely existing Queen and Beastman Chieftain. Once that's accomplished, a rapid offensive must follow to swiftly eradicate the aliens within the star domain and reduce their numbers as quickly as possible.

For the Green Skin Orcs, it's crucial to prevent another Chieftain emerging from their internal power struggles.

For the Insect Swarm, it's essential to prevent further Tentacle Fleet reinforcements from taking over the previous forces. Currently, the Insect Swarm gathered in Omegilia is excessively large, and there's an abundance of food. Before consuming all of it, the Insect Nest's hive mind sees great challenges but

equally substantial sustenance here. Combined, the Insect Swarm is likely to dispatch more, larger Tentacle Fleets, continuously attacking this area.

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That means it's possible for a 'Void Black Hole' to form in Omgeria.

The way to handle a Void Black Hole, of course, is to quickly create a desolate zone so that the swarm can't find anything to eat, and they naturally won't come; even if they do, they will face a hungry swarm after a long journey. And the Void Insect Species, when in a hungry state, is the easiest to deal with.

They are not 'beasts' in the usual sense; they are never satisfied, and being full does not reduce their desire, nor do they stop, they only spawn in greater numbers, ravaging more places.

And before the Expeditionary Force completes full war preparations, what they should do at this moment is watch the Insect Swarm and the Beastman slaughter each other.

Although the scars might cause them to spiral upwards and become stronger in their brutal battle, since it has already become a reality, humans have missed the opportunity to solve the problem at the best time, no matter how reluctant they are, they can only watch helplessly from the side.

Of course, they are not doing nothing, just watching.

There are a total of eleven Star Realm Tunnels leading from the Omegilia Star Realm to the outside world. Blocking these eleven Star Realm Tunnels, letting both sides fight internally and preventing them from spilling out, is what humans need to do.

In fact, this has already become a very real threat.

Whether the Green Skins or the Insect Swarm, if I can't beat you, can't I beat the other one?

They all have sufficient motivation to expand outward.

The swarm can gain more biomass supplements by eliminating the human world, where resistance is much weaker than the Beastman, and then reinvest it in the war against the Beastmen.

The Beastmen can also plunder human technological products to convert them into their own war machines. Meanwhile, the occupied planets can also ’plant mushrooms’, producing more green-skinned boys.

This isn’t even a concern anymore; it’s a fact.

There have been examples of disturbances on more or less all eleven exits from the Omegilia Star Realm to the outside world.

"We must block these eleven exits." Tai Shichen said in a strategic meeting, "We need to make them an Unbreakable Defense Line!"

...

Saying and doing are two different things.

The Alliance Army that followed Tai Shichen and his Battle Group is somewhat too sparse.

Although they are all elite with extraordinary combat power, eleven Star Realm Tunnels, eleven exits, nearly surround the Omegilia Star Realm. Even circling with warships would take three or four months. Relying solely on the Alliance Army to divide up and defend them, leaks would surely occur everywhere, breaking with just a single poke.

What to do with insufficient forces on hand?

On this basis, we must mobilize the local forces in the surrounding Star Domain.

The situation in the Forward Cosmic Domain is a little different from what Magrey captured in the Dark Side Expedition. Maybe because the Forward Cosmic Domain is more distant from the Scarlet Scar, there is isolation here, but the severity is still acceptable.

Many imperial forces, during their exploration outward, formed one small alliance after another spontaneously. Dozens, even hundreds of worlds come together, becoming a power.

Navigating and communication are still difficult, but not to the point of complete isolation.

And the most important world around the Omegilia Star Realm is named the Steel Flame Furnace.

It is a Founding World controlled by the orthodox Martian Sect.

A meeting is underway in the Dome Assembly Hall of the Steel Flame Furnace Founding World.

Steel Flame Furnace is only four Star Realm jumps away from Exit Seven and is also the world most harmed by the Green Skins.

A ’autumn wind’ Green Skin Fleet has already approached Steel Flame Furnace, and the threat is imminent.

Twenty-seven holographic flags rotate slowly above the circular conference table. The mechanical eye of Wang Keren, the Founding General of Steel Flame Furnace, scanned the representatives present. The golden cordon of the Planetary Governors collides with the bone medallions of the Mercenary Leaders, sparking subtle hostility, while the Merchant Wanderers’ gem-embedded data boards and the State Archbishop’s Holy Relic Box on his chest compete for the light beams.

He sighed softly in his mind.

Unity?

Being so close to Omgeria, of course, he hoped for unity. And as the leader of the Founding World, before the catastrophe, he was quite a figure of authority in the surrounding Star Domain. He had tried many times to unite people and change the situation.

But it had never succeeded.

He could only watch the situation deteriorate day by day until that bastard Sifleg emerged.

But who could he blame?

He had supported Sifleg's actions.

Even though he had received warnings long ago that Sifleg's idea was nothing more than drinking poison to quench thirst, still, he allowed it. At the time, he thought of it as a dying horse being treated as a living horse, believing that it was better than doing nothing when everyone else had no ideas.

The result... That guy on a barely distant car from the abyss stepped hard on the accelerator, even dragging the Steel Flame Furnace into the abyss.

He admitted he made some mistakes, wrongfully trusting that bastard. He wished he could bring that deceitful Judge back and tear him into pieces.

But before that, he has to save his Founding World.

The arrival of the Alliance gave him new hope.

Back then, he also received the so-called "Disaster Compatriot Declaration," and to be honest, he scoffed at it, dismissing it as the ravings of a pretender. But now, he couldn't wait for the Alliance to come quickly.

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Many were willing to follow Tai Shichen into Starfire, and all those attending the meeting at the Steel Flame Furnace eventually signed the documents.

They were willing to sign and ultimately 'unite' mainly due to the changes in the objective environment.

In the past, before the unified local government system of the Empire collapsed, there were inherent conflicts among the various forces.

Previously, at least there was an order of the Empire that suppressed the conflicts from easily erupting.

But after the catastrophe, the isolation brought enormous disaster, not only leading to various crises like Aliens, Chaos, Cultists, and rebellions but also nearly incapacitating the Space Domain Government and Star Domain Government. These local governments either nominally ceased to exist after decades of turmoil, or they evolved into a single local force, losing control over other forces initially under their jurisdiction—this situation was more common.

For example, the Wangyue Star Domain, although the star domain government survived, they also emerged from isolation and contacted about fifty worlds around them.

Yet in the Wangyue Star Domain, the strongest force is not them.

Even though the Founding World of the Steel Flame Furnace only controlled twenty or thirty worlds nearby, its own strength, whether in output or military power, far exceeded the combined strength of the star domain government's fifty worlds. Not to mention, the original two Battle Groups of the Wangyue Star Domain, after breaking out from the defeat against the Beastmen in Omgeria, the remaining over two hundred warriors rested at the Steel Flame Furnace and were to some extent under the control of the Sect of Mechanics—otherwise, they would lack weaponry and equipment.

The Mercenary Queen Tristan started with private armed forces; her father's generation was Interstellar Pirates. After inheriting them, even though the Pirate Group was in its prime, she realized continuing this way was not sustainable and decided to accept allegiance. Simultaneously understanding that surrendering her military power after allegiance would only lead to being devoured, she employed every trick to retain her military strength, transitioning from pirate group to mercenary, surviving by providing military protection to some planets and the Imperial Merchant Fleet, additionally acquiring a merchant

license to do some business. Occasionally, her troops would indulge in old habits as long as they didn't get caught.

After the catastrophe, she rose during the chaos, occupying twenty or thirty worlds nearby, establishing herself as the queen, entangling with other forces.

The National Church also had its base in the Wangyue Star Domain. As a shrine world, Komeir quickly reestablished contact with over seventy surrounding worlds through devout prayers after the disaster. The Planetary Governors of these worlds were originally loyal followers of the National Church and maintained their faith after the disaster, entirely obeying the church's command, be it planet resources or armies. Meanwhile, Komeir also commanded a formidable Battle Sister Squad.

Each had their own strength, and each also had their own conflicts and frictions. After the Empire's official control failed, they all inclined towards self-preservation, simultaneously pondering if they could expand their ambitions amidst chaos. Additionally, they faced internal Chaos rebellions and external Alien threats... In such circumstances, they missed the opportunity to assist Omgeria Star Realm in suppressing the Green Skins' rise.

At that time, they were busy vying for power, rushing to claim territory, handling their own internal and external challenges, having no time to manage issues in neighbouring star domains, because the threat had not yet loomed over themselves.

Now, the external environment has significantly changed, and everyone knew what happened in Omgeria. Regardless of what happens after the Insect Beast War ends, even currently, merely the insects and beasts emerging to wreak havoc from the exits of the Star Realm Tunnels numbered seven, eight, nine, in the Wangyue Star Domain, imposed direct pressure on them.

Any internal challenges or inter-factions conflicts, in such circumstances where they are all about to perish together, are trivial.

Especially after the arrival of the Alliance.

Though it's merely a vanguard, even so, the forces Tai Shichen commanded were more powerful than any one of them could have alone.

Not to mention, there was an entire Alliance backing them up.

Their only hope of addressing the lethal threat posed by insects and beasts and resolving the massive ticking bomb of Omgeria next door lies with the Alliance.

One cannot hope for Terran Central on the other side of the Scarlet Scar?

Given such objective conditions, they inherently possessed the practical basis to unite and combine forces.

Otherwise, it would be impossible for Tai Shichen to merely intimidate them at the meeting, expecting the Komeir people to give up their Holy Power Crystal regarded as a Holy Artifact, expecting greedy merchants to yield trade routes and merchant fleets, expecting the Steel Flame Furnace to serve as the front line of the battlefield, fully supporting the war.

Impossible.

Such things are not given up until life-threatening situations arise.

Of course, this does not mean that Tai Shichen's efforts had no effect.

The arrival of his Vanguard Army itself was a significant opportunity to unite the Wangyue Star Domain.

Without his arrival, perhaps the Wangyue People would unite eventually, but it's unclear if it would happen months or years later, as there are plenty of opportunities to prolong disputes and waste time. By then, possibly half of the Wangyue Star Domain would already be engulfed in war, rendering everything meaningless.

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Moreover, Tai Shichen's behavior and dealings with various mortal powers were quite skillful.

He was not like the typical image of an Interstellar Warrior, especially compared to the Blood Shark who disregarded mortals—they were complete opposites.

Just like the Genetic Seeds of the Death Angel, which seem to inherently lead one to have little secrets and form cliques, the Spear of the Dragon King, as a sub-group of the Giant Dragon Legion, was also quite friendly towards mortals, much like their parent group and sibling group.

Tai Shichen's attitude towards these numerous mortal powers was not harsh. After the initial somewhat warning-like meeting concluded, Tai Shichen privately met and talked with many people. His gentle demeanor calmed many anxious parties.

His gentleness was significant, effectively binding numerous forces.

The first batch of troops and resources quickly arrived.

During this process, Tai Shichen and the Vanguard Army under his leadership were not idle. He personally led the warriors of the Battle Group and the elite of the Alliance in a successful initial counterattack, marking a great start.

This victory instantly reduced the crisis at the Steel Flame Furnace.

Tai Shichen's Vanguard Army directly pierced through the Beastman army that spilled over into the Wangyue Star Domain, disturbing dozens of worlds, and reclaimed Bright Eyes Star, where the seventh exit was located.

This was a node planet, linked between the Wangyue Star Domain and the Omegilia Star Realm, closer to Wangyue. It was once also a Fortress World, but now it was a ruin. The Beastmen almost dismantled the human fortress within, leaving only a few scattered human troops struggling to survive.

Tai Shichen's arrival rescued them, and he, along with the elite of the Vanguard Army, firmly nailed themselves to Bright Eyes Star like a nail.

Their counter-attack naturally drew nearby Green Skins returning to encircle. Meanwhile, Beastman troops spreading from Omegilia also targeted Bright Eyes Star as their first objective.

But this situation was exactly what Tai Shichen anticipated.

Bring all the pressure from various parties, I'll take it all.

By blocking the entrance of Beastman infiltration into the Wangyue Star Domain and attracting the Beastman already within the domain to come and encircle, the pressure in other areas naturally reduced significantly.

On one hand, it relieved the pressure on planets invaded by Green Skins, on the other, it created opportunities for the 'Wangyue Legion' to annihilate those Beastmen and reclaim lost territories.

The so-called 'Wangyue Legion' was naturally the local forces of the Wangyue Star Domain, assembled into a local military force.

Tai Shichen indeed put himself in this situation and fully trusted these local forces to fight well and not disgrace their mission.

However, trust was trust, he was not leaving it up to the local Wangyue people to fight alone. That would be equivalent to placing his Battle Group, the Vanguard Army, and the entire Forward Cosmic Domain's situation in the hands of a group not really worth trusting.

The risks were too high.

The main combat power of the Wangyue Legion was indeed formed by local forces, but Tai Shichen left his fourth company commander, Ricardo Lazio, to serve as the temporary commander of this legion. Accompanying him were his entire third company, along with over two hundred warriors remnants from two previously defeated Battle Groups against the Beastman.

These Interstellar Warriors were almost considered part of the Steel Flame Furnace's own troops, but Interstellar Warriors are never easy to subdue. With the arrival of the Alliance, and the full deployment of the Spear of the Dragon King, they naturally accepted the alliance.

Especially after in-depth discussions with Ricardo, the remnants of these two Battle Groups understood the Alliance's strategy towards various groups, further raising hopes to revive their Battle Groups—if relying solely on themselves, the two groups only had about a hundred people each, nearly on the brink of total annihilation.

The only possible way to quickly restore them might be the Alliance.

Despite finding it hard to believe themselves, the Alliance had many similar cases for reference, making it difficult not to trust.

Overall, what they needed to do now was to coordinate well with Ricardo, captain of the Dragon King's Spear third company, and personally engage in eliminating the invading Beastman troops.

This military operation lasted two months, and it could be basically declared that humanity achieved an initial victory.

The most intense battlefield, of course, was Bright Eyes Star. During these two months, the flames of war over this planet never ceased. The Alliance Vanguard Army here, directly confronting the vast numbers of Green Skins, defeated them.

Especially as the actions to clean up Green Skins in the rear achieved results, the pressure on Bright Eyes Star reduced significantly.

Though Beastman troops continually emerged from another direction, at least Bright Eyes Star no longer suffered multi-front attacks, and logistical fleet transportation generally resumed. The engineering team of Steel Flame Furnace reached this world, working diligently to repair and rebuild the planet's defense system.

The main forces of the Wangyue Legion also gradually stationed at Bright Eyes Star, replacing the Alliance Army that fought bitterly for two months.

Tai Shichen's so-called 'Unbreakable Defense Line' completed the first step, which was also the most difficult step.

The Wangyue Star Domain was the most affected by the insect beast war spilling over, with the seventh exit bearing the most pressure. Now, the seventh exit could be preliminarily declared blocked, solving the biggest challenge first, leaving the rest much easier to handle.

Thus, with Ricardo leading the Wangyue Legion, Tai Shichen left them two battalions responsible for the entire Wangyue Star Domain's defense. Ricardo would continue following the successful experience from closing the seventh exit to successively address the problems at the eighth and ninth exits.

The problem shouldn't be large; the eighth and ninth warfare conditions were far less brutal than the seventh exit. The Beastman numbers weren't many, with only three to five worlds each suffering disturbances, blocking them wasn't difficult.

Meanwhile, Ricardo himself led the large portion of the Vanguard Army to the neighboring Yanjiu Star Domain.

In the Yanjiu Star Domain, there were two exits connecting to Omegilia, numbered five and six.

After resolving the Yanjiu Star Domain, Tai Shichen still had three star domains to visit.

Surrounding Omegilia were five star domains that Tai Shichen had to visit each once.

Including Omegilia Star Realm itself, these six star domains were basically the majority of the Forward Cosmic Domain's land. This domain only consisted of nine star domains.

His time was very tight and the tasks were quite significant.

In fact, it could essentially be considered that by solving Omegilia's insect beast issues, the Alliance completed the recovery of almost the entire Forward Cosmic Domain.

According to Tai Shichen's policies, they aimed to form a unified front of these five star domains. Resolving the insect beast war simultaneously indicated the Alliance completed recapturing this unified front, and by then, it was unlikely they could detach from the Dark Side Control Committee system.

As for the remaining three star domains of this domain, they were no longer significant obstacles.

Winning the insect beast war would naturally grant the Expeditionary Force immense legitimacy, and reclaiming the remaining three star domains would likely not require any warfare, achievable through mere notification.

Even without winning. As long as the Expeditionary Force demonstrated a determination to address the major issue of Omegilia, they would acquire support throughout this domain during the war.

At that time, the Expeditionary Force's duty would be to deploy Thunder Torch Towers across various worlds, then consolidate the strength of these worlds, ensuring they would become a part of the Dark Side Control Committee, and potentially even a member of the Alliance.

As long as the Alliance can win the insect beast war.

Chapter 833: Interstellar Blockade

The Insect Beast War of Omgeria is a colossal threat that instills fear across the Cosmos Domain. However, with the arrival of the Alliance's Vanguard Army and their resolute attitude, they managed to secure victory in the seventh exit battle with considerable sacrifices, successfully defending the Steel Flame Furnace. This realization led them to discover that the disaster was perhaps not as insurmountable as imagined, at least not a true apocalypse.

The Alliance's forces, under the leadership of Tai Shichen, arrived as saviors, not calculating every gain and loss. On the battlefield, they often stood valiantly in the most arduous frontlines, plugging the biggest gaps until the crisis was resolved, before handing the defense lines over to locally organized troops for defense.

Not treating their forces as disposable assets or cannon fodder to be thrown to the frontline first gained them considerable favor.

—Although, Tai Shichen hadn't actually considered this. He simply thought from a military standpoint, handing key battles to local troops might create troubles, ultimately requiring him to clean up the mess. It was better to solve the problems from the outset.

He fought for a total of nine months across the five star realms surrounding Omgeria. The construction of the Unbreakable Defense Line was finally proclaimed successful.

The eleven exits of the Omgeria Star Realm to the outside world were entirely blocked. The eleven worlds on the outer side of the Star Realm Tunnel had already fallen under human control, significantly curbing the Green Skin Orcs' overflow.

Of course, this so-called 'blocking' is theoretically incomplete. After all, if the Navy cannot surpass the opponent, and the perturbation points of the Star Realm Tunnel cannot be entirely locked down, the enemy could bypass this difficult planet to attack other places.

However, in confronting the Green Skins and the Insect Swarm, this issue isn't too serious. These two races aren't entirely brainless, but strategically, they rarely choose to bypass immediate targets to attack elsewhere. Facing difficulty, unlike human civil wars or dealing with Chaos Traitors, they don't suddenly traverse the Star Realm Tunnel to migrate to other places. The Green Skins and Insect Swarm usually choose to tackle head-on.

On the other hand, the Alliance also introduced a new technology.

[Cosmic Lock].

It's one of the few highly practical technologies developed by Gu Hang over the past few decades. Its product can create a gigantic device with a diameter of about 900 meters, designed to suppress all subspace-based navigation methods within a radius of one light year around the world where the device is installed.

Once subspace navigation is suppressed, virtually all current interstellar navigation methods are affected.

Old subspace navigation becomes unusable, complicating Chaos invasions; the Star Realm Tunnel essentially utilizes subspace navigation methods, albeit safer. When subspace navigation is forbidden, it becomes inaccessible too. The Green Skins and Insect Race's navigation also relies on subspace.

Of course, conventional navigation methods can still be employed. However, under regular sub-light speed navigation, covering a distance of three light years is far too lengthy, taking up a substantial time frame, often stretching into tens of years.

Such lengthy travel times are hardly acceptable during war. Moreover, venturing out into the uncertain cosmic astronomical conditions makes finding a perturbation point complex, with the risk of getting lost.

Navigating astray in subspace is dangerous. Is the real universe particularly safe? Getting lost in a deserted universe is equally unfavorable.

Placing the Cosmic Lock on a planet essentially means that incoming fleets can't expect to leave. The attacker's sole option is to conduct ground assaults to destroy the Cosmic Lock station and thus conclude the ordeal.

This equipment is expensive, almost comparable to a cruiser. Yet, in terms of strategic value, its worth is remarkably high.

Upon extracting this technology, Gu Hang eagerly ordered the rapid establishment of production lines in the Dragonhawk Star Domain.

So far, there are three production lines, situated in different worlds, with over twenty completed units.

Primarily, they were dispatched to the North Line battlefields for installation in key fortress worlds, blocking the incessant eruptions from the Scarlet Scar that continuously harass and assault the defense lines.

Its impact was substantial; the abruptly invading Chaos Great Enemy was left dumbfounded. They had no choice but to face the complete defenses of a fortress world and launch ground assaults, ultimately meeting their demise against impenetrable defenses, suffering severe setbacks.

Consequently, they either met total annihilation during the fortress world assault or retreated in dismay, utilizing conventional navigation to escape from the Cosmic Lock's encirclement and seek new perturbation points to flee.

Overall, life was tough.

Even though instances of fortress worlds being forcibly breached occasionally occurred, the price the enemy paid was often immense. Moreover, human forces could rely on fortress worlds to hold out for a substantial period. After a Cosmic Lock facility was destroyed, human reinforcements typically arrived shortly thereafter.

With the introduction of the Cosmic Lock as a crucial weapon, the overall stability of the North Line defense significantly improved.

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And after the frontline situation of the North Line stabilized, the production capacity of the Space Blockade Device had a little surplus, so some were distributed to the West Line and Southern Line as well.

In the Omeglia Campaign, this thing could play a big role.

Currently, three worlds that have been attacked by the enemy spilling over from within the Star Domain are already equipped with this device.

From this perspective, the Unbreakable Defense Line has been successfully established from a military standpoint.

On the other hand, from a political standpoint, Tai Shichen's achievements remain outstanding.

He is not annoyed by the plethora of meetings, nor is he unwilling to communicate with mortals. He patiently listens to the needs of dozens of major and minor important factions among the five Star Domains. He tries to satisfy the reasonable parts; for the unreasonable ones, he also has the courage to refuse. Rebels, those who pay lip service, and those who receive what they want but offer nothing in return, are firmly suppressed.

The conflicts between these forces, whether due to interests or century-old feuds, Tai Shichen can balance and suppress well, ensuring that everyone's objectives are aligned and power is focused in one direction.

After receiving detailed reports from the frontline, Gu Hang was a bit surprised.

Such talent among the Interstellar Warriors is truly rare.

It seems that in the future, if there are similar battles that require political leadership, the descendants of the Giant Dragon are an excellent choice.

They are not like the Blood Shark.

Unless it is a pure, destructive military operation, Gu Hang will definitely not let the Blood Shark and Ghost Shark battle groups work alone. A leash must be put around their necks, or else the destruction they cause while ensuring the enemy's defeat will take several times the effort to clean up the mess afterwards.

In this sense, letting the Dragon Battle Group fight wars like the Omeglia Campaign is particularly suitable.

Of course, Tai Shichen's performance probably can't be solely attributed to the Genetic Seeds of the Giant Dragon. His personal contribution is also significant.

Previously, he hadn't paid much attention to him, which was a bit of an oversight.

Most importantly, Tai Shichen was not a new blood Interstellar Warrior cultivated by the Alliance. He was originally the old Battle Group Leader of the Dragon King's Spear.

He was not born of the Alliance, and he never had the chance to attend the Loyal Heir Academy and invest Gift Points for commissar training. Gu Hang is typically a bit wary of such people and doesn't allocate a lot of resources to them.

But this time, Tai Shichen's performance was quite satisfactory to Gu Hang, and in the end, he caused Gu Hang to break his previous principles.

He immediately found Tai Shichen in the Hero Interface and invested Gift Points to raise his level to the limit.

Raising the level surprised Gu Hang again: Tai Shichen's level could be increased to Level 8!

This is quite rare.

However, as he thought before, Tai Shichen's Skill Tree isn't exactly in the classic Interstellar Warrior style.

Most powerful Interstellar Warriors, when their level is increased, reveal attributes related mostly to combat, whether it's firearms, the use of hot weapons, cold weapon combat skills, armor utilization, or movement agility... The specific direction isn't fixed, but it's all for the purpose of combat.

There are also a few with the talent for commanding and leading battles, which reveal some similar skills.

But like Tai Shichen, who has points allocated to political aspects and some traits like charm and charisma, is a rare anomaly.

However, this could also restrict him.

Someone like Alvin, when leveled to Level 7, can reach the rank of Battle Group Champion. For Tai Shichen, it's different.

When not enlightened, he approximately had the highest strength among the Company Champions. Frankly, for a Battle Group Leader, not reaching the Battle Group Champion level is a bit embarrassing. The entire Dragon King's Spear has no top-tier experts at the Battle Group Champion level.

Now, Gu Hang has raised him to Level 8, just barely pushing him to Battle Group Champion.

This means that even if he is pushed to Level 9 in the future, he won't reach the level of an Emperor Champion. At most, he'll be an average Battle Group Champion.

This is largely because his talent is significantly allocated towards non-combat areas.

But there isn't much of an issue.

There are many Interstellar Warriors with high combat skills, but compound talents like Tai Shichen are scarce.

Under his integration, the Unbreakable Defense Line also excelled politically, effectively uniting the surrounding Star Domains.

Combining military and political aspects can truly make it impregnable.

The most dangerous time has passed, and the overflowing enemies have been blocked. At most, a few that slipped through the cracks still rampage across different worlds, but they no longer pose a significant threat. Once the breaches are sealed, it will take time to clean them up step by step.

In the meantime, Tai Shichen and his Dragon King's Spear Chapter are not fighting alone all the time.

Among many local forces, the most notable are the various Starfighter Battle Groups.

In the five Star Domains within the Forward Cosmic Domain, a total of seven battle groups remain 'alive,' but their conditions are not quite ideal. Not to mention being fully staffed, out of the seven groups, only one exceeds five hundred members.

After the arrival of the Dragon King's Spear, Tai Shichen communicated with them individually, privately, and the Alliance's actions in the Magrey Cosmic Domain scared many.

Those who comply prosper, while non-compliers not only face destruction but also gain a terrible reputation.

Moreover, these seven groups bowing now also aim to save their home planets and Star Domains, facing the imminent alien threat.

These reasons combined eventually led them to submit.

Tai Shichen utilizes these battle groups alongside his own, gathering them together. Combined with the Dragon King's Spear itself, at one point, he could command up to 2400 Interstellar Warriors.

However, there aren't that many now.

Mainly because, in the fierce battles of war, the attrition among Interstellar Warriors is significant.

Currently, the strength of Interstellar Warriors he commands is less than 1600.

But this is still a formidable force.

...

In the meantime, Tai Shichen and his Dragon King's Spear Chapter are not fighting alone all the time.

Among many local forces, the most notable are the various Starfighter Battle Groups.

In the five Star Domains within the Forward Cosmic Domain, a total of seven battle groups remain 'alive,' but their conditions are not quite ideal. Not to mention being fully staffed, out of the seven groups, only one exceeds five hundred members.

After the arrival of the Dragon King's Spear, Tai Shichen communicated with them individually, privately, and the Alliance's actions in the Magrey Cosmic Domain scared many.

Those who comply prosper, while non-compliers not only face destruction but also gain a terrible reputation.

Moreover, these seven groups bowing now also aim to save their home planets and Star Domains, facing the imminent alien threat.

These reasons combined eventually led them to submit.

Tai Shichen utilizes these battle groups alongside his own, gathering them together. Combined with the Dragon King's Spear itself, at one point, he could command up to 2400 Interstellar Warriors.

However, there aren't that many now.

Mainly because, in the fierce battles of war, the attrition among Interstellar Warriors is significant.

Currently, the strength of Interstellar Warriors he commands is less than 1600.

But this is still a formidable force.

Chapter 834: Find Me

"Find me."

Li Ang agreed with Mei Zheng's analysis results. He compared it himself for a long time and felt that Wang Su, this top researcher, indeed said these three words before he died.

But for this reason, he felt even more confused.

The words Wang Su said were clearly not self-talk but very clearly a conversation with another person. Looking back at that time, Li Ang had a strong feeling that Wang Su was saying these words directly to him.

"But how could that be possible!" Mei Zheng expressed skepticism. She believed firmly in their lip-reading expert's research results, but this matter seemed too incredible.

"I also find it unbelievable, as I was standing right opposite Wang Su. But between him and me, there was not only a span of several minutes but also a barrier between life and death."

Mei Zheng proposed another hypothesis: "Could there have been another person present at that time?"

This guess was quite reasonable, but Li Ang rejected it.

"Not very likely; otherwise, the review wouldn't have missed it."

"Then... if that's the case, the only remaining possibility is that he was indeed talking to you."

"Which means Wang Su might have some means to predict the future." Li Ang analyzed.

"Although it's still incredible, we can't rule out this possibility. After all, it's not only you who can rewind time to see past events; others may have some magical means to predict the future."

"Following this line of thought, perhaps Wang Su's suicide can be reasonably explained? He might have used future prediction means to see that his future end was more unacceptable than death, so he chose suicide."

"That's a reasonable guess." Mei Zheng agreed, "But what do the words 'Find me' mean?"

Under this question, both of them, who had been bursting with ideas, suddenly got stuck.

After a while, Mei Zheng smiled wryly and said: "I really can’t understand it."

Li Ang exhaled deeply and suddenly proposed an idea: "Isn’t there a possibility that Wang Su isn’t dead?"

"Huh?" Mei Zheng asked full of questions, "You saw his corpse lying in front of you, and you also rewound to see the scene of his suicide, how can you conclude that he might not be dead?"

Li Ang shook his head and said: "It’s just a feeling. Wang Su is someone I’ve investigated a bit. He had the reputation of a genius from a young age, later becoming a top researcher, a senior professor at Times University, with countless achievements. When Divine Bird got the Ancient Immortal Compass and their research department couldn’t make sense of it, they turned to Wang Su for help, showing his status... someone like him, I always felt, wouldn’t easily die."

"It’s merely a feeling, not even a speculation."

"Yes... sigh, the issues end here. Wang Su is dead, the permissions and powers within the Ancient Immortal Compass are completely lost."

Mei Zheng chuckled softly and comforted: "Look at the bright side; we originally aimed to prevent Divine Bird from controlling and deciphering the Sky Net permissions within the Ancient Immortal Compass. And now, the core researcher Wang Su is dead, and we don’t know where the Compass’s power went. From this angle, our goal has already been achieved, right?"

"That may be true, but I still feel uneasy." Li Ang said, "The transfer of the Compass’s power is the scariest part. Did you notice Wang Su’s movements before he committed suicide in the recorded footage? That unobservable action might be the reason the Compass’s power vanished. It likely represents that Wang Su cracked the Compass or transferred its power. The transferred core power of the Compass represents the Sky Net’s permissions. As long as that thing remains unfound, I can’t feel at ease."

Li Ang grew more worried as he spoke.

Mei Zheng stepped forward and embraced him from behind.

"Don’t worry too much, things will come together when they meet; there’s always a way."

"Hmm..." Li Ang nodded but soon realized and calmly freed himself from Mei Zheng’s embrace and then turned to say:

"Though you say that, could you please not take advantage?"

"Hahaha!" Mei Zheng quickly shifted the topic, "What are you planning to do next?"

"I’m going to seek out Pan Dun."

"Find him? You suspect that..."

"Yes, I suspect he betrayed us." Li Ang stated clearly, "From formulating the plan to executing it, the timeframe was short, and the contact from Yunlang was directly made through An Xiuyi, leaving little room for leaks. If I had to point out which part is most insecure, it would be Pan Dun, our go-between."

Mei Zheng frowned and asked: "Did you not exclude Pan Dun from the planning stage? He shouldn’t know much."

"I did exclude him, but what An Xiuyi told him is uncertain."

"Alright, I’ll deploy my people to help you find him."

...

What happened next seemed to further confirm Li Ang’s suspicion.

Pan Dun went into hiding.

By rights, now that Li Ang and An Xiuyi's actions were over, he should have stepped forward to claim his intermediary fee. But when Li Ang tried to make contact, he was unreachable.

He didn't have much time to personally look for someone, but Mei Zheng had enough manpower. She was practically the local tyrant of He Dao District, where the Rebel Army primarily developed their base, notably the most chaotic place in Era City. Similarly, mercenaries at Black Mountain Goat Farm mostly operated in He Dao District, facilitating inevitable close ties between both—whether positive interactions or arising conflicts.

If even Mei Zheng's Rebel Army couldn't find someone at the moment, then Pan Dun was definitely purposely hiding.

There was no way; Li Ang was unable to spend extensive time looking for someone himself, so he had to entrust this matter to Mei Zheng.

He himself returned to the safe house to rest.

He was indeed exhausted from the past period.

However, he was destined not to have a good rest.

That night, he had a dream that he remembered vividly upon waking the next day.

He dreamed of Wang Su.

Chapter 834: Proving Myself

On Bright Eyes Star, the major fortress clusters housing the Cosmic Lock are under heavy assault, with large areas already fallen.

The thunderous cannon fire fell upon them, and even though Ricardo and the others stayed inside solid defensive fortifications, they could feel the ground trembling.

But this didn’t affect Ricardo at all.

He carefully inspected his weapon.

Even though he had checked it many times, this was still his habit before setting out. He used this method to relax his mind and body.

"Captain Ricardo, there’s no chance of victory in this operation."

The person trying to persuade him was named Liu Se, from the Wangyue Knight Battle Group. Just by the name, it was clear that this was a native Interstellar Warrior Battle Group of the Wangyue Star Domain, with a history of about two thousand years; its mother group was the Golden Knight Legion. When the Beastman war broke out in Omgeria, they bravely accepted assistance requests from brother battle groups within the Star Domain, dispatching three companies to participate in the war — at that time, they had less than five hundred soldiers. And those three companies, not a single person returned, including the Battle Group Leader.

The hundred or so remaining Wangyue Knights elected Liu Se as the acting Battle Group Leader, joining the Alliance’s front line. After the establishment of the Unbreakable Defense Line, Liu Se’s task was to cooperate with Captain Ricardo of the Spear of the Dragon King, to defend the three exits of the Wangyue Star Domain.

At the moment, they were both located at one of the three exits, specifically the seventh exit on Bright Eyes Star, which had always faced the greatest military pressure.

But now, Bright Eyes Star was on the brink of collapse.

The Beastmen had already broken in, and despite exhausting all options, they had been forced to retreat over the span of a month, eventually holding at this final core fortress.

No more retreat was possible, behind them was the Space-time Locking Device. If this were destroyed by the Green Skin Orcs, then this massive Beastman Army, capable of crushing Bright Eyes Star within a month, would overrun the Wangyue Star Domain, causing unforeseeable destruction.

And as Commander, Ricardo Lazio, at this final moment, decided to gather all remaining mobile forces and perform a decapitation strike against the enemy's commander, the Beastman Warlord known as 'Ulu'.

Ulu was reckless but truly powerful. He enjoyed fighting on the front line and had personally slain at least ten Combat Brothers from different battle groups over the past month.

No scouting was needed for his position; his flag stood at the forefront of the assaulting fortress.

But what of it?

It's still extremely difficult to kill him.

Ricardo's so-called last gamble, Liu Se was not optimistic about.

The success rate was too low.

"So what do you think we should do?" Ricardo asked.

"Break through, retreat." At this point, Liu Se didn't hold back any longer, straightforwardly offering his opinion, "Try to preserve mobile forces, save as many lives as possible, retreat to the ships and return to the Wangyue Star Domain. We still have hope, we can resist layer by layer within the Wangyue Star Domain until Lord Tai Shichen returns to aid us."

Ricardo shook his head slightly: "I'm not going to spout nonsense about being deserters or losing glory. Anyway, the Alliance doesn't care about that; winning the battle is being a true hero. But I have to say, even retreating doesn't have much chance of success, most likely everyone will still sacrifice their lives on the retreat path. Rather than that, it's better to make one last effort while we still have strength, perhaps we can seize a sliver of life."

"But..."

Ricardo interrupted Liu Se's words, smiling as he spoke: "Moreover, if I lead the charge, it would better create chances for your breakout."

"Captain Ricardo! That's not what I meant!" Liu Se was anxious; he wasn't afraid of death.

"I know, I know." Ricardo just smiled, "Relax, just like I understand your suggestion as a rational choice rather than fear of death; but of course, you also have to understand me, not making a desperate move in hopelessness, you have to trust that I have carefully thought this through to make this decision."

"This is the best choice: In the face of life and death, we inspire the greatest courage, to fight for even the smallest chance of victory, which is better than doing nothing at all. Meanwhile, even if our sacrifice does not achieve victory, at least we must leave seeds behind, and that is your responsibility, Battle Group Leader Liu Se. I highly anticipate you can lead the thirty warriors I've selected from three battle groups, to leave the Bright Eyes Star System alive, and in the future defense of the Wangyue Star Domain, minimize human losses."

Liu Se felt immensely ashamed and responded, "I can take on the duty of drawing the enemy's attention; you lead the retreat. You surviving carries greater significance than me. You are the leader of the Expeditionary Force at the Wangyue Section of the Unbreakable Defense Line..."

Ricardo shook his head, saying: "No, it won't be. The fact that this Beastman Army descended upon Bright Eyes in such vast numbers is one thing, but our rapid collapse isn't entirely without our own reasons."

At this point, he snorted coldly and continued, "The promised Knight Order from the Steel Flame Furnace arrived less than 60%; the troops dispatched by Mercenary Queen Tristan were inadequately equipped; she claimed that fifteen planets that should have paid her financial dues didn't, leaving her insufficient funds to arm her forces; Komeir Sisterhood listened to instructions but didn't follow orders... The Wangyue Star Domain, disappointing."

Liu Se's face showed a guilty expression.

He was a Wangyue Person, and the behavior of those fellows made him embarrassed to be associated.

"We're from the Alliance, not Wangyue People; due to the unique circumstances here, we had no way to enact the Expeditionary Force's usual subjugation policies to clean up the situation first. Such occurrences were foreseen. But you're different, Liu Se, you're a Wangyue Person, it'll be easier for you to garner support than me. So, promise me, survive, then guard the Wangyue Star Domain with its people. Finally, when the Alliance's main force arrives, punish those traitors, and don't spare those who got us killed."

Upon hearing this, Liu Se could only nod.

Then, he heard Ricardo Lazio sighingly utter:

"I, as Captain of the Third Company of Spear of the Dragon King, once during the war group's pre-Alliance days, mistakenly followed Iron Armor Battle Group as traitors, it was I alone who persuaded many people, including our Battle Group Leader, to switch sides and join the Alliance. Over many years, I have harbored doubts about this decision. I firmly believe in the correctness of everything the Alliance has done. But what I doubt is whether everything I've done aligns with what an Interstellar Warrior should steadfastly hold. At that time, whether my actions carried even a hint of yielding to power just to save my own life?"

"For many years, I've struggled to offer myself a definite answer. I desperately wish to say with certainty: not at all, my heart was wholly for the Empire, for humanity, for the future of the battle group. But I can't quite say it."

"And now, the present moment is a perfect chance, allowing me to prove all this."

Unable to hold back, Liu Se said, "You don't need to prove your loyalty to anyone, Captain Ricardo..."

"No, I need to. At least, at least, I need to prove it to myself."

Chapter 835: Armor Strikes Back

Ricardo did not choose to launch an attack from the air.

In the previous battles, many aircraft were lost, and now humanity has basically lost air superiority. Flying out on aircraft is extremely risky, as it is very easy to get intercepted before even approaching the target by the enemy's anti-air fire or the much larger number of Beastman aircraft and airships, which would be deadly.

It's better to mount a ground assault.

The ground forces mobilized by Ricardo were almost the last mobile force he could muster. The only remaining Warhound Titan and six Knight Mechas formed the core assault force. Alongside them were fourteen Alliance Holy Sword Heavy Tanks, and a total of one hundred Lion King Tanks and Lion Tanks. Accompanied by numerous armored vehicles, of various types, ranging from wheeled assault artillery to anti-aircraft vehicles, armored infantry fighting vehicles, and troop carriers—everything was available. Together with approximately six thousand elite ground soldiers working with the armored vehicles, they composed the main forces of this operation.

Although the absolute numbers were not large, each soldier was highly skilled and elite.

Their task was to execute a decapitation strike, rather than a comprehensive battlefield confrontation. In the situation where the front lines had already collapsed, gathering more numbers held little significance.

In reality, if this operation were to succeed, it would primarily rely on the fifty or so Interstellar Warriors personally led by Ricardo.

The other troops' primary mission was to deliver Ricardo and his warriors to the front of the Beastman Warlord Ulu.

The tightly sealed fortress gates suddenly opened.

The Beastman army that was fiercely attacking the gates and the adjacent wall paused in confusion.

They had no doubts about achieving ultimate victory, but why did these shrimp open the gates themselves?

Regardless, it was a great opportunity!

The impatient Green-skinned Boys were tired of exchanging shots with the shrimp through the walls.

They eagerly howled as they rushed towards the gates, but what awaited them was a fierce barrage of artillery fire, sending them flying.

The intensity of this artillery fire was not uncommon at the start of the war. Back then, the human defenders had ample ammunition reserves and plenty of artillery. But as the war progressed, more and more human artillery fell silent for various reasons. The primary reason being the Beastmen's suppression of human artillery positions, destroying quite a few.

When heavy firepower was no longer enough to contend with the Beastmen, the humans wised up. They reduced firing frequency, changed locations after every shot, and focused on concealment when building artillery positions... These tactics indeed extended the survival time of human artillery units, but significantly reduced frontline support.

The sudden intense shelling of the present had not been seen for some time, causing the Beastman units charging towards the fortress gates to suffer heavy losses when caught by surprise.

However, the Beastman leader in charge of the frontline did not worry.

This was merely the shrimp's last weak resistance!

He yelled orders to the rear, demanding a counterattack on the exposed human artillery positions, whether done by their heavy artillery units or airborne forces.

Simultaneously, he pushed his Beastman Boys to keep attacking without regard for casualties.

The opening of the gates was a rare opportunity, though the reason was unknown, such a chance should not be missed.

He even threw in all his reserve forces.

It was a Beastman armored unit, made up of heavy armored trucks cobbled together from various mechanical wreckage, haphazardly mounting large-caliber heavy artillery. A few killing jars and Skugg War Behemoths were interspersed among them.

He aimed to rush into the fortress in one go and claim the honor of being the first to break through. Then, he would receive commendations from the Warlord, his body filled with more Waaagh energy making him bigger, stronger, and more capable of fighting.

Harboring such dreams, the human forces that poured out of Dong Kai's fortress gate shattered his fantasy.

The Holy Sword Heavy Tank was the first to catch his eye.

He had seen them before, they were big, tough, and hard to destroy. The few that got blown up were dragged back, reassembled, and turned into super cool heavy truck-based combat vehicles, much stronger than regular trucks. Even some fragments would spark competition among multiple leaders.

Such good things appearing right in front of him?

The two that rolled out side by side looked like huge fortunes to him!

But soon, there were more pairs, and more pairs... The heavy tanks that rolled out fired their main guns directly into the Beastman units. The four auxiliary heavy cannons posed a deadly threat to the ordinary combat trucks.

Even the largest Skugg Beast, after taking a heavy cannon shot to the side of the neck, staggered. The furious Beast turned its head, roaring with its bloody mouth wide open at the human forces, but the next shell found its mark in its mouth, flattening its head.

Following the Holy Sword Tanks, numerous Lion Tanks and Lion Kings emerged. Their main guns targeted killing jars and combat trucks, while co-axial machine guns and small-caliber secondary guns cleared the charging Beastman light infantry.

The battlefield became a blur of blood and gore.

The team the Beastman leader pushed forward to break into the fortress did not achieve their goal; instead, they were pushed back by the human armored force.

In a fit of rage, the Beastman leader raised his War Axe, and summoned his trusted aide and his most elite heavy Beastman warriors, intending to countercharge.

However, the larger force emerging behind the tanks shattered his resolve further.

This was the Knight Mecha squad led by the Titan.

The already wobbling Beastman forces collapsed completely.

Even the Beastman leader had to flee alongside them.

But how could he escape?

Riding in a vehicle, Ricardo had long set his sights on him.

Shouting for the vehicle to accelerate, he jumped off when they were less than a thousand meters apart, leading dozens of Spear of the Dragon King warriors in a fierce charge.

Fiercely they cut down the approaching Beastmen units, like a sharp spear piercing through relentlessly.

Ricardo himself caught up with the Beastman leader.

The fully armored, larger-than-Ricardo-in-Terminator-Armor Beastman leader turned, raising his War Axe for a final desperate struggle against Ricardo.

But with just one exchange, the company leader's Thunder Hammer knocked the War Axe aside.

With another swing, the defenseless Beastman leader's head was smashed to pieces.

Chapter 836

There was no doubt that Ricardo had achieved a brilliant victory.

After the armored units emerged from the gate, they not only completely routed the orc army attacking the fortress gate, but also beheaded the enemy's commander on the spot.

For the orcs, the death of their commander had a particularly significant impact. The remaining orc attack forces, which were still considerable in number, immediately collapsed.

Any way you look at it, it was a grand victory.

However, on the battlefield of the entire planet, a victory of this scale is still far from enough to change the course of the war.

Victories like this one might need to be won a hundred times, or even hundreds of times, to completely turn the tide of the battle.

But is that even possible?

No, Ricardo knew this all too well.

Stowing away the Mjolnir, there was no trace of excitement on his face as he urged his troops to continue the attack.

For a long stretch afterward, they didn't encounter any more or stronger enemies.

The previously routed orc unit clearly made the path ahead much easier.

But what was the cost?

The cost was that the fortress gate was breached.

The orc counterattack actually came very quickly. Although it was quite difficult to intercept the advancing human armored units from the front, their actions had clearly drawn the attention of the orc command center.

Orc forces had already begun encircling their rear.

This force, purposefully redirected from the orc command center, easily took the main fortress gate.

After the armored units exited, the open gate was naturally closed again. However, the human artillery positions, which were exposed while covering the armored units' sortie, were later decimated by orc aerial attacks and concentrated artillery counter-attacks.

Lacking the fire support of heavy artillery, the gate couldn't be held.

Although losing control was bound to happen eventually, the fall of the last line of defense at the fortress still weighed heavily on Ricardo's heart.

He could only console himself that after deploying forces to attack the main fortress, the number of orcs coming to encircle his troops might not be so numerous, right?

Perhaps this was also a good thing.

Even though it meant the Space-time Locking Device would certainly be destroyed, it was something that couldn't be held. Sacrificing something that couldn't be held to facilitate smoother actions was presumably worth it.

However, just thinking about it doesn't actually mean their actions would be so smooth.

The Green Skin Orcs were more numerous and more elite than imagined.

When two or three towering orc King Kongs, death machines, and war beasts appeared on the battlefield, the human armored units' assault became even more challenging.

In terms of both quantity and quality, the enemy's armored units surpassed those of the humans. Winning a head-to-head battle wasn't certain, let alone achieving a direct breakthrough.

But Ricardo did not give up.

Even if blinded by the situation, it could be considered within his expectations.

After issuing a final command requiring the entire unit to advance ferociously regardless of the cost or casualties, he quietly departed with the Interstellar Warriors, each boarding a few Rhino Assault Transports separate from the main force.

On the front battlefield, the armored units of both sides clashed like two streams of steel, fighting fiercely. Priceless giant war machines were annihilated in the brutal battle, reduced to shattered scrap metal.

And the squad led by Ricardo, skirting around the front, did indeed face much less pressure. The fierce frontal combat held considerable allure for the combative orcs.

At this moment, the units Ricardo encountered were more often small support units or those going to 'spectate'.

With his strength, along with fifty Interstellar Warriors, they cut through these small units one after another.

During the breakthrough, Ricardo's Thunder Hammer swung countless times, with numerous Beastmen reduced to pulp under his Warhammer. His once green and white power armor had long been stained, unrecognizable beneath the orcs' blood.

And it wasn't just him; his Combat Brothers behind him were the same.

On this path of slaughter, the fifty Combat Brothers were constantly decreasing.

The orcs weren't an easy race to deal with, even the most ordinary Beastmen, wielding the simplest of guns, rifles, or ordinary machetes and War Axes, posed a threat to Interstellar Warriors in direct confrontation.

One, three, five of them at a time weren't a problem, but when the Interstellar Warriors faced dozens of continuous assaults, it was a different story.

These so-called small units of orcs may be 'small', but often number in the hundreds to thousands.

Each time they broke through encirclement, one or two Combat Brothers would often be left forever, unable to break free.

However, this wasn't the worst of it.

As the battles here continued, their breakthrough direction also became the 'event' itself, attracting even more orc units.

They began facing even more battles.

And as their numbers dwindled, the speed of the breakthrough slowed, making it easier to be surrounded.

In this process, silently, a Combat Brother would vanish without a trace.

But Ricardo had no time for anything else.

...

Chapter 837: Everything Must Be Settled

Ricardo no longer had any of his combat brothers by his side.

He let out a bitter laugh, knowing that despite giving his all, the inevitable end had still come.

Though, this was expected.

He knew that the success rate of this assault was not high, and the real value was in a fight to the death. Failing was the far more likely outcome.

For this reason, he felt only calm in his heart.

He slightly raised his head to gaze at the sky, which had turned yellowish.

He couldn’t even count the number of green-skinned elites that had died under his hammer. Dying on the battlefield like this didn’t seem so bad after all.

"Hmm?"

Raising his head, Ricardo noticed the flag representing the Beastman warlords was surprisingly close to him.

But this shouldn’t be the case.

Earlier, he observed it clearly and knew he no longer had the strength to charge forward. The path he carved through shouldn't have brought him this close to their lines.

Did Ulu come voluntarily?

Just as he was thinking this, the beastmen who had stopped attacking him suddenly parted to the sides, creating a path before his eyes.

An incredibly burly Beastman warlord emerged from the crowd. His entire body was enveloped in blackened red steel, and the super heavy armor fitted on him made him appear almost as large as a Dreadnought Mech among the Interstellar Warriors.

That must be Ulu himself.

Ulu stood only thirty to forty meters away; for them, this distance was close, almost just a thought, one charge, and one could reach the other faster than raising a gun to fire.

Ulu raised the gruesome long-handled saber in his hand with admiration and pointed it at Ricardo, saying a few words aloud.

The Beastman language, Ricardo couldn't understand.

But he still understood the beast's intention.

It seemed to be offering him a chance for a fair one-on-one duel.

Although he had already exhausted much energy and sustained injuries fighting his way here, while the opponent was rested, such a duel hardly seemed fair.

Yet, Ricardo still smiled with delight.

The opponent could have used countless minions to overwhelm him to death but chose to duel instead; it undoubtedly was an opportunity.

He tightened his grip on his warhammer, exhaled deeply, and after making all preparations, roared and charged at Ulu with all his might.

The raised Mjolnir, carrying his most resolute will, descended upon Ulu, heavy and swift.

Ulu also struck with full force, the long-handled saber swinging upwards. Though appearing wild and ferocious, his skills were extraordinarily refined. He precisely measured the timing, the saber avoiding Mjolnir's hammerhead, slicing into the joint between the hammerhead and handle.

In this moment, as if seizing a lifeline, Ricardo's concentrated power diminished significantly right before the hammer strike, leaving him uncomfortable and acutely aware of the immense danger.

He released his grip on the warhammer, intending to draw a firearm to push back the enemy, but Ulu swiftly turned the momentum of the saber, slamming the hilt's end against his face.

He barely dodged, only to then receive a solid kick from Ulu squarely in front.

With overwhelming force, Ricardo was knocked to the ground. He struggled to get up but was pinned down again by the same large foot upon his chest.

With new and old injuries combined, he couldn't hold back, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

In a daze, he seemed to hear Ulu saying something, but the Beastman language remained incomprehensible.

Yet, he could at least see the long saber raised high, ready to fall.

...

"You’re certainly a warrior worthy of respect; if only you were a bit stronger, it would be better."

With that said, the saber fell, beheading him, Ulu sheathed the saber.

He casually instructed someone to handle the corpse, then issued a new command:

"Have the lads keep attacking, those shrimps can’t hold on. I need to leave this world before dawn. The Bone Shattering King is nearly here, his orders are for us to break through, grow more mushrooms, and reinforce our troops. The Bone Shattering King’s orders are mandatory!"

...

Exit number seven exploded.

Bright Eyes Star was entirely lost, and Ricardo Lazio, the third company commander of Spear of the Dragon King stationed there, gave his life for the country.

From him onwards, only a dozen warriors, including those in the two ragged battalions on Wangyue Star Domain, managed to withdraw.

Upon receiving the news, Tai Shichen immediately led the main forces, hurrying to Wangyue Star Domain.

Along the way, the continuously updated intelligence allowed Tai Shichen and you to quickly piece together the entire battle scenario and understand the approximate cause of the explosion.

The first objective reason and biggest cause of the defeat was the formidable enemy.

This time, a robust Green-skinned Legion erupted from the Omegilia Star Realm.

Simultaneously, observers from other Star Domains just conveyed the information that the situation in the Omegilia Star Realm might have undergone major changes. A new Beastman army arrived from the outside, likely utilizing traditional Subspace jumps or some unknown method to reach Omegilia, bypassing the Unbreakable Defense Line.

The legion that attacked Bright Eyes Star was likely part of this newly arrived Beastman reinforcement.

They not only possessed a massive fleet and extravagant troop numbers, but their leading Beastman warlord was exceedingly strong. During the ground attack, the powerful warlord named 'Ulu' personally fought at the front lines.

Ricardo Lazio, as the human commander and the strongest combatant on their side, made a desperate move during the extremely unfavorable battlefield situation: leading a team to launch a decapitation strike against the fearsome Beastman warlord.

Ultimately, he was defeated.

Tai Shichen knew that the defeat could not be blamed on Ricardo.

His decision was not a grave mistake, but the vast disparity in strength made the correct strategy futile, forcing a desperate strike that ultimately failed.

But why was there such a huge disparity in strength?

This was a question that set Tai Shichen ablaze with anger.

The Green Skins' strength was certainly a primary objective factor, but he also received word that individuals from Wangyue Star Domain, after he led the main force away and established the Unbreakable Defense Line, after preliminary safety measures were in place, acted out of self-interest.

Those with hidden motives perhaps dared not oppose the Alliance, but leveraged the war to weaken others, preserving their strength, striving for more voice within the Star Domain, hoping for more negotiation chips when fully joining the Dark Side Control Committee and the Alliance in the future.

They had the courage to do this.

On the journey back, Tai Shichen often wondered, if everything had gone according to standard, if the defense forces and facilities promised to Bright Eyes Star were adequately completed, would Ricardo have held out until the reinforcements he led arrived?

Perhaps not still.

The events that have occurred cannot be assumed in retrospect.

Nonetheless, Tai Shichen was determined not only to resist, eliminate the invading Green-skinned army, retake Bright Eyes Star, and repair the Unbreakable Defense Line, but to also not let go of those in Wangyue Star Domain who caused Ricardo's death.

All responsibilities must be settled.

Chapter 838: "Treasure

Wang Keren hastily fled from the Steel Flame Furnace.

Indeed, he was the Founding General of the Steel Flame Furnace, and it was his stronghold. If it weren't for the hopeless situation, he wouldn't have left his lair.

But now, it had reached a point where there was no other way.

The Beastman Army that conquered Bright Star was too fierce.

At the beginning of the battle, nobody realized that the invading enemy was so powerful. By the time the situation quickly deteriorated, it was too late to react.

In Wang Keren's view, the culprit for the rapid collapse of the Bright Star battle was Ricardo Lazio.

Wangyue Star Domain provided so many resources to Bright Star, yet that guy couldn't hold it for even half a month before losing Bright Star. He was utterly unforgivable!

He wasn't aware of any fault of his own in the matter.

Just as he did not think there was any problem with being the Founding General of the Founding World and evacuating with the most elite guard and many warships, including the Mechanical Ark, when the enemy was advancing.

The entire Steel Flame Furnace was his possession, his most precious treasure. He was already heartbroken enough to abandon his treasure, so who had any right to accuse him of anything in such times?

Could the Steel Flame Furnace hold out when even Bright Star fell in such a short time?

It's hard to say.

Even if they could hold out at the cost of the entire place turning into scorched earth, staying at the Steel Flame Furnace was risky for him. It's said that the Beastman Overlord was extremely powerful, and if he led an elite force to raid the palace he was in, he could not assure that he would withstand it. He might very well die.

Leaving with the most elite troops and the most precious ships was to preserve vitality. As long as the people and the Mechanical Ark were intact, even if the Founding World was lost, they could perhaps rebuild a new Founding World somewhere else. Even though it would be much smaller and take many years to develop to the scale of the Steel Flame Furnace, it was still something that had to be done.

It's better than the people, ships, and the world perishing together, right?

As for the many people left on the Steel Flame Furnace... There was no way around it. Time was tight, and with limited ships, Wang Keren couldn't possibly take everyone away from the planet.

Moreover, they could just as well remain on the planet, utilizing the Steel Flame Furnace's comprehensive defense system as a Founding World, to maneuver and resist the Beastman Army, layer by layer.

He hoped they could hold out until the Alliance Army led by Tai Shichen arrived, and even more so that by then, the Steel Flame Furnace would still be relatively intact.

By then, he would return and take back his treasure.

Wasn't it natural for the Founding General to reclaim his Founding World?

For now, the most urgent matter was still to find a suitable foothold. This place had to facilitate their operations at the opportune moment.

If the Beastmen broke through all the remaining defenses of the Wangyue Star Domain, and even the Alliance Army led by Tai Shichen couldn't stop them, then this place must be suitable for immediate escape.

If the Steel Flame Furnace could be reclaimed, this place would also need to accommodate his fleet for a swift return and retrieval of his treasure.

The location selection required careful consideration!

He had already gathered his aides and the Principal Sages for two meetings, but the proposed locations did not satisfy him.

After all, this matter was not just about selecting a location but also included a series of subsequent action plans, which had to be executable and imaginative.

In a foul mood, Wang Keren had been irritable for several days.

Today was the third meeting.

He still felt the plans weren't particularly good, and he berated everyone in the meeting.

But he himself did not have any better ideas.

In the end, it seemed he could only forcefully choose one from the existing plans.

Just as he hesitated between a few proposals, the doors of the conference hall were suddenly pushed open.

Wang Keren sharply raised his head.

All those he appointed to attend the meeting had already arrived. Apart from the attendees, he didn't recall permitting anyone else to enter the conference hall at this time.

He saw that the person bursting in was Liu Se, the acting Battle Group Leader of the Wangyue Knight Battle Group, one of the few survivors of the Bright Star Campaign—a failure and a deserter.

Beside him were more than ten Interstellar Warriors.

There were warriors from both the Wangyue Knight Battle Group and the Black Fox Blade Battle Group, the latter being one of the native groups from Wangyue Star Domain, sharing a similar fate as the Wangyue Knights.

Only around a dozen Interstellar Warriors managed to retreat from Bright Star, all from these two groups, while all the Spear of the Dragon King warriors perished.

When they retreated to the Steel Flame Furnace, Wang Keren provided protection to these failures, and during the evacuation, considering the combat power of Interstellar Warriors, even though there were only a dozen, they were brought along and treated with a degree of respect.

However...

"Battle Leader Liu Se, the respect I gave you is not a reason for you to disrespect me," Wang Keren said angrily. "This meeting didn't invite you. Please leave."

Liu Se said nothing, merely stepping aside.

From behind him, two teams emerged.

One team consisted of several Dominant Bishops from the Steel Flame Furnace, led by Sage Pirias.

While Pirias was indeed a Sage of the Steel Flame Furnace, Wang Keren didn't like him. Especially after the Alliance arrived, this guy got close to the Alliance, which annoyed him even more.

During the carriage ride, he deliberately didn't inform Pirias. This guy should have been left on the soil of the Steel Flame Furnace, so why was he on the ship?

As for the woman beside Pirias, she was even more unfamiliar to him.

But despite the unfamiliarity, upon looking at the emblem on the woman's right chest, he suddenly recalled some things.

...

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Chapter 839:

Zhang Heyang was stunned.

He knew that Li Ang was a very difficult person to deal with. Especially since he possessed a powerful hacking technique that allowed him to steal his opponent's power, and no one knew how he did it.

However, what he didn't expect was that Li Ang could steal even the power known as the 'Dark Side of Sky Net', in addition to the typical spells and skills.

He didn't know much about the 'Dark Side of Sky Net'; after all, it was a corporate secret, and he wasn't deeply involved in the project, so it was normal not to know it thoroughly.

But from the bits and pieces he did know, this power seemed to originate from a certain trait inherent in the girl Yao Xiaomu. This trait was related to a past secret experiment that the group invested heavily in, which couldn't be replicated. Even his boss, Yao Cheng's power, was essentially developed from research on Yao Xiaomu's trait, resulting in applicable technology.

In other words, without Yao Xiaomu, the 'Dark Side of Sky Net' power wouldn't exist.

But even so, could Li Ang really steal this power for himself?

Back then, at the Blood Crow Clan, Li Ang cut through Yao Xiaomu's Dark Domain with a single strike, neutralizing the power she controlled, which was shocking enough. After the intelligence was brought back, he heard that the company attached great importance to this matter and urgently allocated manpower for preventative technology development.

Yao Cheng had fought Li Ang for so long and had the upper hand, yet Li Ang didn't use the methods he had used before. Zhang Heyang thought the company's preventative measures against this move were already in place.

As it turns out...

Whether that earth-shattering Breaking Sword was still effective was unknown; at least Li Ang wasn't using it because he was waiting here.

Having shattered it, where would he steal this power from?

After Li Ang himself transformed into a Dark Giant, Zhang Heyang clearly understood that this battle was no longer something he could interfere in. Any attack methods he and his brothers possessed were of no use here.

He could only lead the remaining mobile personnel to retreat as far as possible and arrange for the evacuation of Yunlang Group's staff still in the building.

The rest was just watching these two colossal figures battle it out, blow by blow, within the Yunlang Headquarters Building.

This was no longer the top floor of the headquarters building. Boss Yao's office space was very large, and the ceiling was high enough that even transformed into large Dark Giants, they had some room to maneuver.

But below, there wasn't as much space.

The vertical clearance was insufficient, making the Dark Giant's body look a bit squashed and wide.

This further compressed the horizontal space.

The floors below were not as large as the top ones, with various walls and partitions dividing the space into small sections.

But it didn’t matter; for two Dark Giants, these obstacles couldn’t limit their large-scale movements.

The two giants transformed and condensed their dark powers into arms, giant axes, warhammers, and other weapons, but essentially, it was still a pure confrontation of strength against strength. Their massive bodies, with each exertion of force, paid no mind to any obstacles that blocked their swings.

If there were none, that was great, but if there were, they simply smashed everything in their path.

Walls, partitions, furniture, decorations... Everything within this office floor turned into fragile items. As the two colossal figures engaged in fierce combat, these items shattered everywhere. In fact, these fragments were even used as weapons for mutual attacks. The two Dark Giants unconsciously used their dark power to hoist these construction fragments and hurl them at each other.

However, this fighting style was almost ineffective. Not even bullets worked, so these construction fragments hitting the Dark Giant’s body would just bounce off or get completely dissolved by the dark power.

But it didn’t matter, as it was just incidental.

The most important thing was still the pure contest of strength between the two sides.

Between each punch, axe, and hammer, the attributes were similar, but the opposing forces strived to disrupt each other’s structural integrity.

Overall, they were evenly matched. At least from the perspective of Zhang Heyang, the observer, it was impossible to determine which of the two had the current advantage.

Both were so immense, so fierce, so invincible.

Soon, it became difficult for him to completely observe the battle between the two Dark Giants.

The intensity of their fight increased, forcing Zhang Heyang, the observer, to stand farther and farther away, fearing collateral damage. The strikes that could be ignored by them were lethal to him.

And when the fight between these two giants intensified, with several continuous blows smashing against the ground, breaking through another floor, he could no longer see the specific situation of the battle.

The shattered floor, under the chain reaction of powerful forces, broke apart in large chunks, causing both of them to fall down.

Fortunately, there weren't many people below; they had already been evacuated, so there were no innocent casualties. The two of them continued their savage battle, and then another floor was broken through. And then another one...

The more they fought, the weaker Yao Cheng's momentum became, and his resistance against Li Ang grew feebler, gradually falling behind.

At first, he seemed oblivious; under the influence of the 'Dark Side of Sky Net', his mind seemed slightly fried. But as his power dwindled, making him unable to fight Li Ang anymore, the weakening of his strength seemed to restore some sanity.

He began to realize the problem.

He exclaimed in horror, "You... you stole my power?"

His words had a double meaning.

On one hand, it meant Li Ang stole the special spell of the ’Dark Side of Sky Net’, transforming himself into a Dark Giant; on the other, it meant that during the battle, his power was consistently being drained.

Every attack from Li Ang seemed to steal a ’chunk of flesh’ from the Dark Giant surrounding him, converting it into his own power.

Such a battle was undoubtedly unfair, and it was normal for Yao Cheng to gradually become overwhelmed as the fight progressed.

Li Ang didn’t bother wasting words on this matter and just focused on pounding him relentlessly.

However, as he was hammering, he asked another question: "Where is Yao Xiaomu?"

Chapter 839: You Will Be Judged Fairly

"You all...?"

Wang Keren was stunned. Even when the Demon Hunter approached and controlled him, and violently dismantled the mechanical body under his noble robe, he did not resist.

Upon hearing the verdict of treason, he knew he was done for. Although he did not think the loss of Bright Eyes Star was entirely his responsibility, if the Alliance chose to believe that, there was nothing he could do.

Now, if he were arrested, that would be the end. Falling into the hands of the Alliance would be his true downfall. How the Alliance decided to deal with him would depend entirely on their mood, and he had no ability to control his destiny.

But if he resisted successfully, there was still room for negotiation.

He did not know how these Demon Hunters, or the Pirias whom he despised, managed to get onto his Mechanical Ark. But he could guess: Pirias, at least, was a Sage with his own connections; the Alliance had spent the past few months engaging in clandestine activities within the Steel Flame Furnace,

recruiting some people. Coupled with the betrayal of those dozen Interstellar Warriors, it was not entirely unbelievable for them to emerge in front of him.

But he should not have been arrested so easily.

He was a Great Sage, equipped with the most advanced technology from the Steel Flame Furnace, further modified by his own expertise, making his configuration exceptionally powerful. This mechanical setup was extremely costly, and when deployed, its combat capabilities were extraordinary. Even if he had no combat experience, it at least put him above the average Company Champion among Interstellar Warriors.

In fact, with sufficient training and combat experience, this equipment could single-handedly take down Insect Nest Tyrants and Orc Warlords. The advantage of this setup was simply overwhelming.

Not only him, but the other Sages present, even if slightly weaker, were not too far behind.

The Dominant Bishops were less capable, but still stronger than average Interstellar Warriors.

A room full of roughly twenty high-ranking members of the Sect of Mechanics was his main support.

The dozen Interstellar Warriors and the Alliance Judge—so-called Demon Hunters, which he saw as indistinguishable from Judges—their strength simply could not compare to the high-ranking members of the Steel Flame Furnace.

Not even Pirias could match them.

As long as they took action, they could quickly eliminate these Alliance lackeys.

If he was not arrested on the spot, there would be room for maneuvering later on.

He was the leader of the Steel Flame Furnace; he had the Mechanical Ark; he had the elite warriors of the Founding World; he had the legitimate claim to the Founding World... All these things had alliance value.

He could pay for his past misdeeds, be forced to yield more benefits to the Alliance. But as long as these core alliance values remained, there was still room for negotiation.

He certainly knew that against the power of the Alliance, revolt would inevitably lead to being crushed. However, how much money and effort would it take them to kill him? That was his bargaining chip and confidence in the negotiations.

Yet, he never expected that the critical link where things shouldn't have gone wrong, went wrong.

While contemplating how to negotiate with the Alliance, Wang Keren saw that none of the high-ranking members of the Steel Flame Furnace took action.

Upon hearing accusations of 'treason,' they all seemed to accept it.

How could he resist under such circumstances?

Even if Wang Keren was fully equipped for battle, what meaning did it have? It was unlikely for him to single-handedly slaughter Pirias, the Alliance Judge, and over ten Interstellar Warriors, all Sages like himself.

Moreover, once the fight began, who knew if his loyal high-ranking Church members would stand by his side or turn against him?

Ultimately, he could only choose to do nothing and surrender.

...

"I object! Why should I be convicted of treason like this? What nation did I betray?" Wang Keren shouted when he saw Tai Shichen fully armored. "Why blame me for the loss of Bright Eyes Star? Despite the Steel Flame Furnace failing to deliver 43% of her equipment, does that decisively impact front-line operations?"

"Even with this 43%, the end result wouldn't change; Captain Ricardo wouldn't be able to hold until you returned!"

"Even so, the Komeir National Church withdrew half of the Battle Nun Association, and the promised food supply wasn't fully delivered... So I'm guilty of treason, but what about the Komeir people?"

"Tristan didn't get the funds she wanted, so she went on strike and took away her mercenary force. What's the account for that?"

"And there's Delin, Prince..." He listed many names, all notable figures in the Wangyue Star Domain, "These people all have issues, so why accuse only me of treason?!"

Tai Shichen listened silently to Wang Keren's defense.

This Great Sage, now stripped of nearly all his martial mechanical limbs, could only lie on the prison bed, unable to move. His anger and unwillingness were evident only through his words and expressions.

Tai Shichen sneered: "I've heard such statements too many times today..."

With a wave of his hand, multiple concealed walls of the prison were opened in front of Wang Keren.

Wang Keren saw that inside several cells before him sat the people he had just cursed.

The most prominent figures of the Wangyue Star Domain were thus gathered in the Spear of the Dragon King's prison.

Tai Shichen remarked: "Each of you claims your actions don’t warrant this. You missed 43% of the standard equipment requirement; 39% of the orbital cannon facilities and fortifications for fort defense weren’t completed on schedule... Even if these were made up, Ricardo truly wouldn’t be able to hold until I arrived. The Komeir people say the same thing, that with the Battle Nuns present, they couldn’t stop the Green Skins; nor could planets that should have contributed more Planetary Defense Forces soldiers to Bright Eyes Star’s defense stop the Green Skins; the same if Tristan’s mercenary group had arrived."

"Each of you believes that even if you did what was required, it wouldn’t impact the outcome."

"Therefore, you calmly devoured we’re supposed to accomplish, watching the entire house collapse!"

"If you all had done what you were supposed to, Bright Eyes Star’s defenses would be twice or thrice as strong as their current state! Would the result still be like this?!"

"You parasites, traitors... heh, the Special Military Tribunal of the Dark Side Expeditionary Command will give you a fair verdict."

"The judgment will certainly be fair and worthy of the heroes who fought bravely on Bright Eyes Star, I assure you."

Chapter 840

Tai Shichen returned to the Wangyue Star Domain, and the first battle he fought was not a military one.

Instead of directly confronting the advance of the Green Skin Orcs, he first took on major figures like the Founding General, State Archbishop, Star Domain Head, and Mercenary Queen, along with dozens of Star Zone Leaders and Planetary Governors, all of whom were detained.

Objectively speaking, these people’s indecisiveness and self-serving agendas were things Tai Shichen had long anticipated.

Not only is the Wangyue Star Domain this way, but the other five star domains surrounding the Omgeria Star Realm, forming the Unbreakable Defense Line, are also acting similarly.

Looking back, throughout the Alliance's Dark Side Expedition, things have been like this. In any place where the original ruling class of a planet, not yet subjected to Alliance reform, still holds most of the power, this is invariably the case.

This is human nature; it's all very normal. Those rulers, before relinquishing their power, especially when they can passively or actively realize that their authority will inevitably vanish due to the ongoing Dark Side Expedition, will naturally use their 'final madness' to do something.

Only after the world's main production and violence have been taken over by the Alliance through reforms can things calm down.

The outcomes for these original rulers vary. Some are content 'as wealthy merchants'; others integrate actively into the Alliance system, fighting for it, and seeking new interests and hopes in the new environment of the system.

These could be considered good outcomes.

But there are also those, perhaps because their actions before joining the Alliance were too egregious or because they still continuously provoked trouble after joining, who were ultimately settled with and ended up in a miserable state.

Tai Shichen once wished for a good outcome for the Wangyue Star Domain, and even for the many surrounding star domains and worlds of the Unbreakable Defense Line.

Joining together, facing the alien enemy threatening everyone's safety, fighting hard and achieving victory, during which the Alliance provides strong support and gradually transforms these worlds. The ruling classes and elites on the planets and within star domains actively integrate into the Alliance... isn't this the best outcome?

Unfortunately, there are always those who want to stir things up.

Upon arriving in the vicinity of the Omgeria Star Realm, Tai Shichen initially did not take a determined stance to deal with these local forces mainly because he wanted to make a conciliatory start, and

secondly because his forces were initially too sparse. The alien threat spilling out from the Omgeria Star Realm was quite fierce and urgently needed handling.

Uniting and mobilizing local forces to solve local issues has always been a set strategy of the Alliance's Dark Side Expedition. After all, the Alliance has a manpower abundance but also more problems to solve. Being able to save a bit and use the Alliance's main strength wisely is more efficient.

And after his forces were reinforced by the Western Expedition Army Command, making them abundant, the previously forced compromise strategy changed.

The Alliance reform and absorption of local forces have actually begun within the five star domains surrounding Omgeria.

But unfortunately, the Wangyue Star Domain was the first to have an incident before that.

This lesson must be learned.

Tai Shichen had already issued orders requiring the other four star domains to enhance their support for defense planets at various exits. The degree of planned troop strength, defense construction, and weapon supply must be implemented without any delay, or face the military tribunal.

This is no joke. After the incident in the Wangyue Star Domain, the elites of other star domains naturally felt uneasy. Over the past few months, the Alliance reform in those four star domains has at least started. Some 'special envoys', 'economic experts', 'military advisors', and such roles have certain control over planets. If any particular world or force fails to meet the construction requirements for the Unbreakable Defense Line, Alliance agents will sneak in and detain people; or the stationed Alliance army will directly gather and demand they hand over people, with several real examples of individuals being dealt with.

With real processing records in front, after the chickens were killed, the remaining monkeys had to behave.

Once they behaved, support for the Unbreakable Defense Line became smooth and unobstructed, and also made the Alliance's various special envoys' reform actions toward these local forces and planets smoother.

Judging from the current situation, those four star domains remain relatively stable. After evaluation, Tai Shichen believes that even if another invasion of the same intensity comes to Wangyue Star Domain's No. 7 exit, they should be able to withstand it, at least until reinforcements arrive.

Now, the remaining big problem is the Wangyue Star Domain itself.

In this case, Tai Shichen has instead let the Beastman army act freely.

The primary reason is to ascertain the main force's location through the Beastman army's operations, especially to find out where the Orc Warlord named "Ulu" currently is.

The secondary reason... If the local force in Wangyue Star Domain doesn't suffer, doesn't accept a heavy penalty, how can they docilely accept the Alliance's strong reforms? How can it serve as a sufficiently strong warning to other star domains?

Of course, Tai Shichen absolutely does not wish for the entire Wangyue Star Domain to be decimated.

According to the initial plan, the offensive against Omgeria requires establishing a comprehensive Unbreakable Defense Line, ensuring the enemy is locked within the star domain; outside the star domain, with Wangyue and another five star domains as the bases, providing sufficient war resources for the future expedition against Omgeria. The Alliance's main force is ready to arrive, leading the auxiliary forces recruited from these five star domains into the star domain, eventually annihilating all the Green Skin Orcs and Insect Race army within.

Under this plan, Wangyue Star Domain cannot be wrecked, otherwise, in future expeditions against Omgeria from this direction, a crucial link will be missing.

And the most important part is the Steel Flame Furnace in the Founding World.

While it is necessary to let Wangyue suffer, the Steel Flame Furnace must not be destroyed by the Green Skins. If it's destroyed, the one suffering will be the Alliance.

Moreover, allowing a Green Skin army to occupy an entire Founding World... Tai Shichen can't even imagine what terrible results would follow. After aliens defile such a large human mechanical technology center, how much will their weapons be enhanced?

Other than the Steel Flame Furnace, other areas can be relaxed somewhat.

However, after humans made such a war strategy, the Green Skins' strategy on the opposite side was quite coincidentally similar.

The Ulu Military Governor was well aware that conquering a Founding World would earn him the true appreciation of the Bone Shattering King.

With this determination, he himself appeared on the battlefield.

However, due to the escape of the Founding General, the morale of the planet's garrison at the Steel Flame Furnace was quite low. Additionally, with the Mechanical Ark taken away, along with the most elite batch of the Protection Army, the defense forces were severely lacking.

In the ground battles, the Sect of Mechanics' forces were pushed back continuously.

Even when Wang Keren was judged, and Pirias, carrying the will of the Alliance, led the Mechanical Ark and the Sect of Mechanics' elite back to the Steel Flame Furnace to re-engage in battle, they couldn't change the tide of the war.

An escalation on this battlefield was inevitable.

Especially after Ulu appeared, Tai Shichen saw no need to hold back.

He decisively committed his main forces into the battle at the Steel Flame Furnace.

...

The Battle Group Leader removed his helmet and, through the deep red filter of the orbital scanner, could clearly see Ulu's war machine—a moving fortress pieced together from thirty Battle Fortresses engulfed the entire foundry area. Mushroom spore cultivation tanks spread outward like a cancerous tissue from the Furnace Core, while Green Skin mechanics used rusty hydraulic pincers to weld the Protection Army's mechanical arms to the base of the killing jar.

And the war banner representing Ulu himself was within that moving fortress.

Ulu was going all out.

It was now the second month since Tai Shichen led the main forces landfall.

The combat strength of the Alliance Vanguard he led was still strong enough. His fleet, working in full cooperation with the Mechanical Ark, had almost entirely expelled the Green Skin's space forces.

At this point, Ulu should have realized that his assault on the Steel Flame Furnace had failed.

However, that Orc Warlord clearly refused to accept this result.

And the consequence was that his ground troops, which barely maintained an offensive posture, were suppressed as soon as the Alliance Vanguard landed. Now, they also face even more fierce space attacks, making it even harder.

Defeat was already inevitable...?

Ulu still didn't think so.

The Orc Warlord made a reckless gamble, putting all his available forces, including himself, on the line.

The Green Skin War Fortress was not far from the core Founding City of the Founding World.

His charge indeed posed significant trouble for the human defenses, causing the human army to waver at one point.

But under Tai Shichen’s orders, the human defenses deliberately opened up, allowing this terrifying monster to close in freely.

Come on, come on, this is the death ground I prepared for you.

At a vantage point close enough to see the target, the Battle Group Leader’s white-green battle armor glimmered coldly on the dim bridge as Tai Shichen’s voice caused the metallic dust in the air to slightly tremble: "Two companies are to conduct a surprise attack from the south, I need you to cripple 80% of the Green Skin’s armor production within twenty-four hours."

"And you, sir?" someone asked.

"I will lead the remaining troops to personally confront that loathsome beast under orbital cover."

As he turned, his cloak swept over Ricardo’s genetic code on the data board.

The hydraulic gates of the underground pipeline slowly opened amidst corrosive steam, allowing the elite troops of the Spear of the Dragon King to file out.

The Spiritual Energy Long Sword of Intelligence Director Modeller Lazio illuminated the wall’s defaced God of All Machines relief, originally a solemn emblem of the Sect of Mechanics, now altered to a grinning Beastman face, with glowing green viscous liquid seeping from the gears.

With just a slight exertion, all the desecrated images were wiped away.

This person who shared the same last name as Ricardo was indeed related—Modeller was Ricardo's uncle.

He was proud of his nephew.

Even if Ricardo died, he died as a warrior, there was nothing more to say.

And now, it was his turn to avenge his nephew as a warrior.

...