Governor 951

Chapter 951: Unequal Treaty

The progress of the offensive on Comoros isn't stagnant; it's characterized by a slow advance.

However, this isn't the core reason prompting the Alliance to compromise.

The most critical reason lies in the internal turmoil.

Raiding teams from the Dark Spirit Race have departed from their controlled ports to the real universe. The Alliance governs tens of thousands of worlds, with each of the five main armies having their own war objectives, gathering in various strategic directions. Yet, the internal territory of the Alliance isn't devoid of military power.

Firstly, there are the Planetary Defense Forces of each planet. Despite being under the overall strategy of the Alliance Military Department, the training level of local defense forces on each planet is much stronger and better equipped than during the era of the Empire. However, they still don't compare to the regular Alliance Army.

In confronting the Dark Spirit Race, these Planetary Defense Forces become ineffective.

Nevertheless, the sheer number of defense forces across various planets is still notable. With some equipment eliminated from the Alliance Army and the nobility on the planets, for their own security, industrial safety, and the relatively responsible Planetary Governors appointed by the Alliance, there's an attempt, when possible, to gather funds and assemble a select elite guard.

Though the numbers may not be great, the raiders from the Dark Spirit Race are often fewer, providing some level of resistance.

The situation is worse in terms of naval forces.

The Alliance Navy is certainly strong, but most are deployed at the front lines of the five major armies or tasked with escorting transport ships delivering supplies to the front lines of those armies.

There are some weaknesses in outer space defense forces within the Alliance's internal territory.

Of course, there are some forces present.

Generally, they can be divided into three categories: planetary defense navy, star domain defense navy, and armed merchant ships of the Alliance convoys.

The first category, the planetary defense navy, follows the concept of the Planetary Defense Forces, being navy units that each planet funds and constructs independently. However, many restrictions apply to these planetary navies. Firstly, their establishment requires approval by the Alliance Navy Department and must be under the jurisdiction of the Navy Command.

In theory, the Planetary Defense Forces must also fall under the jurisdiction of the Alliance Military Department, but the differences are significant. Generally, the Alliance Military Department doesn't bother to manage the Defense Forces beyond recruitment. It is seen as the achievement of the Planetary Governor and the Defense Forces Command, perceived as a path to promotion and wealth that they don't resist.

Alliance planetary officials are generally transient officials, which differs greatly from the old Empire where planets were practically the private holdings of the Planetary Governor.

However, it's different with the navy. The Alliance Navy Department not only directly conscripts planetary fleets for frontline combat sequences but also directly issues operational tasks, even appointing and assigning commanders to the planetary fleets.

Moreover, the Alliance Navy Department imposes limitations on the scale of planetary fleets.

Primarily to prevent corruption, and secondarily to guard against rebellion.

After all, the situation on planets is the most unpredictable. Although the likelihood of such situations occurring under the Alliance's rule is lower than elsewhere, it's not negligible. If an incident does occur and a planet's army and navy are well-prepared and strong, the losses could be significant.

Of course, even disregarding these factors, based solely on a planet's financial capacity, it is unrealistic for them to maintain a large-scale naval fleet. Usually, managing a few destroyers with some escort ships to guard against alien pirates is already quite an achievement.

The main defensive power within the Alliance's internal territory still relies on the second category: the star domain navy.

The nature of the star domain navy is similar to that of the planetary fleet, being under the management of the Navy Department, even more strictly than planetary fleets. However, the difference lies in that star domain governments have financial resources to support larger fleets; additionally, the Alliance Central Government's finances provide some support. Some retired or refurbished second-line ships are sometimes directly allocated to the star domain fleet.

After all, having a standing fleet with considerable combat power within a star domain is quite necessary.

Planetary fleets don't exist on every world, but star domain fleets are present in every star domain, differing only in size based on the star domain's importance and pressure faced.

Moreover, a star domain is vast.

Smaller ones have two to three hundred worlds; larger ones have five to six hundred.

Even at full speed, crossing it takes at least half a month to two months; a full tour of the star domain would take two to three years. When focusing on specific key planets or engaging in certain actions or activities, it becomes even more challenging to manage; slowing down makes it onerous to resume quickly, and completing a full tour in ten years isn't unlikely.

Thus, the fleet cannot act as one whole unit; similarly, it must be divided into several smaller sub-fleets for operations.

The combined forces of planetary and star domain fleet constitute a basic defensive measure with the star domain as the unit. When it comes to the Cosmos Domain level, there are no specialized fleets, as

the security of the entire Cosmos Domain is managed by the Alliance Navy Headquarters. If there occurs a war at the Cosmos Domain level, fleets from the Central Army are deployed. The Cosmos Domain Navy Commander's responsibility is akin to a coordination center, attempting to resolve any issues within a star domain by deploying forces from other star domains for support before the Central Army arrives.

Chapter 951: Unequal Treaty (2)

Aside from the native defense system, there's also a force that can be mobilized, originating from the armed merchant ships of the Alliance caravans. Although their primary work and task are to conduct business, serving as veins to maintain trade within the Alliance, in necessary times, their armed forces can also be called upon to counter the enemy.

Especially since the Alliance caravans are originally an important prey for the Dark Spirit Race.

According to this kind of hinterland Star Sea defense system, when opposing the Dark Spirit Race's raiding fleets, which are fully engaged across multiple Cosmos Domains and numerous Star Domains, simultaneously seeking targets and conducting ultra-limit operations, it's genuinely challenging.

Honestly, a large number of attacks from the Dark Spirit Race were thwarted, and their failure rate is actually quite high.

But the problem is, the Dark Spirit Race fails often, yet their costs are low!

This mainly lies in their strategic issues.

The Dark Spirit Race would not be reckless.

According to the intelligence obtained from prisoners by the current Alliance, those in charge of conducting ultra-limit operations in the manifested universe are led by Isara of the Dusk Fang, a joint action of over fifteen large dark-skinned families.

Their strategies are extremely nimble. Their raiding fleets are divided finer than human forces, they prudently choose targets, and once they detect anything off, they immediately run, never confronting directly.

Once successful, they aim to cause as much damage as possible.

Just imagine, a planet suddenly attacked by about fifteen dark-skinned ships. This planet is relatively poor, with a population possibly not exceeding a billion, an army of about ten million defending globally; no navy; and a relatively backward planetary orbital defense system with insufficient construction.

In the entire universe, within the overall polity of the Alliance, this place is like a ’village’.

Suddenly attacked by the dark-skinned ones, their elite forces landed, beheading and assassinating officials, causing chaos among the planetary leadership; then, they plunder important resources; using various weapons to massacre civilians.

After causing havoc for about ten days, when the support fleet is still two or three star systems away, they decisively withdraw.

If they have time before leaving, they can even conduct an orbital bombardment.

How can this be defended against?

It is extremely hard to defend against.

If they are unsuccessful at the assassination stage, strongly resisted by the Defense Army during the land plundering phase, or intercepted by orbital defense systems during orbital bombardment or when deploying something akin to an Extinction Order, the Dark Spirit Race would undoubtedly admit defeat decisively, abandon the target, and flee.

A few times, the Alliance’s rapid fleets caught them, winning a few battles, but overall, it’s mostly been at a disadvantage.

The native defense fleet has always been in a state of constant rush.

Honestly, this series of measures by the Dark Spirit Race is quite successful.

In a certain sense, the Alliance can almost be considered to have suffered a 'defeat'.

How do you determine the victory or defeat of a war? Isn't it just about whether the strategic goals of the parties involved have been achieved?

From this perspective, the strategic goal of the Dark Spirit Race, using what they call the Blood Rose Maze and spreading the flames of war to the Alliance's homeland, like an 'annoying bloodsucking mosquito', indeed has been achieved: they've successfully forced the Alliance back to the negotiation table.

Negotiations have recommenced.

In the meantime, the Alliance was also unwilling and tried several times.

Even though the difficulties present themselves unsolvable, they still need to be resolved.

Even if the final outcome is a settlement through negotiations, what's on the negotiation table must be earned through battlefield performance.

The Alliance successfully detonated two planetary obliteration bombs inside Comoros.

These two super bombs, though not capable of wiping out an entire planet like that, at least destroyed two districts heavily guarded by the Blood Maze. Even though the Alliance's suicide squads bore huge sacrifices to deliver the bombs, and the planetary obliteration bombs themselves are extremely expensive consumable weapons, it's uncertain if it was worthwhile.

However, the Alliance is also using this approach to harshly warn the dark-skinned ones: do not assume I am helpless. If we too are willing to pay any price, we still have the ability to utterly destroy you.

Additionally, on the Star Sea Battlefield in the manifested universe, the Alliance urgently redeployed fleets from the five major armies.

These fleets are specialized 'Hunting Fleets', equipped specifically for this purpose. While the Retribution-class battleships have very strong frontal combat capabilities and can be considered the backbone of the star battle, they are too slow. Similarly slow, the Zhuge-class carriers have also bid farewell.

These hunting fleets are often centered on the fastest Holy Grail Level battlecruisers, complemented by numerous destroyers and a small number of fast cruisers and light carriers to swiftly hunt down the raiding fleets of the Dark Spirit Race roaming within human Star Domains.

These raiding fleets cannot retreat through the Veil Spirit Gate after just one hit. Many are captured, completely destroyed, while hiding or in action before or after.

Simultaneously, with the frequent usage of the Dark Spirit Race's Veil Spirit Gate, some locations have been deciphered. Human hunting fleets often arrive in advance, not in a hurry to destroy the Veil Spirit Gate, but patiently wait at the door. When the next wave of dark skins comes out or returns, they strike again, launching an ambush.

This effectively confines the Dark Spirit Race's raiding operations in the manifested universe.

With difficult but progressing situations on both fronts, Ambassador Deska at the negotiation table grew more confident.

Finally, through continuous compromise and confrontation, a preliminary peace talk agreement was reached.

The Alliance permanently owns the already occupied Queen Rose Port and Bodhisattva Port.

The Alliance has the right to lease eight ports, including one large port, two medium-sized ports, and five small ports. These ports are contiguous with Queen Rose and Bodhisattva Port.

The Alliance has the right to station troops at these leased ports, jointly managed by both sides. A lease fee was negotiated, which the Alliance can fully accept. Theoretically, using these leased ports for transport and troop deployment costs seven times more than conventional transport energy, but the advantage lies in the drastically shortened time for troop deployment and important material transportation.

When humans have needs, the Dark Spirit Race must conditionally open their countless Veil Spirit Gate nodes in the manifested universe.

The Dark Spirit Race can engage in some technological trades with humans. The relevant technology list has been drawn up by both sides, but honestly, this can only be considered an added bonus. The dark-skinned ones are not too fond of human technology, limiting their military expansion or self-development, with bottlenecks rarely in technology.

And humans are quite eager for dark-skinned technology, but many dark-skinned technologies are developed based on their own conditions, which humans may not find useful.

Moreover, truly core technologies will not be shared by the other side.

These conditions can be regarded as the Alliance's gains in this war.

Conversely, what did the Dark Spirit Race gain?

Ceasefire, no longer getting beaten.

Trade, they can use their own produced goods, high-precision creations, and port usage rights for trade with the Alliance. Among these, the most important are basic energy, food, and raw materials.

With these conditions, although the core areas of Comoros remain fully controlled by the Dark Spirit Race, and most ports still remain in the hands of the dark skins, it can be said that Gu Hang's goal to aggressively attack Comoros at great cost has been achieved.

The Alliance has gained the ability to use the Veil Spirit Gate for large-scale troop deployment!

From this overall perspective, humans are truly the victors: all the strategic goals that Gu Hang wanted were achieved.

And the dark skins gained nothing. They didn't obtain the two Chosen Ones they desired; they took a beating; a significant portion of their home was ceded out, either becoming permanently administered by the Alliance or existing as a 'concession'.

What they received in return was merely stopping the beatings, along with vague and potentially restricted trade with humans.

For the Dark Spirit Race, this is undoubtedly an unequal treaty.

Chapter 952: Worth Less Than Toilet Paper

The two parties signing the treaty are Deska and Veselani.

They represent their respective forces, both smiling as they shake hands at the negotiation table.

A photo of this scene was taken. It's unclear how the Dark Spirit Race will handle it, but on the human side, this information will make the news.

Another noteworthy aspect is the background of this photo.

Removing the two smiling diplomats shaking hands in the center of the photo reveals an execution scene in the background.

On the execution ground, there are twenty-three clearly countable corpses hanging from gallows, all dead.

The corpses hanging further away are hard to see clearly, while the one at the front is quite visible.

In terms of human time, just a few weeks ago, she was still a significant general for the Dark Spirit Race, calling shots in the real universe, in the heart of the Alliance territory. She played a crucial role in changing the Alliance's attitude from demanding the Dark Spirit Race's unconditional surrender to being willing to come to the negotiation table.

She is Isara, governor of Dusk Fang. The unrestricted warfare she led within the Alliance heartland, to be honest, is the greatest source of damage the Alliance has suffered since the Comoros War broke out.

During the peace talks, the Alliance proposed an additional condition: that the Dark Spirit Race hand over Isara to be hanged on the spot during the negotiations.

According to the Alliance, "This is a war criminal hated by all people of the Alliance," demanding her public execution for her war crimes.

Although the war is between soldiers, the reason Isara committed so many crimes in the heartland of the Alliance was her attacks on civilians, carrying out heinous extinction actions that resulted in over seven billion civilian casualties.

Her crimes are monstrous and unforgivable!

This matter, of course, was unacceptable to the Dark Spirit Race.

At least, it was initially unacceptable.

They could clearly see how insidious the Alliance's demand was.

The condition for signing the peace treaty involved betraying their own 'war hero.' Having the corpse of a war hero hanging behind them while signing the treaty would be incredibly ironic.

This would be a significant morale blow to the factions within the Dark Spirit Race supporting Victor.

This is utterly different from Victor's execution of dissenters. That was a display of his authority, even if in a terrifying manner.

But betraying Isara to humans is an entirely different matter.

Victor was forced, and he succumbed.

This certainly represents a massive loss of authority for a hierarch who rules internally by authority.

Veselani initially strongly rebuked Deska's demands.

She countered, saying that humans also committed many crimes during the attack on Comoros, especially with those instances of using the extinction order weapon to destroy several districts, causing massive deaths...

But this argument was ruthlessly shot down by Deska.

How do the Dark Spirit Race have civilians? They don't.

The ruling class is either government-like personnel or combatants, or slave owners, or special agents... according to the human definition of civilians, those not involved in the war, there are truly few among the Dark Spirit Race.

Of course, the Dark Spirit Race needs to eat, be clothed, need consumer goods. These, naturally, require producers.

But in the Dark Spirit Race's society, producers are not civilians; they are slaves, slaves of other races.

Among them, more than half of the slaves are humans.

No wonder humans, now the most populous and largest race in the real universe, are involved.

Seizing this point, Deska angrily declared that the trial and execution of Isara are preconditions for peace talks, non-negotiable. Moreover, as per the agreement, the Alliance has extraterritorial rights in its "concession" in Comoros. When Alliance people commit crimes, they must be governed by Alliance laws, while crimes committed by the Dark Spirit Race that do not involve humans are handled by the Dark Spirit Race. When it involves humans, be it murder or being murdered, or other crimes, the Alliance governs.

The worst humiliation is not even this; more directly, in Queen Rose Port and Bodhisattva Port, both completely governed by the Alliance, these places are regarded as Alliance territories. Anything the Dark Spirit Race does must abide by human rules. Humans have full rights to deny the Dark Spirit Race entry into these two ports.

As per the treaty, Isara and her troops committed heinous crimes within Alliance territory. The Alliance did not demand that all military personnel who participated in attacking the human world in the real universe be tried, which already considered the other party's dignity.

Now, only demanding the elimination of the evil head is already a significant concession from the Alliance, even somewhat ashamed in front of the souls of the seven billion innocent civilians!

If the Dark Spirit Race does not agree even to this, it signifies a lack of sincerity in negotiating peace, and there would be no need to talk further!

Ultimately, Veselani, or rather the black-skinned ruling class behind her, begrudgingly agreed.

Isara is a powerful Psychic and has undergone full transformation by Blood People, making her a mighty warrior.

Her strength is sufficient to kill an average Battle Group Champion.

Under ordinary circumstances, trying to 'hang' such a being wouldn't be easy. First, capture her, drug her, essentially destroy her body, then put magical restraint cuffs on her. Under these multiple restraints, Isara was left half-dead.

The final execution on the gallows is nothing but formalism.

But formalism itself is very important.

Isara's own death is actually not that problematic. The loss of an individual combat power at the level of a Battle Group Champion, along with an excellent Commander, is regrettable, but among the Dark Spirit Race, there is no lack of replacements.

The Alliance wanted her manner of death to create a negative political impact on the Dark Spirit Race, digging a big pit for Victor.

Besides Isara, the other twenty-two hanged bodies were also all on the 'war criminal' list provided by the Alliance.

Anyway, with such a general sent off, the rest naturally followed suit by the Dark Spirit Race's side.

...

With the signing of the treaty, the war indeed came to a halt.

Both parties withdrew their troops along the current front lines. The Alliance Military received orders to retreat, handing over several districts in conflict. Even some districts completely occupied by the Alliance were also handed over.

These districts are meaningless to the Alliance—as long as there's no state of war.

However, some districts were not handed over, with the Alliance maintaining garrisons.

This was part of the treaty content.

The Dark Spirit Race promised to provide eight ports as concessions and allowed the Alliance to connect these ports into one controlled area.

The areas retained or handed over from the Dark Spirit Race, linked the eight ports with Queen Rose Port.

Before the negotiations, the area occupied by humans in the Comoros region was about 4% of the entire Comoros. After the negotiations, following the territorial exchanges, the human-occupied area remained approximately at 4%.

However, the shape changed, from being centered around Queen Rose Port, extending to Bodhisattva Port, now resembling a chain linking a total of eleven ports aboveground.

This was meant for convenient transportation of materials, personnel, and communication on the ground.

If the war reignites, such control areas are actually fragile and easily cut off and encircled by the Dark Spirit Race.

Having such concerns is normal.

The treaty is signed, but can that piece of paper guarantee peace?

Far from it.

Under the current conditions, from a strategic standpoint, Gu Hang is just barely satisfied from the Alliance’s perspective.

The so-called satisfaction refers to achieving strategic goals; barely, because he still wants more.

However, the Alliance also needs to catch a breath.

The current Alliance is waging war on five fronts.

Despite pretty good internal management, military pressure brings internal pressure as well.

The Alliance needs to step up with a higher level of mobilization orders.

At the same time, the Alliance needs to find solutions to the two major problems that previously blocked their advance.

Fortunately, there seem to be some ideas.

In anticipation that the Dark Spirit Race will continue to stir trouble in the real universe, the ’Hunting Fleet’ of the Alliance needs to continue expanding.

For this, the ship production lines within the Alliance will undergo some order adjustments. Various high-speed ship construction plans will be significantly increased within limits.

Besides the Western Front that has already fought into the other side of the Empire, other lines must increase efforts to deploy more high-speed ships.

The strategy of the ’Hunting Fleet’ has shown it can significantly reduce the over-limit operations of the Dark Spirit Race, minimizing losses in the Alliance’s hinterlands.

Logically, as long as the ’Hunting Fleet’ strategy is strengthened and enforced, the effectiveness will be higher.

Along with information on defenses being disseminated, strengthening military defenses throughout the Alliance territory.

This should be about enough.

Of course, this cannot completely resolve the Dark Spirit Race's attacks on civilians and weak defense areas. After all, guarding for a thousand days against theft is unrealistic. Maintaining this current defense strategy means the Alliance is tied down with too many troops in the real universe and homeland for defense, leading to financial strain.

The only true solution is to find a way to thoroughly destroy the Dark Spirit Race and occupy the Comoros.

That requires solving the maze problem.

Humans believe the Blood Rose Maze is a super-giant living weapon, with specialized research groups developing counteractive devices and technology against this living weapon.

Simultaneously, the Alliance military and various battle groups have extensive experience fighting in the Blood Rose Maze. These valuable experiences will be distilled and summarized, some provided to technicians to develop weapons, while others for commanders and staff officers to think about optimizing combat strategies, coming up with suitable tactics to deal with this major problem before war begins anew.

In short, although the Alliance desires more from the Comoros, for now, being able to stop the war for a while and gain more preparation time is ultimately a good thing.

And for the Dark Spirit Race, they need even more time to lick their wounds.

This invasion of the Comoros was essentially their own initiative, but the result was overplayed. The Dark Spirit Race was quite unprepared for the current situation.

Facing the present circumstances is too passive, and the sudden losses are significant.

However, for the Dark Spirits, they are overwhelmed and pained by the beating.

But are they terrified? Perhaps a little, otherwise, they wouldn't be so eager for an armistice and negotiations.

But to say they're truly subdued? Far from it!

Not to mention accepting it deep down, even verbally they're likely not quite convinced.

They too need time to breathe, heal, and solve internal issues, to regroup and devise feasible strategic plans.

From this perspective, the peace agreement is quite fragile.

The side that gained in the agreement thinks it's not enough; the losing side is entirely unconvinced.

In such a scenario, under the guise of a peace treaty, it's essentially a temporary truce whose effectiveness is about as useful as a piece of toilet paper.

Gu Hang is one hundred percent sure that the entirely unconvinced Dark Spirit Race will, once prepared, tear up the agreement without hesitation and restart the war.

And coincidentally, the Alliance is readying for the same.

With eight new leased ports in hand, and territory exchanges within the Comoros complete. Although the newly acquired areas are scattered, making defense difficult.

Nonetheless, there are advantages: the Alliance can exploit its manpower advantage to a greater extent.

As long as troops can quickly be reinforced from several ports, due to the expanded controlled areas, when the Alliance launches a full-scale attack next, they can strike more areas simultaneously.

Overall, risk and reward are intertwined.

For the current Dark Spirits and humans, this is a tacit temporary ceasefire.

Both sides are gearing up for war under the facade of peace.

And once either side is ready, they will undoubtedly tear up the agreement immediately.

The rekindled war will likely be more brutal than the past half-year of warfare!

And to prepare for the inevitable resurgence of war, the most critical task for the Alliance is to reinforce Comoros at once.

Preferably to utilize those eight newly acquired ’leased ports’ as well.

But on this matter, the Alliance faces two major issues.

Treaty limitations, and Robert’s Terra Expeditionary Force’s impending departure.

Currently, both points are difficult to overcome.

Chapter 953: Blood Rose Labyrinth

At that moment, ghostly blue runes lit up inside the walls, a flicker of teleportation glowed, and swarms of engineered mice were transported to the crevices of the power backpacks, extending precise drills that frantically drilled into the joints of the armor! A warrior’s power glove hydraulic joint was pierced by liquid metal solvent, rendering it useless, and he had to swing a chain-saw sword to cut off his trapped left leg at the knee to break free. Another warrior’s communication backpack was covered by dimension-interfering mice, emitting a piercing overload noise. "Move forward! Abandon the vehicles!" Eliyon’s command roared through the helmet’s communication channel. The warriors began to forcefully assault the base of the signal tower; the Heavy Bomb Group, under the cover of their comrades, continued to suppress the mouse swarm, but every step forward was taken over the remains of Ratmen that came forward wave after wave. The base of the signal tower was clearly visible, but the square surrounding the base was completely covered by a thicker, raised mycelium mat, resembling a throbbing giant organ. As the vanguard squad stepped onto the square’s edge, the "heart" suddenly contracted violently! The mycelium mat below the square suddenly collapsed, forming a bottomless pit of flesh and blood, and hundreds of warriors fell unexpectedly into the deep pit! The pit walls

immediately secreted a gelatinous digestive liquid, and a swarm of rats rained down from above! The robust bodies and power armor of the Interstellar Warriors were enough to resist tearing, but the corrosive slime at the pit's bottom was dissolving their foothold at a terrifying speed.

Eliyon's eyes bulged with rage. The emergency scan data sent at the cost of the fallen revealed the truth: The entire "Skull Chop Cross" area had been transformed into a maze trap, and the signal tower was already a worm-eaten shell, with the giant mycelium organism underneath being the key node supporting the teleportation channel. "All bombs, fire at the base!" Eliyon's order came with desperate determination. The last few dozen warriors poured their remaining heavy weaponry firepower towards the base. Under the bombardment of high-explosive and thermite beams, the mycelium chunks rolled and charred, but what was exposed beneath was not the imagined energy core, but countless twisting giant mouse fusion embryos, connected with innumerable pipelines and mycelium, like a deformed heart parasitizing this deadly maze! The assault firepower only temporarily interrupted its pulsation. The Shadow Scythe warriors began projecting incendiary rope anchor claws below to their comrades on the pit wall, "Prepare for retrieval!" But suddenly, a glaring red light erupted at the pit's bottom. The cluster of embryos on the pit walls collectively self-destructed, with a terrifying bioenergy pulse sweeping across the entire area! The unignited fusion embryos absorbed the blood and flesh energy of the Dead Ratmen, rapidly reshaping in the mycelium pit's depth into larger, new biological nodes covered with dark red energy scales visible to the naked eye. The square's pit violently shook, the edges began to collapse and expand, causing more Interstellar Warriors to stumble and fall. "Retreat! Abandon the target!" Eliyon's order came at the final moment of communication breakdown. The surviving warriors detonated preset thermite bombs to create a wall of fire to temporarily block the mouse swarm, dragging each other toward the twisted tunnels behind. As the reinforcing Titan engines crushed the maze's outer structure and reached the signal tower, the square had collapsed into a massive, filthy lake of flesh, with a giant egg sac suspended in the center, heavily damaged yet still slowly pulsing, and fragments of power armor and vehicle wreckage floating on the lake's surface, while the Shadow Scythe Legion's insignia slowly sank into the tainted blood. This company-level raid, at the cost of nearly complete annihilation of heavily armed elites, merely unveiled a corner of the Blood Rose Maze's veil—its foundation established on energy converted from human warrior flesh, each wound allowing this living fortress to absorb pain and evolve. The Dark Spirit Race-controlled mouse swarm flowed like the putrid blood of this maze, and humans were trapped within its vivacious grasp.

Eliyon's eyes bulged with rage. The emergency scan data sent at the cost of the fallen revealed the truth: The entire "Skull Chop Cross" area had been transformed into a maze trap, and the signal tower was already a worm-eaten shell, with the giant mycelium organism underneath being the key node supporting the teleportation channel. "All bombs, fire at the base!" Eliyon's order came with desperate determination. The last few dozen warriors poured their remaining heavy weaponry firepower towards the base. Under the bombardment of high-explosive and thermite beams, the mycelium chunks rolled and charred, but what was exposed beneath was not the imagined energy core, but countless twisting giant mouse fusion embryos, connected with innumerable pipelines and mycelium, like a deformed heart parasitizing this deadly maze! The assault firepower only temporarily interrupted its pulsation.

Chapter 953: The Bloody Maw of the Labyrinth (Part 2)

The Shadow Scythe warriors began to project explosive ropes to secure stakes to their comrades below the pit wall, "Prepare to retrieve!" But suddenly a blinding red light erupted at the bottom of the plaza pit. The embryonic clusters on the pit wall collectively self-destructed, a terrifying bio-energy pulse swept across the entire area! Untriggered fusion embryos absorbed the flesh and energy of the Dead Ratman, rapidly reshaping into larger biological nodes covered in dark red energy scales deep in the fungal pit. The plaza pit violently shook, the edges began to collapse and expand, more Interstellar Warriors stumbled and fell. "Retreat! Abandon target!" Eliyon issued the command in the last moment before communications cut off. The surviving warriors detonated preset Thermite Bombs creating a firewall to temporarily block the rat swarm, dragging each other back towards the twisted channel behind. When the reinforcing Titan engines crushed the outer structure of the maze and reached the signal tower, the plaza had collapsed into a gigantic murky lake of flesh, with a critically damaged yet slowly pulsating giant egg sac suspended in the center, debris of Power Armor and vehicle fragments floating on the surface, while the insignia of the Shadow Scythe Legion sank slowly into the foul blood. This company-level raid ended in almost complete annihilation of heavy-armored elite forces, revealing only a corner of the Blood Rose Maze's veil—its foundation built upon energy transformed from human warriors' flesh, each wound allowing this living fortress to draw pain and evolve. The rat swarm manipulated by the Dark Spirit Race flowed like the rotten blood of the maze, and in the meantime, dark blue runes lit up within the walls, transmission micro-lights flickered, swarms of engineer rats transported to the seams of Power Armor backpacks, protruding precision drills frantically chiseled armor joints! A warrior's hydraulic joint on his Power Glove was penetrated by liquid metal solvent losing functionality, he could only swing his Chain-saw Sword to sever his entangled left leg at the knee to break free from bondage. Another warrior's communications backpack was covered by dimension-interference rats, emitting a shrill overload noise. "Advance! Abandon vehicles!" Eliyon's command roared through the helmet's internal communication channel. Warriors began a forced assault towards the base of the signal tower, the Heavy Bomb Group continuously suppressed the rat tide under comrades' cover, every step forward trampled the successive carcasses of Ratman. The base of the signal tower was in clear sight, but the plaza surrounding the base was completely covered by thicker, raised fungal carpet, like a pulsating giant organ. When the vanguard squad stepped into the plaza's edge, the "heart" suddenly contracted violently! The ground beneath the fungal carpet collapsed abruptly, forming a bottomless pit of flesh, hundreds of warriors caught off guard fell into the abyss! The pit walls immediately secreted adhesive digestive juices, and the rats pounded down from above like raindrops! The strong bodies and Power Armor of the Interstellar Warriors were enough to resist the tearing, but the corrosive mucus at the bottom was rapidly dissolving their footholds. Eliyon's eyes were cracked. The emergency scan data sent at the cost of the sacrificer's life revealed the truth: the entire "Skull Cracker Cross" area had been transformed into a maze trap, the signal tower long since a worm-eaten shell, the massive fungal blanket below it the key node supporting the transmission channel. "All bombs, concentrate fire on the base!" Eliyon's command carried a desperate realization. The remaining dozens of warriors unleashed the final heavy weapon firepower towards the base. Under the bombardment of high-explosive bombs and thermite rays, the fungal blanket rolled over blackened, but what was exposed below was not the imagined energy core, but countless twisting giant rat fusion embryos, connected by numerous pipelines to the fungal blanket, like a deformed heart parasitic on this death maze! The heavy firepower only temporarily interrupted its pulsation.

Chapter 954: Taking the Initiative

It was already agreed upon that Robert and his Expeditionary Force would leave, and Gu Hang didn't mind their departure.

After all, there was a ceasefire in Comoros. Although in the future, the war is bound to reignite, it will have nothing to do with the Terra Expeditionary Army.

Robert and his army have their own challenges to face, which are expected to be no easier than the battles in Comoros.

However, objectively, the departure of the Terra Expeditionary Army is a depletion of human forces in Comoros.

It's not just the Expeditionary Forces themselves leaving. To ensure Robert's mission to pacify Holy Terra proceeds more smoothly, the Alliance provided full support to Robert's Expeditionary Force.

Originally, Robert hoped to receive ample logistical supplies and to have some of his troops' personnel losses replenished. But Gu Hang waved his hand generously, directly dispatching whole units under his command.

It's not about handing over the troops to Robert. These Alliance units maintain their own organization, have their own comprehensive command system, and their own supreme commander—an Alliance Navy Admiral. Over a hundred million Alliance Army, three hundred Alliance Warships, two fully equipped battle regiments are under his command.

And he is to act under Robert's command.

Of course, this is theoretical. In practice, Robert could certainly give orders directly to any units allocated to the Expeditionary Forces—using the Alliance's command system.

However, he could only direct operations, not dissolve, change, or disrupt the internal systems of this Alliance force.

Overall, this unit seems like a coalition force under Robert's command.

Robert had no objections. As long as the units follow orders, can be used as easily as one's limbs, and are capable fighters, that's good enough.

He had no intention of turning any unit into his personal army, so as long as the Alliance troops obey commands, there's no intent to change the nature of the forces.

It is fundamentally the Alliance's army.

The departure of the Expeditionary Force not only depletes the Alliance troops themselves; it's also about the Alliance boosting their numbers with over a hundred million troops and three hundred warships.

Crucially, they occupied the precious transportation capacity of the two fully controlled ports that humans have in Comoros.

Transporting forces into Comoros from the Veil Spirit Gate requires a continuous queue of ships sailing through non-stop.

Some large ships, such as battleship-sized ones or Colossal Belly Transport Ships, require more than one, nearly two hours to completely pass through a medium-sized Spirit Gate; using a large Spirit Gate, it still takes at least fifteen minutes.

The entire Queen Rose Port combined with Bodhisattva Port, operating at full capacity, still requires about six days to transport the Terra Expeditionary Force from Comoros to Satellite V.

Which means that currently, human military strength in Comoros will directly reduce by one-third, unable to receive any reinforcements for six days.

To fill these vacancies again will take another six days; further increases in troop strength will require even longer.

Of course, the Alliance's military strength is not limitless. Once nearly half of the Central Front Army is fully deployed in Comoros, the total scale is approximately five times that of Robert's Terra Expeditionary Force.

That will take about three months to half a year—mainly because a larger force demands higher logistical requirements. The Alliance must stockpile sufficient materials to support a large-scale battle.

Large transport ships carrying personnel and materials into Comoros also take time to leave.

That's why Gu Hang continues to covet Comoros, as the throughput is simply inadequate.

Even when the General Staff Department of the Alliance, a brazen staffer proposed a crazy operational plan, despite many objections and risks, it was still sent to Gu Hang's desk with the support of some equally crazy individuals.

And Gu Hang actually approved it directly!

The entire plan is somewhat complex at the execution level. It requires mobilizing many units, making a lot of advanced preparations. But fundamentally, at its core is just one thing—launching the most sudden assault while the Dark Spirit Race is at its least guarded and least expected.

Both humans and the Dark Spirits know peace is just an illusion, and inevitably there will be a battle in the future. Moreover, those Dark Spirits surely won't sit idly by as humans continuously increase their numbers.

The time left for them is not considerable, projected at as short as two to three months, as long as six months, before the war resumes.

The specific timing depends on the preparations made by the Dark Spirits themselves.

Ideally, they would choose a tipping point before the gap between the forces widens too greatly.

Meaning when human troops have yet to arrive in large numbers, and their own preparations are mostly complete.

For the Alliance, the best strategic action is certainly to delay the war for several years. Not only to bring in enough of their own forces but also to stockpile weapons, ammunition, energy, food, and other war supplies in abundance before engaging.

What takes up the most transportation capacity in an artillery unit? It's not personnel or artillery, but each of those large shells!

Other units, even the light infantry, follow the same rule. A ninety-kilogram elite soldier, combined with weapons, ammunition, rations, and a ceramic steel armor suit, sums to already fifty kilograms.

This is for one mission, carrying a basic set of equipment and supplies.

Multiple missions, or maintaining a fixed position for a few days, would require continuous logistical supplies to deliver bullets, food to the front lines to maintain combat strength, with total weight easily surpassing the soldiers' own.

All has to be transported to Comoros.

But anyone with insight can see that the Dark Spirit Race won't naively watch humans do this.

Does the human side just wait until the opponents are prepared, then select the most suitable offensive opportunity for the Dark Spirits, and merely reinforce the defensive lines to prepare for an attack?

That would be passive. Relying on those vast but also leaky defensive lines could easily be breached and cut apart.

Since the fire of war will inevitably ignite, why not seize the initiative?

The Dark Spirits would never expect that even with the Terra Expeditionary Army just departing, at a time when human forces in Comoros are at their lowest, humans would dare to launch a comprehensive proactive strike at this moment!

Chapter 955: A Necessary Move

The biggest objective of the entire strategy is to launch a blitzkrieg with the force of thunder when the enemy is caught off guard and unprepared, thus expanding the defense area and capturing multiple core strongholds.

Most importantly, we must transform all eight concession ports into our own. Then, leveraging the multiplied transport capabilities of these ports, bring as many troops and supplies as possible to engage in a major battle with the Dark Spirit Race.

The biggest risk in this is the possibility of failing to capture all the ports, or facing setbacks during a full-scale attack, causing our forces to collapse.

If we fail to defeat the enemy in one swoop and they counterattack, our exhausted human troops might be completely pushed back to the vicinity of Queen Rose Port, or even pushed out by the Dark Skin tribe in one stroke.

Due to the riskiness of the entire plan, it has sparked significant opposition within the staff department.

It’s unnecessary, unnecessary.

Even with steady progress and passively letting the Dark Skin come, the risk wouldn’t be so high. At that time, it would merely entail withstanding military pressure and continuously circulating supplies in hopes of slowly breaking the deadlock.

However, these discussions ended abruptly after Gu Hang issued clear orders.

There isn’t much left to discuss. Prepare diligently.

...

In the Alliance's secret attack plan, one component is of utmost secrecy and importance.

Twelve masters from the Storm Mage Corps have secretly entered Comoros.

Each of them wears a diadem.

The Soul Crown, a holy artifact.

Among the Alliance's Psychic community, the worship of the Soul Crown is prevalent.

To the vast majority, the Soul Crown is a treasure that greatly enhances spiritual energy intensity, combined with the honor of being bestowed by Gu Hang himself. Each recipient of the diadem is either a chief think tank of a powerful battle group or a top-tier Great Mage within the Storm Mage Corps. In any case, they are all top-notch Spiritual Masters.

Yet, a small minority, especially the recipients of the diadem, know that its greatest function is to summon Gu Hang.

Even if only an avatar arrives, at the cost of the Soul Crown shattering.

But having such an opportunity is an excellent trump card.

At critical moments, not only can it save lives, but it can also bring a significant shift in certain brutal wars.

Practicing spiritual energy, the deeper one goes, the more they can appreciate the power of the Alliance leader.

And here, not only are there twelve masters endowed with the Soul Crown, but also more mysteriously, a thirteenth diadem floats in mid-air, guarded by them.

Its size and form are consistent with the diadems on the Psychics' heads.

Except, it's several times larger, towering over a person.

It isn't meant to be worn.

Its primary function is to pull Gu Hang over under a powerful enough summoning.

The entity itself.

...

Gu Hang had long noticed that as he grew stronger and approached a certain level, he was paradoxically becoming less free.

His Storm God Kingdom had expanded immensely with the Alliance's growth.

It almost spanned across the Subspace dimension, covering the entire Alliance region.

And he was required to sit there for long durations.

Although it appeared that he was merely sitting daily in his hall on Rage Owl Star, overwhelmed by paperwork like a pitiable figure, in reality, this was only a portion of his duties.

The Alliance's affairs are complex and immense, as the ruling area now exceeds a quarter of the Empire. Despite the Alliance's direct and governing approach, even with a vast administrative machinery sharing many of Gu Hang's responsibilities, the number of critical decisions he needs to make daily is still immense when viewed on such a vast scale.

But these alone are far from occupying all of Gu Hang's focus.

A larger portion of his energy is devoted to his Storm God Kingdom.

The Thunder Torch Towers, distributed throughout the Alliance's territory, suppress Subspace influence, comprehensively containing all corruption, allowing the Alliance's people to keenly pursue knowledge without fearing Jian Qi's gaze; enabling the Alliance's warriors to fight bravely without fearing Terror Demon's control; letting entertainment and culture cleanse the spirit and nurture character without fearing Slaanesh's corruption; under advanced medicine, the spread of plagues and diseases can be controlled without fearing supernatural Nagor diseases...

It's all thanks to the Thunder Torch Towers.

And what do the Thunder Torch Towers rely on?

Is it truly dependent on some special technology developed by the Alliance?

No purely technological method can achieve this level.

The Thunder Torch Towers lean on an existence capable of stabilizing the areas enveloped by the Divine Realm, preventing the mightiest Evil God from peering freely.

That existence is Gu Hang himself.

Even though this suppression is not perfect, inevitable Chaos corruption and invasion still occur. But at least, with him holding fort, the Alliance's Ministry of Internal Affairs, intelligence departments, Demon Hunter departments, law centers, and Tribunal have ample ability to address such Chaos corruption.

Without Gu Hang holding the line, the Alliance's prized rational and efficient governance would be nothing but castles in the air. If any official could easily be corrupted for various reasons, if the military readily experienced widespread revolts, if cults flourished in the Nest Capital, the situation within the Alliance's domain would quickly resemble other regions of the Empire.

Various anti-corruption departments would be overtaxed, rebellions and invasions would occur in succession, maintaining a vast army yet unable to expand externally, only becoming trapped in endless internal maintenance.

Do other parts of the Empire lack blessings from a higher power?

Of course, they do, or they wouldn't have sustained this long, the Empire would have collapsed.

That blessing comes from The Emperor.

However, The Emperor also equally blesses the Alliance.

But Gu Hang only protects his own Alliance.

Dual protection results in the current favorable scenario.

The price, however, is that Gu Hang cannot move recklessly.

The greedy eyes from Subspace have never ceased.

If Gu Hang's attention is diverted, the brilliance of the Thunder Torch Tower might remain briefly, but Chaos problems would quickly emerge. And if prolonged, internal unrest would occur frequently, and even if Gu Hang returned promptly, the ensuing damage might exceed the previous pillaging by the Dark Spirit Race in the Alliance's heartland.

But for Comoros, Gu Hang can make a move.

If necessary.

Chapter 956

Between the swarm, fungi, and mechanical creations, their hunched spines are covered in symbiotic fungal armor, with small short-distance teleportation devices embedded at the joints. Their brains have been removed by the Blood People and replaced with biological neural nodes that can receive maze commands, allowing them to move like extensions of the maze within the areas covered by the fungal carpet. When the human army steps into the maze streets, these "rats" silently seep out from sewage outlets, ventilation shafts, and even cracks in peeling walls. They utilize the maze's perception network to precisely anticipate human firepower lines, and their fungal limbs squirm rapidly on the crimson carpet. As the barrage comes, they instantly activate short-distance teleportation, appearing in groups in the midst of armored car territories or at the flanks of infantry formations. Their mode of destruction is primitive yet efficient: self-destructing rats carrying highly corrosive mucus sacs gnaw at the seams of armor with acid; engineering rats equipped with Dimensional Interference Devices paralyze vehicle engines and communication arrays; and hundreds of frenzied combat rats, stimulated by maze bioelectricity, tear at the throats of isolated soldiers with terrifying speed. The fleshy fungal carpet becomes their best cover and transport pathway, and every fallen human body provides the maze with more energy, catalyzing even more twisted rat shadows.

The hundred Interstellar Warriors of the Shadow Scythe Legion's fourth company, along with two mechanized infantry regiments, struggle forward in this hellish environment towards the core area of the "Skull Splitter's Cross." The mission objective is to capture the landmark signal tower there—the tower's base is wrapped in the maze's energy core, and destroying it is theoretically supposed to cripple a main transport channel. But the main road to the signal tower has long been completely hollowed out by the Ratman, and the tactical intelligence's marked "safe passage" alloy corridors are actually covered in the writhing masses of life, fungi, and mechanical creations. Their hunched spines are covered in symbiotic fungal armor, with small short-distance teleportation devices embedded at the joints. Their brains have been removed by the Blood People and replaced with biological neural nodes that can receive maze commands, allowing them to move like extensions of the maze within the areas covered by the fungal carpet. When the human army steps into the maze streets, these "rats" silently seep out from sewage outlets, ventilation shafts, and even cracks in peeling walls. They utilize the maze's perception network to precisely anticipate human firepower lines, and their fungal limbs squirm rapidly on the crimson carpet. As the barrage comes, they instantly activate short-distance teleportation, appearing in groups in the midst of armored car territories or at the flanks of infantry formations. Their mode of destruction is primitive yet efficient: self-destructing rats carrying highly corrosive mucus sacs gnaw at the seams of armor with acid; engineering rats equipped with Dimensional Interference Devices paralyze vehicle engines and communication arrays; and hundreds of frenzied combat rats, stimulated by maze bioelectricity, tear at the throats of isolated soldiers with terrifying speed. The fleshy fungal carpet becomes their best cover and transport pathway, and every fallen human body provides the maze with more energy, catalyzing even more twisted rat shadows.

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Chapter 956: The Last Chance

Victor quietly caressed the dim sword in his hand.

At this moment, fully armored, he was making his final preparations before the battle.

Behind him, a vast Dark Spirit Race army was ready and silent.

They awaited only an order to advance in full force.

This was the most elite force the Dark Spirit Race could muster in a short time.

You could even say this was the foundation of the Dark Spirit Race.

But not their full power.

They couldn’t muster their full strength either.

As humans had judged, the Dark Spirit Race was not at all subdued; seeking peace was merely to prepare for the next stage of war.

But even before that, there were significant doubts about the peace talks within the Dark Spirit Race.

Indeed, peace talks could provide ample preparation time, but they could also give humans ample preparation time.

Both sides would benefit.

Moreover, it was uncertain who would benefit more.

The two ports occupied by the Alliance would fully and without any hesitation send troops to Comoros; in the eight leased ports, there were supposed to be no military transports against Comoros, but the Alliance frequently made small moves, and lacking measures to stop or punish humans, the regulations and restrictions became almost empty words.

In this situation, by the time the Dark Spirit Race was ready for war, the human side might have become much more troublesome than before.

These concerns were undoubtedly reasonable.

However, Victor once again pushed against all dissent.

Only this time, it was not as easy as before.

In the past, he had supreme prestige as the King of Comoros. But now, after multiple failures, his prestige was not exactly crumbling but considerably diminished. Although everyone still feared him on the surface, Victor could feel the impending storm.

However, his subsequent strategy was quite clever.

Peace talks were not without support.

First, he pulled the supporting faction over to suppress the Hawk Faction openly;

In secret, he revealed his core plan.

This plan won the favor of those opposed to peace talks.

And the remaining opponents were personal adversaries, challengers to his authority. Facing these people, he showed a ruthless and brutal side, efficiently purging internally, which temporarily strengthened his authority within Comoros.

All of this allowed his plan to proceed smoothly.

The so-called plan was to use the peace talks to quickly send the Terra Expeditionary Army away and blow up the Veil Spirit Gate near Holy Terra once they had completely left.

The last few ships of the Terra Expeditionary Army that hadn't completed their journey would be totally lost.

Of course, this was merely an incidental act, causing no significant loss to humans other than about one percent of the Terra Expeditionary Army's ships—far from being a major blow.

The main purpose was to prevent humans from reinforcing Comoros from the direction of Holy Terra.

After taking action, Victor would personally lead the Spirit Race forces in a fierce assault on humans.

In the peace treaty, the Dark Spirit Race conceded a lot of interests. But, if one intends to tear up the treaty, then as long as the terms written in black and white are not fulfilled, there is no loss.

Only considering what was fulfilled, humans received eight leased ports but could only sneakily transport troops, not many;

The area captured by humans initially resembled a fist and later transformed into a narrow network to connect the eight leased ports, which was evidently conducive to the Dark Spirit Race's attacks.

Critically, at this time point, humans' power in Comoros was at its weakest.

For six to seven days, humans couldn't reinforce Comoros and instead pulled out an entire Terra Expeditionary Army.

The forces were directly reduced by a third.

Beyond this point, the human power in Comoros would grow stronger step by step.

This strengthening curve had no upper limit.

Though Comoros would gain more preparation time and burst out more strength, in Victor's calculations, this increase was greatest only at the start. Due to the overall scale and potential of the Dark Spirit Race being very limited, they would quickly fall into a period of fatigue in exploiting their war potential, leading to them being rapidly surpassed.

This was most panic-inducing and despairing.

Was there no chance left?

No, there was.

At this node, Victor saw it as a more favorable point than the original plan of preparing desperately for war during peace talks.

Though not in his strongest form, he could seize the moment when humans were weakest, making it a prime opportunity.

To Victor, this opportunity was the last chance to reverse the situation and save the entire race.

He must go all out.

He brought with him the most elite forces of the race, the core technology, and the mightiest battle strength—himself.

The divine sword in his hand had not been taken out for many, many years.

The ’Komo Sacred Sword’ was truly the treasure of the race.

So-called Komo was once the name of a deity within the Spirit Race Empire, a face of the God of Thousand Faces.

And now, Gelong was this sword.

It contained the despair and anger left behind by the Spirit Race’s extinction until now.

When this anger was unleashed, even if facing a True God, Victor was daring enough to battle it.

Even though wielding this divine sword came at a high cost, now, it was a price that had to be paid.

As a message arrived, Victor’s hand halted its caressing of the sword blade.

With a command, the entire army launched the attack.

...

The flames of war suddenly erupted, catching both the Spirit Race and humans off guard.

Victor also did not expect that despite the humans benefiting more from a prolonged stalemate, they would choose, like him, the moment of the Terra Expeditionary Force’s departure to launch an aggressive attack!

This caused the entire Spirit Race's attack plan to undergo significant changes right from the start!

Of course, the humans also did not expect the Dark Spirit Race to attack at this time, lacking a plan to counter the raid. Just as the Dark Spirit Race initially planned, the human defense line was shattered into pieces. Of the eight leased ports, six suddenly fell.

However, the human's proactive attack also had a great impact. Quite a few Dark Spirit Race units couldn't reach the frontline as expected and were caught prematurely by the humans who had penetrated deep into Comoros, forcing them into a grueling battle.

No turning back now, Victor had to overcome countless difficulties, wielding the Komo Sacred Sword, leading the most elite force to resolutely strike straight at Queen Rose Port.

He had to capture this port back or at least destroy it to cut off the endless human reinforcements streaming into Comoros.

For this, he was willing to pay any price.

Holding the divine sword, he was absolutely confident that he could cut down anyone daring to block his path.

Yet, when he truly saw Gu Hang descending from the sky and felt that tremendous power from the trembling Komo Sacred Sword, he suddenly realized:

Was he really going to confront a True God?

Chapter 957: Divine Battle

How did Victor confirm that what he was facing was a True God?

Of course, it was the most direct feeling after personal experience.

He recognized Gu Hang's identity. He knew that this man was the leader of the Alliance and a true Spiritual Master.

But that was all his original understanding was limited to.

No matter how powerful a Spiritual Master is, there are limits.

Victor, wielding the God Sword, dared to face even gods, let alone a Psychic.

Even if the power displayed was terrifying, and even made the God Sword in his hand tremble slightly, he fearlessly swung his sword.

Just as he had resolved earlier, even in the face of a True God, he would fight with all his might!

Moreover, he still did not believe that a True God could just casually appear in Comoros?

The gap between Subspace and the veil of reality is a fragile area that cannot support such a powerful existence.

As he swung this sword, a despairing hum emanated from the depths of the sword blade of the Comoros God Sword.

It was the dying wail of a Spirit Race deity locked into this ultimate creation from ancient times.

In the face of the sword's awakened will, space was as fragile as paper.

Minute cracks spread through the air in front of Victor.

In the area towards the sword's edge, space disintegrated, the magnificent alloy-forged archway silently dissolved, shattering like blocks of glass, as a vortex of shadows formed from endless resentment surged forth from the sword's edge!

When Victor, the lord of the Dark Spirit Race, raised the God Sword high above his head, the sword's light that was not a physical strike burst forth mightily, slicing straight towards the critical anchor point leading to the real universe — the core tower of Queen Rose Port.

He no longer cared about strategy or tactics, nor cared about the price he would pay for swinging this sword. He only sought to destroy this node, to completely sever the throat through which humanity could reinforce their troops.

This was the last-ditch effort of the Dark Spirit Race in their dire straits!

However, before the destructive sword light that seemed capable of devouring a star could reach the core tower, a silhouette silently descended before the blade's edge.

Gu Hang merely lifted an arm, his five fingers loosely grasped, with no brilliance, no roar, and the Chaotic Abyss cut by the God Sword crashed into an invisible barrier.

The shriek of space tearing instantly transformed into a muffled whimper as the abyssal light flow was forcibly compressed and condensed.

In an instant, a brilliant river of energy, flowing with stardust and galaxies, was "clutched" in Gu Hang's palm with one hand. It no longer wantonly sliced through space, but instead flowed gently like a ribbon between his fingers.

He even bowed his head to inspect this beautiful river of light, transformed from the ultimate destructive power of the Comoros God Sword, his face expressionless, his calmness sending a chill of piercing pain through Victor's soul core.

Victor's pride did not allow him to retreat. The Comoros God Sword seemed to perceive the holder's resolve, and the black gem, which devoured starlight set in the hilt, suddenly lit up with countless malice-filled runes.

Even a mundane lifeform, merely grazed by the ripples of these runes, would be utterly erased from the plane of existence.

And countless such runes transformed into dimensional thrusts, pierced through the concept of space, ignoring Gu Hang's raised arm and the starlit river in his palm, directly stabbing at Gu Hang's seemingly ordinary human shell.

Yet Victor's attack this time still failed to achieve the effect he anticipated.

When the blade's power touched Gu Hang's simple black clothes, it did not cause any disintegration or collapse. It was as if it had been submerged into an absolutely still deep pool, not stirring a single ripple, and even the dark cursed glow that overflowed from the God Sword seemed frozen in an invisible circle around Gu Hang.

At this point, shouldn't Victor realize what he was facing?

These two strikes surely would have shattered even the highest Divine Sovereign Demon or any Subspace Inferior God. If not killed on the spot, at least seriously injured, needing to leave ingloriously.

But seeing Gu Hang's completely unaffected demeanor...

Is this the god he intended to slay?

He had once, in some arrogant nights, fantasized that unless Slaanesh personally came, no one could withstand the Comoros God Sword that he wielded.

In the end, Gu Hang shattered his fantasy so easily.

Or could it be said, Gu Hang had reached that level?

How could that be possible!

In Subspace, there was already a cold sun seated upon a Golden Throne. How could another equal existence be born among humans, a race like primitive monkeys?

He did not believe it.

Or rather, it didn't matter whether he believed it or not, he had no choice.

With two strikes, the Comoros God Sword had almost exhausted Victor. One more sword strike, and Victor might face life-threatening danger.

However, he still resolved to swing again!

Yet before he could even unleash a new strike, Gu Hang, who was still in the distance a moment ago, was now within arm's reach!

Though Gu Hang, who drew near, was just an ordinary human in stature, even shorter than the average height of the Dark Spirit Race. Yet in Victor's perception, it was as if an indescribably immense presence had suddenly arrived right in front of him.

Victor didn't even have time to make any response before Gu Hang's hand had already penetrated his own powerful Spiritual Energy Shield, reaching directly for his right hand which tightly gripped the sword hilt.

Chapter 957: Divine Battle (Part 2)

An icy, irresistible force instantly locked Victor's right wrist bone.

The chill of death suddenly froze him!

At this moment, not only was his body immobile, but even his consciousness and thoughts became very slow.

And the greater change came from the sword in his hand.

Gu Hang never thought that Victor could bring him any trouble. Victor's combat power was perhaps comparable to the Bone Shattering King?

In any case, even if he was strong, he couldn't be on another level.

However, those two sword strikes of his were indeed very fierce.

Any champion chosen by a god, or even a strong being at the Subspace Great Demon level, would disintegrate under that sword; even at the level of the Son of God or the top-level Divine Sovereign Demon, two sword strikes would leave them seriously injured and on the verge of death.

Unfortunately for him, he happened to run into Gu Hang, didn't he?

But Gu Hang's time was also limited.

Every moment he spent away from the Storm God Kingdom, no longer supervising the entirety of the Alliance, came at a cost — and that cost was the Alliance.

The risks of various chaotic corruptions increased a hundredfold the instant he left. In this short interval, possibly hundreds of Alliance officials had seeds of something waiting to bud planted in their souls. They might resist the corruption with their willpower in the future, but they might also step onto a path of no return due to desire, the pursuit of merit, health, knowledge... myriad factors.

In the hinterland of the Alliance, at the lower levels of those Nest Capital Worlds, perhaps many insane individuals were awakening at this moment. Perhaps they had figured something out and decided to do something big. In the next ten or perhaps several decades, that Nest Capital might face a cult developing in secret...

In any case, Gu Hang needed to hurry back.

But before that, the issue of Victor and the sword in his hand had to be resolved.

Gu Hang wasted no effort, and his Spiritual Energy probed inside the Black Flame Divine Sword.

His exploration was rather rough.

The Black Flame Divine Sword let out a mournful wail like the opening of the heavens! The sword's body surged violently like boiling black flames, and the faces of billions of dying beings flashed rapidly in front of Gu Hang.

Even with Gu Hang's ability, he was momentarily distracted.

When he came to, he realized that the sword's body was originally transformed from the shell of an ancient fallen Spirit Race deity, and within it remained its final will.

At this moment, this will had been completely ignited.

It seemed to carry the shadowy side of the entire universe, deep sorrow, mad despair, eternal curses... many negative divinities, ultimately refined.

This was the true face of the Black Flame Divine Sword — the final container of the last desperate will of the fallen Spirit Race deity!

An ancient, non-human stream of overlapping billions of wailing wills crashed fiercely towards Gu Hang!

The final counterattack of Comoros' residual soul had come!

The layer of tranquil obscurity surrounding Gu Hang shattered in an instant.

The space around the arm he extended to grip Victor's wrist peeled away like fragmented mirrors, revealing the boiling void below that could not be directly viewed. At the edges of his figure, tiny ripples like water appeared, as if his very existence was quivering slightly!

The terrifying locking force on Victor's wrist instantly vanished, and his frozen consciousness and body recovered. This was not his own power; at this moment, rather than him controlling the sacred sword, it was more apt to say the sacred sword was controlling his broken body.

He opened his mouth as if roaring, yet no sound emerged. The gap created by the burning of the sword's original will allowed him to grip the hilt with both hands, thrusting the Black Flame Divine Sword, which carried the last hope and curse of his race, fiercely towards Gu Hang's chest!

The blade of black flame, carrying the curse of the fallen deity, the wails of billions of Spirit Race souls, and Victor's personal all-consuming deranged will, pierced Gu Hang's heart without any deviation!

There was no sound of collision; at the moment the sword tip touched, time seemed to freeze.

The next moment, energy sufficient to burst a Star System exploded fiercely with the sword tip as its center! It was a pure rules-level outpouring, the ultimate curse of the Spirit Race deity manifesting against rebels!

The void shattered like glass struck by a giant hammer, with spiderwebs of pitch-black cracks madly spreading, devouring all light and matter around it. The closest alloy structures were as fragile as paper before this energy, twisting, melting, and vaporizing in an instant.

More terrifyingly, the barrier between the veils was completely torn open!

The veils were fragile, unable to bear such a massive explosion.

On one side, the torn veil revealed the star sea of the real universe, while on the other was a bizarre, malicious Subspace!

Though it was just a crack, in an instant, a pair of eyes most interested in Comoros turned to gaze over.

A lascivious laughter, very excited.

Comoros, hidden for so long, was finally found by Him.

Without a doubt, if this crack wasn't closed immediately, Comoros would be doomed. The army of Slaanesh could arrive here in mere breaths, bringing the will of the Evil God, expanding the crack, and bringing every member of the Dark Spirit Race back to the Demon Palace to "enjoy the eternal dream."

However, Victor already couldn't care less.

Even how much of his will remained at this moment was questionable. The despair represented by Comoros was the most insane emotion, a curse heedless of all consequences.

The full-force strike of the Black Flame Divine Sword, with its storm of destruction, continued washing over Gu Hang's figure, swearing to destroy him!

In that split second, a weak yet undeniable lightning flashed open at the core of the black flame.

The flow of time became disordered in the lightning.

Victor's remaining consciousness was horrified to discover that the sacred sword, which he thought had already hit its target, was being... reverse-disintegrated from the tip by that rule lightning!

The cursed black flame rising from the sword tip wasn't extinguished but rather retracted, as if in reverse playback;

The material structure of the sacred sword was forcibly restored to countless rare material particles it was made from, and further disintegrated into the most basic energy information flow at a more microscopic level!

This reverse-disintegration disregarded the resisting will of the sword, rapidly spreading upward along the blade!

The sacred sword, controlling Victor's body, attempted to pull itself out, yet it couldn't free itself. A massive force kept the Black Flame Divine Sword firmly "glued" to Gu Hang's heart.

The Black Flame Divine Sword let out an unprecedented wail!

The core consciousness of Comoros struggled in its dying moments.

When the lightning was about to erode into the sword guard's core, the viscous shadow essence, embodying the ultimate despair of the entire Spirit Race, suddenly contracted. Deep within the sword, the ignited, frenzied shadow belonging to the fallen Spirit God entered a complete and ultimate frenzy after continuous suppression.

It abandoned attacking Gu Hang, instead collapsing inward all its reality-devouring power — intending to drag the entire sacred sword and its internal residual will into mutual annihilation!

At this moment, Gu Hang's left hand finally extended, fingers long and steady, lightly pressing on the final remaining hilt of the Black Flame Divine Sword.

Victor's last fragments of will clung to this like a candle in the wind, along with the final will of the deity Comoros.

In an instant, the magnificent shadow of the Storm God Kingdom abruptly descended upon the hilt. Small as it seemed, it was a direct manifestation of the core of the divine realm. The light of countless Thunder Torch Towers stretched out like a starlight network within it.

The sacred sword's remnant body, on the verge of completing its self-destructive process, abruptly halted its inward collapse.

The divine will boiling and roaring within the sword core was instantly pierced, bound, and dragged, with the viscous shadow essence containing the last despair and power of the Spirit Race deity being drawn out like a spine, transformed into a filthy black energy torrent, forcibly extracted from the sacred sword, and absorbed into the highest Thunder Tower of the divine realm.

Deprived of its support, the Black Flame Divine Sword completely ceased its self-destruction. There was no explosion, no energy release; the remaining hilt and blade quickly carbonized and disintegrated into basic inorganic ash, dispersing like bones dried for eons in the wind.

And Victor—the former overlord of the Dark Spirit Race ruling Comoros—had long since been completely drained and sacrificed by the sacred sword along with the shattering of his last will, leaving not even a speck of dust.

And Gu Hang's right hand at this moment also touched the rapidly expanding void rift on the other side.

An invisible force smoothed the rift, forcibly redirecting the boiling Subspace Energy back, dimming the starlight of the real universe.

The formerly lascivious laughter suddenly turned into a malicious curse.

Chapter 958

Gu Hang finally moved. It was not to evade, but to step forward. In that single stride, the concept of distance was utterly overturned. He seemed to disregard the singularity's terrifying gravitational field and warped space-time curvature, traversing directly through the long folds of space twisted by chaotic laws between them, and descended before the singularity about to be annihilated. That left hand, which had been lifted and never lowered, at last stretched out, five fingers long and steady, between them swirling ineffable, profound starlight. He did not reach out to touch the agitated, burning, frantically collapsing black singularity, but instead that hand gently, immaterially pressed upon the last remnants of the Sword of Como's hilt—there, where Viktor's final will fragment clung like a dying candle to the wind. In the instant that hand fell, the phantom of the Storm God Kingdom erupted, vaster and mightier than the Venus Ring Mountain Range! This was no mere projection, no illusion, but a direct manifestation of the core rules of the Divine Realm! Countless lights from the Thunder Torch Towers stretched out like a chain of stars, spanning across the material universe and subspace, and within the phantom of the Divine Realm, innumerable divine chains of law, imbued with thunder and the order of the stars, probed forth as if alive! These chains ignored the gravitational collapse of the singularity, disregarded the barriers of the divine sword's own material, defied the walls between matter and energy, and, like spiritual snakes, stabbed with precision into the turbulent source depths of the self-destructing sword—the core of that viscous shadow! At the moment when the law-chains pierced the heart of shadow, Viktor's last fragments of consciousness were swept over, ground to dust, and scattered by this frozen order. All the remnants of will with which he had infused the sword's body through the burning of his life were forcibly reformatted by the laws of the Divine Realm. Gu Hang's fingers gave a gentle snap. "Deprivation." The silent command resonated at the level of the fundamental laws of the cosmos. The "singularity" that was about to complete its process of self-destruction abruptly halted its ultimate

implosion! The divine will boiling and roaring in the sword's core was penetrated, bound, and dragged by the divine chains of law in an instant! That viscous shadow source, holding the final despair and might of the spirit race's deity, like a spinal cord being extracted, transformed into a dirty torrent of black energy, was forcibly extracted from the exploding "singularity"!

Chapter 958: Expelling the Evil God

The rift between the veil was gradually smoothed over, causing a certain entity to become anxious.

Gu Hang was somewhat nervous.

Victor summoned the Comoros Divine Sword, capable of shattering the void, unexpectedly exceeding his expectations. By the time the veil's spatial barriers started to crack and show signs of collapse, Gu Hang had already intervened at the first opportunity.

However, dealing with that divine sword took a bit of effort.

The fact that the spatial barriers were cracking was already an established fact, inevitably attracting the attention of Slaanesh.

Gu Hang didn't want to confront Slaanesh directly at this stage.

The risks were too high.

Regardless of whether Gu Hang could reach the same level as those four Evil Gods, even if he did, a direct confrontation would be unwise.

Moreover, he didn't have any confidence at all.

If he were sitting in the Storm God Kingdom, in his own domain, it might have been better.

Even if he couldn't win, at least he wouldn't lose.

As long as he didn’t completely fail, everything would still be negotiable. After all, Gu Hang had a major external ally, and should a certain Evil God decide to attack him recklessly, that entity likely wouldn’t stand idly by.

But in Comoros, outside his domain, he had no confidence at all.

Still, even without confidence, he couldn’t do nothing.

He extended his hand, and an unassuming thunder spear gathered in his palm.

A moment later, the thunder spear was suddenly hurled out, during the process of the rift being smoothed, and in the blink of an eye, it was swept into the waves of Subspace, creating a concentrated vortex.

After completing this strike, even Gu Hang felt slightly breathless.

But it didn’t matter, for when the Prince of Lust’s vicious curse suddenly stopped, Gu Hang gave a slight smile.

At least he could buy some time.

As long as he had this time, it would suffice.

The rift that was just repaired would soon transition from fragile and turbulent to completely restored.

Slaanesh didn’t manage to arrive.

That was excellent news.

When the veil was no longer at risk of collapsing, and Slaanesh's Demon Army couldn't find its way here through the gap, Gu Hang's tasks were effectively complete.

His figure gradually blurred, like ink sinking into the water, completely disappearing from the battlefield center.

In the distance, twelve individuals wearing Spiritual Energy crowns, with a massive crown Spiritual Master in the center, collapsed to the ground together. Half of them fell into unconsciousness, while the other half suffered from splitting headaches, yet each of their eyes shone with immense shock and delight.

They were shocked by the divine-level battle they witnessed and couldn't comprehend.

They delighted in the brief observation, which might offer insights beneficial for a lifetime.

The premise was that they had to recover from this loss.

...

The war in Comoros didn't subside.

The suddenly resumed conflict clearly represented the Dark Spirit Race's unwilling attitude.

Even though Victor died, along with the elite Spirit Race troops he led in the attack against Queen Rose Port, they were buried together. But after the initial chaos, the Spirit Race quickly elected a new leader—Maraki, the governor of the Shadow-Eating Clan, leading them to continue the fight.

However, the fatal issues still persisted.

Even though the Dark Spirit Race seemed resolute in their fighting spirit, losing their highest commander suddenly, even with someone taking over, wouldn't lead to a smooth reorganization of the command

system. They were initially in a fierce, almost all-out attacking posture. Due to the command center's chaos, their offensive coordination was quite poor.

They were repelled by humans.

By this point, the situation was quite dire.

One must not forget that the human troops on the opposite side weren't just on the defensive.

By coincidence, the humans were entirely in an offensive posture with their pre-war arrangements.

And when the Dark Spirit Race's overall offensive posture was pushed back, the human offensive appeared unstoppable.

A significant number of city districts, lacking defenders, were occupied by human forces, solidifying into defensive lines. Originally fragile, the linear occupied zones expanded significantly outward, forming a connected defense that was easier to protect.

Of the eight concession ports, which had been recollected by the Dark Skin troops to six, the entire offensive collapsed, and within the following two weeks, humans gradually reclaimed each one.

The most dangerous time had already passed.

Humans weren't destroyed when the Terra Expeditionary Army just left, and new troop reinforcements had yet to arrive.

Then, it was the Alliance's turn.

And it would continue to be the humans' turn.

Due to the battle between Gu Hang and Victor, Queen Rose Port suffered extensive damage. However, the Reception Tower was alright, energy reserves were okay, the Veil Spirit Gate remained intact, and troops were sent over in waves. The only issue being the path out of the port having some difficulties and a slower efficiency before repairs were completed.

However, as all eight concession ports were occupied, because of the war's resumption, they were no longer restricted by any rules and began transporting troops with full force.

In just one month, the Alliance's Central Front Army surged with over eighty percent of its total strength.

This surpassed the humans' peak strength during the first phase of the Comoros war.

Based on this, the human army commenced a full-scale offensive.

The Dark Spirit Race was suppressed step by step.

Victory could conceal many issues, whereas failure would exacerbate many more problems.

Maraki ascended hastily but lacked both Victor's prestige and the ability to dominate all internal factions. His organizational and internal management skills were far inferior to Victor's.

As the leader of an entire race, he was unqualified.

Successive failures devastated his already fragile reputation. The Dark Skin factions completely lacked confidence in succeeding where Victor couldn't, under his leadership.

Realizing the precarious situation, Maraki attempted an unsuccessful internal purge.

The failure lay in the fact that, although some dissenters were removed, it fueled even more opposition.

He was assassinated while in office.

Subsequently, in the war, the Dark Skin couldn’t appoint the next leader.

Various Dark Spirit Race factions independently governed for a period.

Some insisted on resisting, then were severely beaten; some conserved their strength, which meant conceding several strategic points to humans; some advocated for renewed peace talks, which were completely ignored by the Alliance.

Even a previously effective strategy in wartime was useless when revisited.

They sent raiding fleets to the real universe, attempting to replicate the previous disruption route against the Alliance’s interior.

However, the Alliance, wary of past losses, intensified defenses, using the pause in the Dark Side Expedition to withdraw a large number of fast ships to form a ’Hunting Fleet’ specifically to counter the Dark Spirit Race’s raids.

The difficulty of again destroying Alliance hinterland planets climbed sharply.

Additionally, the Dark Spirit Race’s most excellent raiding commander, the former governor of Dusk Fang, Isara, was betrayed by them, hanged on the spot during the signing of a previous ’toilet paper’, with no chance of soul recovery.

Without an excellent commander, the raiding fleet’s threat significantly diminished.

Coupled with the Dark Spirit Race’s internal chaos, support for the raiding fleet was insufficient. Some surrender factions even sold the coordinates of Veil Spirit Gates in the real universe to the Alliance, seeking a temporary respite from the Alliance’s attacks on their territory...

All these factors combined made the Dark Spirit Race’s most threatening actions increasingly feeble.

At this point, even if the war hadn’t ended, so what?

They were utterly finished.

In this broader context, Gu Hang heard that a Dark Spirit Race leader, thought to have been purged under Victor’s rule, suddenly returned.

It was the old crone.

Chapter 959:

The flow of time suddenly becomes chaotic within the lightning. Victor, in horror, discovers that the divine sword he has thrust with all his might, already striking the target, is actually being... reversed and disintegrated by the lightning of rules from the sword tip! The curse black flame rising from the sword tip isn’t extinguished but retracts like a video playing in reverse; the material level structure of the divine sword is forcibly restored to countless rare material particles that constructed it, further decomposed into the most fundamental flow of energy information at a more micro level. This reverse flow resembles the highest command of some cosmic rule, ignoring the sword’s own will to resist, quickly spreading upwards along the sword! This disintegration frightens Victor from the depths of his soul more than any direct attack! He tries to pull out the divine sword but finds it seemingly "glued" by invisible force to Gu Hang’s heart! No, not glued, it is the reverse disintegration process itself of the rule lightning that creates an irresistible "suction." As weak as paper, it instantly twists, melts, and vaporizes, like a bubble encountering a close-up supernova core explosion. The space barrier is completely torn apart, revealing the bizarre, malicious torrent of Subspace Energy behind it. This is Victor’s full strength blow, using the Komo Divine Sword, containing rule-level power that negates the existence of gods! A destruction storm formed by black flame continuously washes over the tiny figure. Just as Victor’s heart, soaked in despair and ignited with a trace of ecstasy, is about to leap out of his chest, a weak yet unavoidable lightning breaks open at the core of the storm. This is not a dazzling thunderbolt, but more like the spark of "order" itself, interwoven by endless chains of rules, pure to the extreme. Lightning flashes and bursts open at the sword tip of the Komo Divine Sword, which pierced Gu Hang’s heart!

Chapter 959: The Old Matriarch

Looking at the old woman who came to visit, Gu Hang was still somewhat curious.

He hadn’t intended to meet with this new leader of the Dark Spirit Race.

Talks had no meaning.

Even though the diplomatic envoys on both sides continued to maintain contact and communication after Victor's death, humanity had essentially lost the desire to negotiate with the other side, repeatedly emphasizing the demand for unconditional surrender.

For humans, doing so was straightforward—partly because the Dark Spirit Race's credibility was questionable, though humanity wasn't much better. But the biggest reason was that, from the perspective of the Alliance, with Victor's death and the Dark Spirit Race's successive defeats, they had lost all bargaining chips for negotiation.

Military defeat and political turmoil made the Alliance determined to push for the complete occupation of all of Comoros strategically.

Once totally victorious, everything would be mine, so why negotiate any terms?

After the last peace talks, the Terra Expeditionary Army, which was in a hurry to leave, had already departed. For the Dark Spirit Race, this meant sending away a strong force, gaining an opportunity for offensives, but conversely, it also benefited humans.

Originally, one key reason humans were willing to engage in peace talks was the concern that prolonged events in Comoros could lead to unacceptable changes on Holy Terra.

Although the Alliance had a plan—the expeditionary fleet with Veil Spirit Gate equipment had long set out to seek a route to Holy Terra.

However, that was at best a backup plan.

The sooner they could act on this basis, the better.

The last peace talk had already provided a good opportunity.

Even though Robert's departure took away a large force and occupied the transport capability of the Veil Spirit Gate for a considerable time, seemingly weakening humanity's power in Comoros, it simultaneously relieved the Alliance of concerns about Holy Terra.

No more worry about the affairs of Holy Terra, only focusing on Comoros.

The Alliance, able to give it their all, coupled with Gu Hang's intervention and Victor's death in battle, left Comoros with no room to retaliate.

Now, if they wanted to engage in peace talks again, there were simply no chips to negotiate with.

Until the old woman appeared.

According to the report Gu Hang received, she logically should have been purged by Victor before the peace talks.

The old woman has a very special status, considered a religious leader among the Spirit Race, also an entity that is superior to many family governors. In times of crisis for the Spirit Race, it is quite reasonable for her to step out and stabilize the situation.

After all, her prestige is well-established.

What puzzled Gu Hang was that she was actually not dead.

Originally, upon learning that the old woman had been purged by Victor, Gu Hang had felt quite regretful.

The Storm Heroic Spirit managed to infiltrate Comoros so smoothly and rise step by step, able to access some core secrets and information of the Dark Spirit Race within decades, thanks largely to the Witch Spirit Cult.

There was a vague presence of the old woman within it.

She had never directly established any contact with Gu Hang through the Storm Heroic Spirits. However, Gu Hang believed she seemed to be proactively allowing certain things.

This was just a feeling, and throughout the decades of the Storm Heroic Spirits' activities in Comoros, Gu Hang regarded it as a form of mutual understanding between the two parties.

After the war in Comoros officially broke out, and the Storm Heroic Spirits played a crucial role, Gu Hang intended to find a way to establish contact with the old woman.

However, contacting her was no easy task, especially once all the Storm Heroic Spirits were exposed, there were no longer any infiltrators.

The Alliance's regular operatives, often disguised as enslaved humans under the Dark Spirit Race, were significantly limited in their actions, capable only of obtaining low-level intelligence and accessing lower-tier members.

Attempting to reach the old woman through this path was a hassle.

However, there was another path.

The diplomatic route.

Since the beginning of the war, diplomatic activities between humans and the Dark Elves had not ceased. There were Dark Spirit Race ambassadors stationed with the Alliance, and similarly, Alliance diplomatic envoys came with many accompanying military officers and guards.

From this perspective, a significant proportion of these people were from the Alliance's intelligence department. They would take advantage of various diplomatic activities to attempt contact with high-level figures within the Dark Spirit Race.

They also had tasks to contact the Witch Spirit Cult, especially aiming to reach the old woman. However, as a religious leader, the old woman generally did not appear at most events, making contact nearly impossible.

Although the intelligence department's agents never abandoned the mission, the old woman suddenly vanished before they could succeed.

Despite the purge of this religious leader being kept confidential within the Dark Spirit Race, how could such things remain secret?

With the religious leader absent, many high-level members of the Witch Spirit Cult were replaced, and many of their original privileges were reduced... even without clear evidence, it wasn't difficult to infer what had happened.

Gu Hang felt a bit emotional upon learning the news.

But he hadn't expected her not to die, yet she now held power.

The first task she undertook after gaining power was internal consolidation.

This step proceeded relatively smoothly.

The Dark Spirit Race could recognize that they were facing the danger of extinction. Under such circumstances, if they did not unite, it would indeed be the end. The old woman possessed enough prestige to bind all factions together; no matter how ambitious individual forces were, they had to respect the bigger picture.

The most important point in uniting the Dark Spirit Race was that the old woman could provide a solution to stop the war.

This suggestion elated the Dark Spirit Race internally, but when the specific solution was heard, it sparked a huge uproar.

Unconditional surrender.

While the Dark Spirit Race could accept surrender,

everyone hoped to discuss terms clearly, even if it meant becoming dogs, they'd accept. After all, seeing the war was unwinnable, the nest had already been breached, and what they could use as bargaining chips was very little.

However, unconditional surrender was still too hard to bear.

On one hand, the Dark Spirit Race had, for thousands of years, relied mainly on exploiting slaves and external plundering as means of existence. Although they were not particularly targeting humans, humans, as the dominant race of the material universe, with most habitable planets and largest population, were regardless plundered most often. The number of humans captured and enslaved currently numbered in the tens of billions, occupying more than seventy percent of all slaves held by the Dark Spirit Race.

This scale, spread across the entire thousand-year history of the Human Empire, how many tears and blood have been shed under the rule of dark skins?

Racial animosity was clear as day.

Moreover, they were well aware of the Human Empire's usual stance towards all non-human races—annihilation.

Unconditional surrender meant handing the butcher's knife to humans, then raising their necks in submission, leaving it entirely to human whim whether heads would roll on any given thought.

Why do this?

If extinction of the entire race was inevitable, why not perish in resistance rather than surrender so ignominiously and face easy extermination?

Why become a leader of enough stature only to lead an entire race to this?

But the old woman was obviously resolute, no matter how the internal feedback was, she clearly conveyed her will to the Alliance ambassador and requested a meeting with Gu Hang.

Gu Hang consented.

Chapter 960

The power of the dimensional rift. When the last common lord of the Spirit Race lifted the celestial sword above his head, the sword light that did not physically fall had already erupted in full force. It was a vacuum abyss devouring starlight, with twisted physical laws wailing and shattering at the edge of the abyss, directly cutting towards the crucial anchor point to the real universe — the energy conduit array at the core of Queen Rose Port. He no longer cared about any strategy or tactics; destroying this node equaled completely severing the throat of humanity's reinforcement. This was the last desperate gamble of the Dark Spirit Race!

Yet that destructive sword light, capable of swallowing stars, did not touch the glimmering conduit array. A figure silently descended before the abyss's edge. Without the fluctuation of space jumps, without the sign of energy gathering, he seemed overly "real," like an anomaly that shouldn't exist in this distorted domain. Gu Hang, the creator of the Alliance and the embodiment of the Storm God Kingdom, merely raised an arm. His five fingers grasped the air without brilliance or roar; the Chaotic Abyss, cut by the celestial sword, which could extinguish the laws of the material universe, crashed against an invisible cosmic barrier. The screech of dimensional tearing instantly became a muffled whimper, with the abyss-like light flow forcibly compressed and condensed! In a flash, a river of resplendent energy, flowing with stardust and galaxies, was "pinched" in Gu Hang's palm. It no longer wantonly cut through space but flowed gently like a ribbon between his fingers. He even looked down at this magnificent river of light, transformed by the ultimate destructive power of the Cormo Sword of Destruction, with no expression on his face, calm to the point that Victor's soul core felt a cold sting — this was not fear, but an instinctual warning from a higher-dimensional being facing an unknown level of existence. Victor's pride didn't allow him to retreat; the Cormo Sword seemed to sense its master's resolve, and the black gem on its hilt, which devoured starlight, suddenly lit up with countless malicious runes. A screech that pierced through the soul dimension exploded within the gem, not a sound but a direct negation of the essence of existence. Any mortal life merely grazed by the ripples of this screech would be thoroughly "erased" from existence, along with its history and causality returning to nothingness. This was a manifestation of a fraction of the God of Thousand Faces' core power, known as the "Extermination Echo."

Chapter 960: God of 1,000 Faces

Gu Hang was willing to see the old woman, as her unconditional surrender and the fact that she once seemed to have released goodwill towards humans, acting as a 'Dark Elves insider,' were important factors.

However, to speak of the most decisive factor, it was that Gu Hang had many questions he wanted to ask the old woman.

About many things.

...

"Let's start with the surrender of the Spirit Race." Gu Hang's sitting posture was rather casual.

The old woman did not speak immediately; she was just observing Gu Hang.

For the gods, such direct observation and staring were actually not good.

But she couldn't help it.

The biggest reason lay in the image Gu Hang presented, which was just too... normal.

He was wearing attire that, from a human's aesthetic perspective, was somewhere between formal and casual. It was not complicated but maintained a certain dignity. He was sitting in a chair at that moment, his posture casual, but not overly frivolous.

This matched the image of a leader of human forces.

But it matched too well, so much so that it made the old woman feel very unreal.

Just looking at him like this, you couldn't see anything.

Taking a deep breath, the old woman began to honestly answer the questions.

She was representing the Dark Spirit Race to discuss the matter of unconditional surrender.

So-called unconditional surrender does not mean simply putting down weapons without a word or having no conditions whatsoever. Rather, it means not negotiating; the victor only communicates unilateral surrender demands and specific details of surrender, such as time and place, to the defeated nation.

Meanwhile, the victor does not recognize the former government, political groups, or leaders of the defeated party as having any political power. From the moment of signing the surrender, until establishing new relations with the victor, all functions of the defeated party's government are exercised by the victor's military command institution.

Though there is no negotiation, the Dark Spirit Race still wished to get a statement on the aftermath of surrender from the Alliance.

The reason they were willing to surrender, firstly, was, of course, because they had no choice, they couldn't win.

The second point, brought out by the old woman, was her belief that surrendering to humans was not only the end of this war but also the hope for the Spirit Race's new development in a new phase.

In other words, she did not believe that the Spirit Race's unconditional surrender, along with Comoros and the entire race under the Alliance's jurisdiction, would be a catastrophic disaster for the Spirit Race.

On the contrary, this was the future. The Spirit Race would develop better because of this.

Upon hearing this, Gu Hang chuckled and spoke.

"What gives you the basis for such a judgment? Perhaps, after your unconditional surrender, you will face the blade?"

"Would you do that?"

"Possibly so," Gu Hang replied. "The Dark Spirit Race... managing you reasonably is indeed something of high risk. If you launch a rebellion, it would be quite troublesome. Would the benefits of keeping you overweigh the risks of managing and suppressing you, that's quite an unknown."

Gu Hang's words were quite frank.

The old woman listened but did not turn pale due to the absence of a safety promise or anything like that.

"All of this is Mensa's will; I believe in Mensa, and also in you."

Gu Hang heard something that intrigued him even more.

As for why he held such understanding, it came from their deity—Mensa.

Because Gu Hang had just captured a Spirit Race God, from whom he learned some information.

The former cosmic overlords, Spirit Race Empire, also had their racial deities. Usually, there was some research, saying that the Spirit Race once had many deities, with the so-called Pantheon, where gods sat on high, protecting the entire race.

However, the history of the Spirit Race was too ancient, and the entire race was quite mysterious to humans. Human alien research scholars were quite incomplete in their research on the Spirit Race.

When Gu Hang captured the remaining soul in the Comoros divine sword and began, like in the past, assimilating those captured Great Demon and Neuron Worms, trying to assimilate the subspace essence of this Spirit Race deity.

But he was unsuccessful.

There was subspace essence, and it was quite abundant, no less than a Divine Master Demon—this was just an already defeated Spirit Race God who could only inhabit a so-called divine sword, yet it still had such power!

However, recalling the scene from the previous battle, seeing the three swords wielded by Victor, the remaining soul of Comoros having such a magnitude of power was indeed normal.

If it was just about being powerful, it would only slightly increase the difficulty of assimilation, not make it impossible to consume.

The core problems are twofold.

The first thing Gu Hang encountered was the immense 'mental residue' attached to it. When the Spirit Race Empire collapsed, it seemed that billions of Spirit Race's despair became attached to this God of Despair, carried by it, up until now.

If consumed indiscriminately, the hidden danger would be substantial. Those remnants of despair might continuously resonate in Gu Hang's Storm God Kingdom.

Of course, if it were only like this, it wouldn't stop Gu Hang from 'devouring' it.

It would merely take a bit more time, slowly processing, stripping those remnants away bit by bit.

In summary, it could be considered as troublesome but couldn't prevent Gu Hang from consuming Comoros.

However, the other problem was more complicated.

During the 'consumption' of Comoros, Gu Hang found that this entity was not an independent individual.

It wasn’t just a mere fragment separated; it was connected to a distant, strong existence.

The thing opposite, even if it wasn’t akin to the Four Gods or The Emperor, at least it was on the same level as himself.

However, it seemed to be in a very weakened state.

Though this connection was very concealed, unless Gu Hang was attempting to consume, assimilate Comoros, it would be hard to discover; yet, this concealed link was exceedingly solid.

It seemed...

They were originally one entity, different manifestations of the same existence.

This prevented Gu Hang from consuming it unless he could pull the other end of the connection over.

"What exactly are these Spirit Race deities all about? Could the old woman explain my doubts?"

"I very much wish to explain for you, but I cannot do it." The old woman replied truthfully.

But before Gu Hang could express disappointment, he saw the old woman’s body suddenly begin to glow faintly.

"However, you can directly converse with..."

Her voice began to become ethereal, and then her voice experienced some changes, transforming into a dual male-and-female voice:

"...directly converse with us."

Gu Hang’s expression focused.

Comoros’ remaining soul and the remote-linked existence seemed to have appeared before him just like that.

"Who are you?"

"I am Windsor, also Mensa, and also Comoros... one god, thousand faces."

"I am the myriad statues within the Pantheon, the reflection of all accomplishments, emotions, and thoughts of the Spirit Race..."

Upon hearing this, Gu Hang waved his hand: "Enough... I know what you are."

"Just failures. I used to think you were a group of failures, turns out you are really just one, isn’t it?"