

Wow 981

Chapter 981: Encirclement (Part 2)

"Boss! I can't hold on anymore!" Black Beast gritted her teeth over the channel, her mecha surrounded by the Bug Race, making maneuvering increasingly difficult, "You guys continue! I'll stay here and draw their fire!"

In this intense battle, she had already considered sacrificing herself.

"Keep moving!" Bai E's voice was indisputable, his blade flashed, freeing her from the encirclement.

But with an injured member, the team's advance was significantly slowed.

Finally, after the arduous destruction of the command node of the second giant ship, Black Beast's mecha energy was critically low, with multiple internal system alarms, unable to continue high-intensity combat.

"Sir... I..." Black Beast looked at her nearly paralyzed mecha, her eyes full of reluctance.

"Retreat and assist in defending the space station," Bai E ordered, "You've done enough."

Black Beast gritted her teeth, piloting the damaged "Night Owl," arduously returning in the direction of the "Shield of Defense" space station.

Now only three members remained in the team.

The third giant ship.

Its internal defense was outrageous.

Almost every step triggered new traps and ambushes.

Victor's "Dawn" mecha, after continuous high-intensity combat and damage, finally reached its limit.

While dodging a flood of acid, the main thruster overheated and exploded, the mecha lost balance, hit directly by a plasma cannon from a heavily armored giant bug.

"Boom!" Dawn's chest armor melted through, Victor roared in rage, desperately controlling the mecha to fire its remaining weapons.

"Victor!" Catherine exclaimed.

"Get him out of here!" Bai E sliced through the heavily armored giant bug, shouting to Catherine.

No time for grief, no time for rescue, every second could bring a new attack.

Catherine's eyes were red, but she knew Bai E was right.

The Silver Feather mecha extended a mechanical arm, grabbed the remnants of Dawn, using all its strength to drag it towards the nearest breach.

"Hold on, Victor!"

"Bai E... I'm sorry..." Victor's voice echoed weakly in the channel and then went silent, extremely feeble.

Now, only Bai E and Catherine remained, facing the more intense defenses deep within the third giant ship.

Catherine's "Silver Feather" was already heavily scarred, the sniper rifle overheated and replaced several times, with spiritual energy links intermittently cut off.

But she gritted her teeth, still using precise shots to clear threats for Bai E.

Her shooting talent exploded to its fullest potential at this moment, always finding the most vulnerable junctions of the specialized Bug Race units, saving Bai E precious physical and spiritual energy.

The two cooperated seamlessly, like two ghosts traversing a mountain of blades and sea of flames, finally destroying another command node.

However, when they escaped from the third giant ship, they were despairingly aware that the Bug Race fleet and the "Traitor Fleet" seemed to have reached some sort of understanding, temporarily slowing their attack on the Karian defense line, instead starting to... tighten the encirclement!

The target was clearly the area where Bai E and Catherine were!

"Are they... targeting us?" Catherine's voice trembled.

Six giant Bug Race ships, along with that Traitor Fleet, were forming a massive, slow but steady net, intending to trap them in this starry sky!

"No, they're targeting me." Bai E's voice was terrifyingly calm.

In his "Insect Race Killer" perception, that hidden and enormous malice, like a cold deep sea, was slowly closing in from all directions.

The Bug Race's initial target might have been more than just a planet.

Devouring planets was instinct, but capturing or eliminating him, the "Insect Race Killer," could be an even higher-level directive!

The previous failure on the competition planet led them to adopt a more cautious and deadly strategy—

Using a planet and countless human fleets as bait and consumables to set up this lethal trap!

"Catherine, you retreat as well." Bai E said, looking towards the massive Bug Race ship in the distance with the most hidden spiritual energy fluctuations.

The Brain Worm was likely there or on one of the remaining two ships.

Regardless, he had to go.

"No! I can still fight!" Catherine stubbornly shook her head, Silver Feather mecha raising its sniper rifle, even though the barrel was scorching, the mecha also warning.

"That's an order." Bai E turned around, through the communication channel, as if he could see Catherine's violet eyes, "Go back, tell President Edwin and General Aleksey, concentrate all forces, firmly hold the 'Shield of Defense' and planet's final line. The Bug Race's target is me, their attack on the planet will weaken before I fall. You must... wait for the opportunity."

"But you alone..."

"Alone, I'm faster." Bai E interrupted, his tone carrying unquestionable determination.

Catherine looked at the blue and white "Star Emperor" mecha, now covered in scorched and damaged marks, tears flowed uncontrollably.

She knew Bai E was right.

Her presence might be a burden at this point.

And Bai E, alone, might still have a glimmer of hope with his terrifying personal strength and mobility, fighting out of a desperate situation.

"...Please...come back." Catherine's voice choked, maneuvering the Silver Feather mecha, looked deeply at the lone mecha before turning and speeding towards the "Shield of Defense" space station.

Now, only Bai E remained, one man, one mecha, suspended in the cold universe, surrounded by a steel and flesh net slowly closing in.

Six Bug Race bio-ships like five moving mountains, emitting a suffocating spiritual pressure.

Even the three giant ships with command nodes pierced by Bai E still had bio turrets on the surface emitting ominous glows.

And that Traitor Fleet, like hyenas circling a giant beast, flickered with dim cannon fire.

The entire battlefield seemed to fall silent for a moment.

Every surviving human, whether soldiers on the Karian line or high-ranking officials in the command center, saw through observation screens the lone blue and white mecha standing amidst the circle of destruction.

Despair, like the deepest chill, froze every heart.

One man, facing a Bug Race fleet and a Traitor Fleet, enough to devour a planet?

How could this be won?

"Why...why doesn't he retreat?" a young officer murmured.

"Retreat? To where?" General Aleksey shook his head bitterly, yet a nearly mad admiration burned in his eyes, "He's buying us time...using himself as bait."

President Edwin closed his eyes, hands clenched white-knuckled.

He entrusted the planet's fate, the hope of five billion citizens, in this man's hands.

And now, this man was walking alone into certain doom.

The Bug Race fleet completed their encirclement.

No warnings, no communications.

All the firepower from six giant ships and the Traitor Fleet poured destruction at the tiny blue dot at the center of the circle all at once!

Deep blue plasma beams, ghastly green acid projectiles, dense missiles, and the traitor fleet's human-standard artillery...like a deathly firework blooming in the universe, instantly engulfing the space where Bai E was!

"No—!" Catherine screamed heartwrenchingly in the Silver Feather mecha.

The command center fell silent. Everyone seemed to hear their own heart breaking.

Yet, at the core of that destructive energy weave, a point of dazzling blue and white light suddenly shone!

And...grew brighter!

"Humm—!"

An indescribable, vast spiritual energy wave like a Star Sea abruptly erupted!

Centered on that blue and white light point, forming an ever-expanding Spiritual Ability Field!

All attacking energies heading towards him, whether the Bug Race bio firepower or human plasma beams, upon contact with that Spiritual Ability Field, were like mud cows into the sea, forcibly twisted, deflected, even...absorbed!

Chapter 982: The Might of the Human Emperor

"What... is that?" The observer was dumbfounded.

Within the Spiritual Ability Field, the silhouette of the "Star Emperor" Mecha flickered mysteriously.

But at this moment, the Mecha seemed to have undergone some transformation.

Beneath the blue and white coating, Spiritual Energy patterns shimmered brilliantly like a Star River.

The Mecha's body seemed to subtly expand, and even a phantom of Light Wings, composed purely of Spiritual Energy, extended from its back!

The Armor-breaking Spirit Light on the Devouring Star Blade was so dazzling that it was impossible to look directly at it, as if one held a fragment of the Galaxy!

Bai E sat inside the cockpit, feeling as if his soul was burning.

He pushed the perception of the "Insect Race Killer" to unprecedented heights, not just sensing the Bug Race, but resonating with the survival will of the starry sky, of the fifty billion souls on the planet beneath!

Those prayers born of despair, those steadfast stands, those heroic sacrifices... transformed into a vast and tragic power, merging into his Spiritual Energy!

This was not his power alone.

This was the will of Karian Planet, the final radiance humanity emitted in dire straits!

The once-tamed nest will now gathered all the human wills that beheld this scene.

Bai E's sword was linked with everyone.

"Bug Race..." Bai E's voice, through some Spiritual Energy resonance, rang directly in the consciousness of all humans and the Bug Race, calm, yet carrying the majesty to crush stars, "Your hunt ends here."

In the next moment, the "Star Emperor" Mecha moved.

No charging, no dodging.

It simply raised the Devouring Star Blade and sliced remotely at the nearest Bug Race battleship!

No earthshaking explosion sound.

Only a blue-white blade light, refined to the extreme, appeared to slice through the universe's curtain, directly manifesting on that giant ship's hull!

"Shhhh—!"

Like a hot knife cutting into butter.

The tremendously thick biological armor, strong enough to withstand main battleship cannon blasts, before this blade light divided like paper mache!

The blade light continued its momentum, pierced through the battleship, severing its Spiritual Energy circuits, flesh cavities, command nodes... everything, completely destroying any possible hidden brain worm avatars or sub-core!

With one strike, a Bug Race biological battleship fell silent, its wreckage severed into two pieces slowly drifting in vacuum, its internal Spiritual Energy light completely extinguished.

Silence.

Deathly silence enveloped the whole battlefield.

Both human and Bug Race seemed awed by this incomprehensible strike.

Then, the "Star Emperor" Mecha turned toward the second warship.

The Bug Race fleet finally reacted from shock, with the remaining four giant ships and the traitor fleet unleashing a frenzy of hysterical attacks!

Ten times more intense than before, the firepower covered the space again!

At the same time, the warship surfaces opened countless hatches, sending waves of flying insects and biological crafts out, forming a death cloud that rushed at the blue Mecha!

Bai E's gaze didn't waver at all.

The light wings behind the Mecha gently fluttered, and the body vanished instantaneously, appearing amidst the insect cloud almost like spatial teleportation!

The Devouring Star Blade transformed into a storm of obliteration, where its blade light passed, be it flying insects, biological crafts, or incoming energy beams, all were shattered or annihilated!

He no longer needed to seek weak points; absolute power and speed, coupled with the "Insect Race Killer's" instinctive destruction of the Bug Race, turned him into a true celestial reaper!

The second strike! Another giant warship was cleaved in half!

The third strike! A battleship from the traitor fleet, along with its mutated commander, turned into cosmic dust!

The fourth, fifth strike...

The blue-white Mecha traversed the Bug Race fleet, and each flash accompanied the destruction or severe damage of a warship.

The Bug Race's attacks futilely pursued his shadow, failing to touch even a corner of his garment.

The Spiritual Energy Light Wings provided not only terrifying speed but also formed an Absolute Defense Force Field, blocking all attacks outside.

This wasn't a battle; this was a one-sided massacre!

A massacre conducted by one man against an entire fleet!

Inside the command center, everyone stood up, eyes widened, mouths agape, yet unable to produce any sound.

The scene before them had already exceeded their comprehension.

Was this a miracle? Or a nightmare?

Catherine watched the screen, where that figure seemed divine, with silent tears sliding down, yet her eyes burnt with a fiery intensity.

General Aleksey trembled all over, muttering, "What... kind of existence have we summoned..."

President Edwin took a deep breath, exhaled slowly, as though attempting to expel all fear and despair from his chest, replacing it with an almost devout awe and hope.

The Bug Race fleet completely collapsed.

The remaining two giant ships and the remnants of the traitor fleet began to turn direction desperately, attempting to flee this celestial nightmare.

Within their vast and ethereal Spiritual Energy field, for the first time arose a clear, biological instinct—fear!

"Trying to run?" Bai E's icy voice rang again in everyone's consciousness.

The "Star Emperor" Mecha ceased the chase, hovering in the cosmos.

It gripped the Devouring Star Blade with both hands, raising it high.

Around the Mecha, those brilliant Spiritual Energy patterns shone to the maximum, and the wings behind expanded abruptly, seemingly to embrace the entire Star Domain!

Endless Spiritual Energy gathered from Karian Planet, from the void, and infused into the blade!

Chapter 983: The Might of the Human Emperor! (Part 2)

The Devouring Star Blade emitted an unbearable hum, its light as intense as if it were transforming into a blue star!

Bai E channeled all the power, all the will, all the rage and protection into this blade.

Then, it fell.

No sound.

Only an indescribable blue-white pillar of light pierced through the field of vision and the soul, extending from the Star Emperor mecha toward the fleeing Bug Race fleet and Traitor Fleet!

Where the light passed, space seemed to warp and shatter.

The slowest escaping Bug Race mothership and a few traitor ships grazed by the edge of the light were vaporized instantly, leaving not even wreckage behind.

And at the core of the light, it struck directly at the largest and most subtly pulsating mothership—likely the Brain Worm's hiding spot!

"Screeeee!"

A piercing shriek, beyond human hearing limits, erupted at the spiritual level from within the hit mothership!

It was the Brain Worm's death wail, filled with pain, unwillingness, and... deep terror!

The mothership did not explode but dimmed instantly, as if drained of all life.

...

In the higher-dimensional space that the beings on the Karian Planet and the material universe's entities on the battlefield could not perceive or observe.

At this moment, because of Bai E's soul-burning, ultimate strike gathered from the survival will of five billion beings, an unprecedented fearful wave arose.

The physical world's bodies and the spiritual bodies in higher-dimensional space are intimately connected.

When Bai E in a life-and-death crisis pushed his spiritual energy to the extreme and resonated deeply with the desperate prayer, unyielding defense, and heroic sacrifice of billions of beings on the planet beneath his feet, his mirrored spiritual body in higher-dimensional space likewise underwent a cataclysmic change.

It was no longer like the "candle" or "torch" of an ordinary spiritual ability user, which could be either dim or relatively bright.

At that moment, Bai E's spiritual body in higher-dimensional space, like a supernova, released a radiant light that made countless roaming demons shudder, even instinctively wanting to flee!

The brilliance, the vast and majestic spiritual energy wave, even briefly illuminated a corner of that eternally dark and conceptually vague dimension!

This light not only contained Bai E's own spiritual characteristics as a human but also fused the collective will erupting from five billion beings on Karian Planet at the edge of life and death.

It was survival, protection, defiance, indomitability... it was the purest and strongest cry of life facing destruction.

This collective thought wave from a massive cluster of intelligent life, in this higher-dimensional space built of the thoughts of intelligent beings, caused ripples that were revolutionary.

This light, this wave, penetrated through the layered, indescribable dimensional barriers of higher-dimensional space, alarming certain ancient and terrifying beings that lurked deep within the dimensions and ruled over tides of endless fear, desire, war, plague, and more.

These beings were once referred to by humans as the four Evil Gods, or Demon Gods, of higher-dimensional space, or by other civilizations with different names as ultimate existences.

When the light of Bai E's spiritual body pierced through the darkness, when that spiritual energy wave containing the planet's will swept across...

In a dimensional realm composed of endless fear emotion and ever-changing terrifying visions, countless screams, whispers, and roars came to a pause.

An "eye" older than the stars, filled with endless dread and voyeuristic desire, opened from the depths of the dimension, gazing toward the direction from which the wave came.

It sensed a faint trace that was both familiar and hateful, and mixed with... a barely perceptible but indelible "tremor."

It was a sensation from long ago when a massive Human Galactic Empire was at its peak, its collective thoughts unimaginably concentrated on its ruler, that had caused them trouble and a sense of threat.

Yet, that feeling should have long dissipated with the empire's collapse, and the disappearance and rebirth of that "Human Emperor."

Why... why at this moment, on a battlefield of a remote planet, is a similar flavor felt again?

Although weaker by several times, mixed with Bug Race's aura and the random thoughts of ordinary beings, the core traits of "domination" and "protection" could not be mistaken.

In a dimension where pink, pale purple, and all sorts of extreme joy, love, and desire flowed, yet hid twisted possession and ultimate emptiness at its deepest point, a lazy and surprised "Oh?" resonated.

A mental wave composed like the whispers of billions of lovers spread: "Such a burning flame, so fervently ablaze... truly wishing to treasure him, savoring that sweet intertwining of despair and hope. But this flavor, why does it seem like the mark left by that ill-tempered old friend from back then? Hadn't he long been extinguished?"

In the dimension resonating with eternal battle intentions, echoing with the clash of blades and the roar of warriors, a thunderous shout burst forth: "Combat! Slaughter! Destruction! Hahaha! Such pure battle intent! Such unyielding struggle! This planet, this life form! Deserves a grand war as a sacrifice!"

And in a dimension garden filled with scenes of decay, mutation, rebirth, and the endless cycle of death, a bloated figure let out a hoarse, phlegmy eerie laugh.

On its body, pustules ruptured and renewed, countless plague spirits joyfully danced at its feet: "It's him... he's back again!"

The will of the four deities momentarily converged at a higher level, information passed among them in a way that transcended time.

"The plot has failed, this is indeed the mighty Human Emperor!"

"Hmph~ As expected, when has their plan ever succeeded?"

"Didn't they promise that as long as we remained silent, we could send off this cycle of the Human Emperor's rebirth... and what happened? The Human Emperor is always the Human Emperor, no matter how many times he falls and rises again, he'll always return."

"Why return at all? Why does he want to come back?!"

"His empire has long crumbled, and his sources of power have long been shattered. We orchestrated those rebellions, watched those arrogant 'Children of the Empire' betray their emperor, and divide the empire's legacy. The 'Human Emperor's' path is already severed!"

"But the fact is, he's back again! He's walking the path once traveled by the 'Human Emperor,' even if only at its start."

"We must stop him! Before he truly grows, and regathers the scattered faith of humanity!"

"The plot has failed, we should confront the Human Emperor! I always said that remaining silent was the dumbest idea."

"Hmph! Back then I made them betray their emperor, now I still can. Those who cling to the center of the galaxy, proclaiming themselves the 'true heirs of the Empire,' the 'Children of the Empire,' their current power and status, all built on past betrayal. They fear the Human Emperor's return more than anyone, even its slightest possibility."

"Guide them. Hint to them. Utilize them. Let them deal with Bai E, deal with any forces he might build. Let humans themselves smother their hope of resurgence."

"Meanwhile, continue sowing more seeds. Seek more susceptible and easily tempted human individuals. Lurk, grow, and when the time is right, stab from behind."

"Proceed as planned. Let this Bai E, and his so-called dream of Human resurgence, drown in human internal conspiracies and betrayals! The Human Emperor's road? Ha... destined to be a solitary path filled with thorns, ultimately buried by his own people, a road of no return."

The will of the four deities reached a consensus, like a cold and viscous undercurrent, began surging deep within high-dimensional space.

They moved toward the material universe, especially permeating specific nodes and entities closely linked with higher dimensions.

They intended to scatter new bait, new whispers, new fears and ambitions into the world of humans.

Particularly in the hearts of those with power, ambition, and complex feelings towards the glory of the past or the rise of the new.

Chapter 984: The Uncontrollable One

In the material world, on the battlefield at the edge of the Karian Star System, Bai E was completely unaware of the undercurrents and conspiracy in the high-dimensional space caused by him.

The ultimate beam slashed by the "Star Emperor" mecha, after completely obliterating the Brain Worm and its associated biological giant ship, slowly dissipated into the deep space of the universe.

The battlefield was plunged into dead silence.

The last remaining giant ship of the Bug Race and a few surviving traitor fleet ships had long severed their spiritual energy links or control systems in boundless fear, floating or slowly drifting in space like headless flies, completely losing their combat will.

The defensive fleet and orbital platforms of the Karian Federation also fell into silence. Everyone was immersed in the overwhelming impact and bewilderment brought by this victory that transcended understanding and seemed like a miracle.

Until the public communication channel echoed with the voice of President Edwin, choked with emotion and trembling: "We... we won! The Bug Race fleet has been defeated! Karian... is saved!"

This sentence was like a spark igniting a fuse, instantly exploding in a frenzy of surviving ecstasy!

"We won! We won!"

"Long live Mr. Bai Er!"

"Long live Bauhinia!"

The command center erupted with deafening cheers and cries.

Officers hugged each other, and technicians sat slumped in their chairs, crying tears of joy.

Catherine leaned against the control platform of the Silver Feather mecha, tears blurring her vision, yet her face blossomed with a radiant, heartfelt smile.

General Aleksey looked at the blue and white mecha silhouette quietly suspended in the starry sky on the screen and slowly, solemnly, saluted, performing the most standard military salute.

Xing Zhuo stood on the observation bridge of the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance, his heart surging with emotions, but as an experienced commander and politician, he calmed down faster than others.

He immediately ordered: "Immediately organize the battle data and video materials, especially the final combat scenes of Mr. Bai Er, and encrypt them at the highest level! Communication team, prepare high-priority encrypted hyperspace communications, I need to contact the parliament and Business Alliance headquarters directly! Quickly!"

He realized that what happened today would completely change Bai E's status and destiny in the alliance, and even among all known human forces in the universe.

A tactical nuclear bomb capable of single-handedly defeating a Bug Race sub-fleet on the frontlines, its value and deterrent power are immeasurable.

The attitude of the alliance towards him must undergo a complete 180-degree fundamental adjustment!

In the center of the battlefield, Bai E sat in the cockpit of the "Star Emperor" mecha and slowly exhaled a warm breath.

The brilliant spiritual energy patterns on the mecha's surface and the light wings behind were gradually dimming and dissipating.

A strong sense of exhaustion and a certain hollowness at the soul level surged up.

What just happened almost drained all his strength, not only spiritual energy but also mental will.

He could feel that his resonance with the immense will of the Karian planet had weakened and disconnected.

The feeling of wielding power akin to controlling the Star River receded like a tide, leaving a clearer self-awareness— the miraculous strike just now was not his doing alone.

He looked at the mecha status screen, with many sections marked in red, energy reserves depleted, and armor severely damaged, but the core structure remained intact.

The channel echoed with Catherine's urgent voice: "Sir! How are you? Do you need rescue?"

"I'm fine." Bai E's voice carried a hint of exhaustion, but remained steady, "Notify the Karian side to clean the battlefield, detain prisoners, and treat the wounded. The Bug Race remnants and traitor fleets need careful inspection."

"Yes!" Catherine immediately responded.

Bai E then connected to the direct channel with the "Shield of Defense" command center: "President Edwin, General Aleksey, the crisis is temporarily resolved. But the follow-up handling work is very important, especially the investigation of the traitor fleet, be sure to find out the source and method of their infiltration."

The fact that the Bug Race has special models that can disguise themselves and replace humans should also be made known to these humans in the universe.

President Edwin's voice was full of gratitude and awe: "Mr. Bai Er, we will follow your orders completely! The entire Karian Federation is forever grateful for your kindness! You are our savior!"

"I'm no savior," Bai E calmly responded, "just fulfilling a promise. Now, please fulfill your promise to assist us in stabilizing the situation and provide necessary repairs and supplies. Also, regarding the status of the Bauhinia Republic..."

"Rest assured! Mr. Bai Er!" President Edwin immediately promised, "The Karian Federation will fully support the legitimate status of the Bauhinia Republic in all possible occasions! Moreover, we are willing to establish the closest alliance with your country!"

The political gains are significant.

However, Bai E felt no great joy in his heart, only a deeper sense of urgency.

The threat of the Bug Race was far from over, and what was defeated this time was only a sub-fleet.

The next time they come, who knows what kind of storm will arrive.

...

When Xing Zhuo's urgent communication reached the Peak Alliance's highest council, the previously contentious roundtable fell into dead silence.

The holographic projections repeatedly played the scenes from the Karian Star System battle—

Especially the blue and white beam that pierced through the starry sky, and the image of the "Star Emperor" mecha crushing the Bug Race fleet like a deity.

"We were wrong." One veteran council member, who had firmly opposed cooperation with Bai E, spoke in a dry voice, "He is not a dangerous individual that we can and need to control, but the only savior humanity has against the Bug Race so far."

Chapter 985: The Out of Control Ones (2)

Xing Zhuo's hologram stood in the center of the council, his voice heavy: "The Traitor Fleet has been confirmed as part of the Alliance's Combined Standing Force Seventh Division. The entire crew returned after the last battle against the Bug Race with no abnormal behavior records. However, battle data shows that after the Bug Race fleet launched an attack, the spiritual energy fluctuations synchronized with the appearance of the Bug Race bio-ships reached a peak value."

"The Bug Race has already infiltrated the Alliance's military system." Another representative in a military uniform slammed the table, "We must initiate the Purge Protocol and conduct spiritual energy screening on all frontline troops!"

However, some secret groups met covertly after the public council session ended.

"Bai E's value has exceeded the scope of 'weapon'." An old voice spoke, "He can single-handedly defeat a Bug Race sub-fleet, yet in the future, he could become the Alliance's greatest instability factor."

"But the populace and half the member states already see him as a beacon of hope," another coldly replied, "To act against him now is tantamount to destroying the Great Wall."

The third person chuckled softly, their voice as slick as a serpent: "So we need an 'accident' — for instance, the next Bug Race attack happening just as the Star Alliance Review Group arrives at Mine Star. If Bai E is 'unfortunately' killed by the Bug Race in the defense of Mine Star, he will become a hero, and Mine Star, losing its core defensive power, will fail the review..."

"And then? Mine Star gets devoured by the Bug Race?"

"No, the Bug Race will be repelled by the 'timely arrival' of the Alliance's Combined Fleet. Mine Star will be designated as a 'protected civilization' due to 'lack of self-preservation ability', and will be 'managed' by the Alliance. As for the resource distribution during the custodianship period, technology patents, and the research on Bai E's remains..."

He didn't finish, but the other two in the secret room already understood.

"But will the Bug Race cooperate?"

"They don't need to cooperate. We just need to leak certain 'information' through specific channels, such as the weak points of Mine Star's orbital defense net, Bai E's spiritual energy fluctuation frequency

characteristics, and the exact arrival time of the Review Group... The Bug Race would be interested in such prey, don't they have 'eyes' among us?"

"The risk is too great. If the Bug Race breaks through the defenses, it could affect the entire Star Domain."

"That's why we need a reserve force to save the day at the critical moment..."

"Do our people have that kind of ability?"

"Those elves... might be interested in such matters."

...

After the battle of Karian, the development of Mine Star entered a brief lull.

As the transport fleet from the Karian Federation arrived at Mine Star's orbit, Catherine stood atop the newly built spaceport command tower, looking relieved.

The bet agreement with Golden Swallow Company remained effective, but the payer had become the Karian Federation... part of their gratitude for Bai Er's rescue.

Outside the porthole, dozens of heavy industrial ships were delivering crates of nano construction units, ecological cycle modules, and fusion energy cores to the planet's surface.

"The first batch of material list includes: blueprints for three orbital shipyards, five sets of geocore energy collection systems, and..."

Silver raindrops of nano construction units landed in the designated zones, automatically unfolding into basic frameworks upon landing, where engineering robots swarmed in to reinforce them.

Ecological cycle modules were placed in canyons near Mine Star's equator, with pale blue energy membranes slowly expanding, generating breathable atmosphere within.

The steel framework of the orbital shipyard extended day by day beneath the starry sky, like a skeleton of steel; the ecological cycle modules operated steadily, providing breathable air and a stable water source to some areas.

The miners now had sturdier housing, more ample food, and alongside construction, training, and learning... a gradual yet solid order was being established on this once hopeless planet.

The Karian envoy handed a data pad to Catherine, speaking respectfully, "President Edwin has additionally granted access to the 'Star Alliance Junior Civilization Transition Library'. The survival of five billion sentient beings, thanks to Mr. Bai Er, is worth us giving our all."

Catherine watched the rapid progress of construction on the data pad, silently noting: "The first batch of residential areas will meet occupancy standards within 48 hours, with 30% of the orbital shipyard's basic framework completed..."

The woman wearing golden-rimmed glasses laughed lightly during the communication with Catherine: "It seems your star has found a generous sponsor. But the terms of the agreement won't change — within a year, Mine Star must meet the Level 1 Sovereign Civilization standard. Karian's assistance can only accelerate construction, not replace your passing the Star Alliance's 'Cultural Autonomy Audit'."

"Yes, the problem doesn't lie with the pace of construction." Gong Yan's voice came through the communication channel, as she reviewed the latest reports in the Golden Swallow Company's office.

"Karian Federation's aid means basic materials are no longer in short supply, but the Star Alliance's 'Cultural Autonomy Audit' requires us to demonstrate independent technological research capabilities, cultural identity, and military self-defense systems. Karian's engineers can help us build, but they cannot design for us."

She pulled up a file marked in red: "The most challenging is the 'cultural identity' — the Star Alliance demands the declaration of the planet's primary civilization's origins, historical development, and philosophical ideas. Mine Star only has miners, pirate remnants, and us outsiders, without history, without literature, nor even a coherent legend."

Catherine pressed her forehead.

There was no choice, although Mine Star's development was already in high gear, the challenges remained endless.

Building a universe-level sovereign nation from scratch is not a simple task.

After a series of disheartening troubles, Victor entered the command tower bringing good news: "The Seventh Legion has expanded to three hundred twenty members, all completing basic training on second-generation mecha. But there's bad news... during training, a new recruit's spiritual energy went out of control, almost detonating the mecha's energy core."

Catherine frowned with concern, but didn't take it too seriously, "Let him get some good rest."

The planet's development doesn't relate much to individual prowess; as a leader, Bai E found himself quite idle during this calm period of development.

He mostly stayed in the command center or the newly built training field, making significant decisions, but mostly meditating and recovering.

The battle at Karian consumed him greatly, draining not just spiritual energy, but mental will and some deeper forces.

He needed time to absorb and digest everything from that battle —

Whether insights into the use of power, or warnings brought by the Bug Race and the Traitor Fleet.

On this day, Xing Zhuo's communication request came through.

The background showed him aboard a Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance research vessel, with the typical merchant's smile on his face, but his eyes held an almost imperceptible weariness.

"Mr. Bai Er, Mine Star's development is promising, congratulations." Xing Zhuo's opening remark was polite and perfunctory.

"Thank you." Bai E responded blandly, "Your contact at this time should be for more than just small talk."

Xing Zhuo's smile faded, replaced by a slightly worried expression. "Indeed. Apart from monitoring Mine Star's progress, I mainly came to discuss with you the recent... odd activities within the Star Domain."

He shared an encrypted briefing with Bai E.

The briefing listed over twenty independently reported 'anomalous events' recently within the Peak Alliance's Star Domain.

Event locations were scattered, involving multiple member states, all with similar characteristics:

Spiritual Ability Users suddenly experiencing unexplained spiritual energy loss of control outside combat or high-pressure environments.

"At a Lorin Collective fringe outpost, a mid-level Spiritual Ability User responsible for communications maintenance had a spiritual energy outburst while on night duty, destroying half of the communications array and falling into a deep coma."

"On a Thunder Dragon Empire commercial star, a spiritual energy craftsman was crafting a spiritual energy ornament when it suddenly exploded, incinerating the craftsman's own spiritual energy, with high concentrations of chaotic spiritual energy residue detected on-site."

"Within a Blood Cry Empire training camp, three new Spiritual Ability Users experienced collective loss of control during routine meditation, attacking each other, resulting in one death and two serious injuries. The survivors were mentally deranged, muttering incomprehensible dreams."

"Even within our Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance, there were two similar reports: one on a transport fleet, another at a research outpost. Both were promptly controlled without causing significant damage, but..." Xing Zhuo paused, emphasizing, "The frequency is too high. In past years, such concentrated spiritual energy loss of control incidents were rare, yet in the past month they've been occurring repeatedly."

"Mr. Bai Er, do you think... it might be related to the Bug Race?"

Chapter 986: Inspection Team

Bai E looked at the briefing, his brow slightly furrowed.

Loss of control over Spiritual Energy is not uncommon, especially in situations of high pressure or when mistakes occur during practice.

But the frequency, dispersion, and the intense contamination and aggressiveness of these occurrences are indeed suspicious.

"What are the investigation results?" Bai E asked.

"Investigation?" Xing Zhuo smiled wryly, "After each incident, the involved member countries or powers conducted internal investigations, but the results... were either 'improper personal practice leading to demonic possession,' 'interference from unknown Star Domain radiation or Spiritual Energy fields,' or 'possible contact with unpurified ancient Spiritual Energy relics.' In short, there is no consistent conclusion, and no common external triggers were found. The Alliance tried coordinating cross-analysis of the data from various parties, but progress has been slow, as the data provided is not detailed enough due to concerns of safety and confidentiality."

He looked at Bai E, with a hint of probing in his tone: "Mr. Bai Er, you are a top expert in Spiritual Energy, having experienced countless battles and witnessed all kinds of... anomalies. From your experience, are there any... specific commonalities in these incidents? Or, have you sensed any unusual disturbances in the Spiritual Energy background of the recent Star Domain?"

Bai E remained silent for a moment.

His "Insect Race Killer" perception primarily targets the Bug Race, and although he is also attuned to a broader Spiritual Energy environment, such large-scale subtle changes are difficult to grasp without intentional scanning or tracking.

Moreover, after the Karian campaign, his own condition had not fully recovered, and his perceptive acuity had somewhat diminished.

"I have not been continuously monitoring the Spiritual Energy environment of the entire Star Domain," Bai E stated truthfully, "These incidents appear to be isolated individual losses of control, but if there is indeed a connection behind them, it is likely not just simple Spiritual Energy interference or contamination."

Since coming into the universe, he had never heard the humans in the universe speak of the dangers of those high-dimensional demons... Even back when he was on the planet, they had their share in posing the greatest threats to humanity.

"Is it possible... that it's an influence from a higher dimension?" Bai E proposed a possibility.

Based on the knowledge he brought from the planet and his experiences walking through high-dimensional space, high-dimensional demons are most skilled at and fond of tempting intelligent lifeforms to fall.

They distort their will, ignite the negative emotions within them, ultimately leading to loss of control or even mutation.

Spiritual Ability Users, due to their keen spiritual sense and close connection to higher dimensions, are often the primary targets.

Xing Zhuo's expression grew more somber upon hearing this. "Higher-dimensional influence... we have considered it. There is a department within the Alliance dedicated to the study and protection against higher-dimensional phenomena. But the problem is, according to the current monitoring methods, there has been no detection of large-scale higher-dimensional energy tides or significant demon activity

peaks recently. Furthermore, if it were the proactive erosion by high-dimensional demons, there would usually be more clear ritual characteristics, energy traces, or... objects of corruption often are those of weak will or malicious intent. Yet, many of these recently out-of-control Spiritual Ability Users are ordinary members with good records and clean backgrounds, some even newly awakened novices with relatively simple minds."

"Most importantly... the higher-dimensional space has been calm for a long time, and those mythical demons have not been active in the world for quite some time."

He sighed, "Precisely because there is no rational explanation, this kind of causeless disaster is more unsettling. Panic is quietly spreading among some of the middle to lower-level Spiritual Ability Users and related institutions. Some are beginning to fear using their Spiritual Energy, worried that the next loss of control might be their own. This is a significant blow to the overall use and development of Spiritual Energy for the Alliance."

Bai E nodded, he could understand the fear brought by such uncertainty.

He then thought of himself and dialed Catherine's communication, "Has there been any Spiritual Ability User losing control recently on Mine Star?"

"Spiritual Ability User losing control?" Catherine paused, seemingly searching the records, "Yes, but there's only one case, not a big deal."

Xing Zhuo, beside her, agreed, "That should be expected. First, there aren't many Spiritual Ability Users on Mine Star, aside from you and a few core members, there are only a few low-level Spiritual Ability Users discovered or naturally awakened from pirates and miners, sparse in number. Second, Ms. Catherine seems to be very concerned with monitoring the mental state of the Spiritual Ability Users, having established a basic regular check and psychological counseling mechanism."

This was indeed true.

Catherine, managing the Mine Star, deeply understood the importance of stability.

She had arranged relatively simple regular tests and interviews on Spiritual Energy stability for all registered personnel with Spiritual Energy potential or those already having it.

Though rudimentary, they at least provided a certain degree of warning and reassurance.

Even though Bai E's own state had not fully recovered, his powerful Spiritual Energy presence itself had an invisible stabilizing and purifying effect on the Spiritual Energy environment within the range of the Mine Star, which might be another unspoken protection factor.

"For now, we can only remain vigilant and enhance monitoring and protection," Bai E said, "If it's truly a higher-dimensional issue, passive defense won't suffice, and... their methods of infiltration might be more covert than we imagine."

He recalled those hidden deep among people and could even disguise flawlessly—the Chaos believers when he was still on the planet.

The Four High-Dimensional Gods' enticement always targeted the heart, leveraging desires, fears, pride, and despair.

Any weakness in people's hearts could easily be magnified under Their deliberate targeting.

The toughest battle he faced before growing was the first time confronting the Demon of Fear...

Chapter 987: Inspection Team (Part 2)

But at present, these out-of-control incidents appear more like random, isolated accidents, lacking a clear indication of conspiracy.

"Yes, that's all we can do." Xing Zhuo seemed a bit helpless, "I have already submitted the relevant situation and our concerns, along with some data on the Bug Race's disguised infiltration during the Karian campaign, to the Council's highest security committee. Hopefully it will attract higher-level attention, deploying more resources for investigation. However..."

He hesitated for a moment, "There are voices in the council that believe the current priority should be addressing the Bug Race threat and accelerating the development of the 'Divine Fragment' weapon. These small-scale spiritual energy incidents internally should be lower in priority. Especially... After you demonstrated such powerful personal combat strength, many people feel that the Bug Race is the only worthy enemy to worry about."

Bai E was not surprised by this.

"Prepare yourselves well." Bai E finally said, "Tell your people, if they spot any suspicious spiritual energy pollution signs, or if personnel exhibit inexplicable personality changes, frequent nightmares, abnormal interest in specific symbols or whispers, they must be vigilant, immediately isolate and report it. Sometimes, the seeds of disaster lie hidden in these subtle anomalies."

"Understood, I'll pass that on." Xing Zhuo solemnly agreed, ending the communication.

Bai E was left alone in the command room, looking through the observation window at the orbital shipyard gradually taking shape above the Mine Star.

The starry sky seemed calm, but the news Xing Zhuo brought implied that beneath this calmness, there was a hard-to-detect undercurrent hidden.

Is the loss of control of Spiritual Ability Users really just coincidental?

Or is it that, beyond the fangs of the Bug Race, another more invisible and insidious threat has already quietly begun to grow within the human Star Domain?

He didn't know the answer.

But he knew, whether it is the Bug Race or possibly an existing shadow from higher dimensions, to protect the newly budding home beneath his feet, he and his followers must become stronger and more vigilant.

And deep in the space of higher dimensions, the wills of those four ancient existences were looking satisfiably at the emerging sparks in the material world.

Loss of control, fear, suspicion, barriers... these are the best nutrients.

They were not in a rush; patient sowing and watering would ultimately allow the fruit of betrayal and chaos to mature again on the body of human civilization.

...

With the near blood-transfusion-like assistance from the Karian Federation and the Golden Swallow Trading Company, the Mine Star has been able to provide the best welfare policies within the Star Domain, attracting a large number of immigrants without stable industries to join.

In half a year, with the influx of abundant resources and manpower, there were earth-shattering changes on the surface of the Mine Star.

The previously dilapidated and scattered mining area settlements were completely transformed.

A new city— "New Jing City", centered on the original basic mining area, with orderly planning and clear functional zoning— rose from the ground.

Although the architectural style has a noticeable utilitarian character, far from luxurious, the sturdy alloy framework, stable energy supply, comprehensive circulation system, and basic public service facilities are enough for tens of millions of residents to live a life far surpassing the past.

At the city's center, a magnificent "Civilization Council Hall" and its adjacent "Technology Archive" were established, serving as the spiritual and knowledge center of New Bauhinia.

Though the archive is far from being enriched, it has at least symbolic significance.

Around the central area are academies, hospitals, workshops, markets, and... a building with a simple and solemn style, privately referred to by many as the "Holy Temple."

Despite Bai E's repeated public statements discouraging and not needing personal worship, that blue and white beam of light across the starry sky during the Karian campaign, alongside the god-like mecha figure, has already been imprinted in the minds of countless people.

The spontaneously gathered people, especially those he saved or who came in admiration among the new immigrants, began to silently pray and express respect in the "Holy Temple."

A belief in the personal power of "Bai E" quietly took root and spread among the populace.

Catherine and Gong Yan followed Bai E's instructions and tried to guide multiple times, but with little effect.

Regarding population, through various channels, the registered population of Mine Star surged within half a year, although still distant from the hard standard of one billion, it already far surpasses the initial barren state, and continues to grow rapidly.

More importantly, most of these new immigrants hold a high degree of recognition and belonging towards "New Bauhinia," which is valuable wealth exchanged with resources and policies.

In terms of technology, with the help of Karian engineers and some defecting scientists, the Mine Star established a basic industrial research and development system, able to digest, improve, and produce some existing technologies on a small scale, preliminarily possessing an "autonomous" embryonic form.

Militarily, besides the Seventh Legion, a "Planet Defense Army" primarily composed of new immigrants and miners' offspring was formed, although the equipment mostly relies on external sources, at least they have a framework.

Overall, despite the gap from a mature, deeply-rooted sovereign nation, the development speed, potential, and uniqueness Mine Star displayed within just half a year has garnered attention from many parties.

Of course, this near-barbaric growth inevitably caused dissatisfaction among some member states within the Peak Alliance, especially those who were initially hostile or wary towards Bai E and "Bauhinia."

They expressed protest through various channels, claiming Mine Star's population absorption affected their domestic stability, criticizing the Karian Federation for "assisting the enemy," and even suspecting Bai E of secretly engaging in illegal human trafficking or brainwashing.

However, under Bai E's soaring prestige and the explicit support from Karian and other countries, these murmurs were temporarily suppressed and couldn't form effective substantial obstruction.

As Mine Star rushed to prepare for the upcoming assessment, the Star Alliance's inspection team arrived on schedule.

This inspection team was not large, consisting of a medium-sized silver research ship and two escort ships, with the emblem of the Star Alliance—a star surrounded by olive branches—painted on the hull.

Their arrival was low-key yet formal, and they communicated with the Mine Star side through official channels ahead of time.

In the command center, Catherine, Gong Yan, Black Beast, and others appeared serious.

Although there is some confidence in their development, facing the Star Alliance—the highest joint organization ruling the known universe's human civilization—no one dared to be careless.

"The primary purposes of the Star Alliance inspection team are twofold." Catherine reported to Bai E, "First, to verify the actual situation of our 'Bauhinia Republic' reconstruction, assessing whether it meets the minimum standards of a Level 1 Sovereign Civilization. This is crucial for determining whether we can gain formal recognition in the Star Alliance from a legal standpoint. Second, to confirm the validity of our qualification as champions representing this Stellar District in the Star Alliance Grand Competition. According to the Star Alliance charter, the entity representing the Stellar District must be a sovereign state or political entity recognized by the Star Alliance."

Bai E nodded: "Arrange the reception, let me know when I am needed."

"Understood."

The members of the Star Alliance inspection team were not arrogant bureaucrats; instead, they demonstrated a high level of professionalism.

The team leader was a male scholar named Elorin, with a gentle disposition but sharp eyes, alongside the president of the Star Domain Competition Committee seen in the last competition.

After a brief welcoming ceremony, the assessment began immediately.

They delved into "New Jing City," assessing city layout, infrastructure, public services; visited newly established academies and technical workshops, conversing with engineers, teachers, and students to evaluate technological level and knowledge inheritance; randomly interviewed citizens about their living conditions, recognition and sentiment towards "New Bauhinia," and rights protection; reviewed the thick documents about national institutions, legal frameworks, and development plans prepared by Catherine's team; even requested to examine some economic operation data and material supply chain records.

The inspection was meticulous and comprehensive, lasting a whole week.

Throughout the process, Bai E only appeared at the initial and final stages, having brief discussions with Elorin.

Chapter 988: Bug Race Invades... and Dark Elves

Bai E candidly explained the initial intention of rebuilding Bauhinia, the challenges he faced, and the goals for the future, without exaggeration or deliberate flattery.

Elorin maintained a scholarly objectivity without being servile nor haughty, but Bai E could sense a trace of scrutiny and... perhaps even a hint of admiration deep within his gaze?

Was it curiosity about his personal strength or surprise at the development speed of Mine Star?

The atmosphere was heavy at the closed-door evaluation meeting after the assessment tour.

Elorin and his team members engaged in lengthy discussions.

Ultimately, Elorin, representing the assessment team, delivered a preliminary opinion:

"Mr. Bai Er, Ms. Catherine, and the managers of New Bauhinia."

Elorin's voice was steady, "After a week of on-site visits and reviewing the data, I represent the Star Alliance Civilization Council Evaluation Team No. 127, and present the following preliminary evaluation summary."

"Firstly, regarding the determination of the 'Bauhinia Republic' sovereignty reconstruction."

"Positive aspects: Within an extremely short timeframe, on a resource-scarce Mine Star, you have established major settlements equipped with basic functional zoning and public service capabilities;

preliminarily established frameworks covering basic education, healthcare, and industrial research; developed relatively complete legal regulations and management systems; attracted a considerable number of immigrants and have initially formed social cohesion and national identity. Particularly, in the face of external threats and fulfilling cosmic responsibilities, your decisiveness and action have been impressive."

"Shortcomings: The population base is still far from the Level 1 Sovereign Civilization standard of one billion; technological self-innovation capacity is weak, heavily reliant on external technological inputs and assistance; cultural accumulation and historical heritage are nearly absent, lacking a distinctive civilizational identity; military force structure is singular, heavily dependent on a few elite and core military forces, lacking a systematic, sustainable defense foundation."

"Comprehensive conclusion: Your developmental momentum and potential deserve recognition, especially considering achievements made under unique historical conditions and external environments. However, the current state still falls short of the Star Alliance Level 1 Sovereign Civilization standards in key metrics such as population, technological autonomy, and cultural uniqueness. The final determination will require submitting all assessment materials and evaluation reports to the Star Alliance Civilization Council for comprehensive review and voting. This process may take several months."

This conclusion was within Catherine and others' expectations.

Securing an evaluation of "potential deserving recognition" can be considered a green light, given they are rebuilding from ruins in such a short time.

"Secondly, regarding the validity of your participation qualification as champions of the Stellar District in the upcoming Star Alliance competition."

Elorin shifted his tone, "This part is related to the sovereignty determination but follows different charter provisions. According to supplementary clause No. 3 of the Star Alliance competition charter: If the original participating entity cannot compete due to force majeure, its successor entity within the original Stellar District, applying under the name of the original nation, and able to demonstrate 'effective national governance entity' status and 'basic capacity to represent the Stellar District' before the competition commences, can receive temporary qualification confirmation upon verification by a special assessment team from the competition committee, allowing it to represent the original Stellar District to compete. The final formal qualification shall be determined post-competition, based on the nation's recognition status."

He paused and looked at Bai E: "Our assessment finds that the governance entity currently demonstrated by 'New Bauhinia' possesses effective administrative management capabilities, stable social order, and... crucially, top-notch mech warrior battle power that meets the competition requirements. Therefore, we preliminarily determine that you meet the requirements for temporary competition qualification. We will report this conclusion to the Star Alliance competition committee. Once the committee grants final approval, you will be able to compete in the upcoming Star Alliance finals held at the center of the Milky Way under the name of the 'Bauhinia Republic,' representing this Stellar District."

This news invigorated everyone in the command center!

Although sovereignty recognition is pending, the most critical "knockdown argument" for competition qualification is about to be secured!

Participating in the Star Alliance finals, regardless of placement, will bring tremendous attention and potential development opportunities to "Bauhinia"!

"Thanks to scholar Elorin and the assessment team for the just evaluation." Catherine thanked on behalf of Mine Star, with a tone that couldn't hide her delighted excitement.

Elorin nodded, but his expression didn't relax; instead, it grew more solemn: "However, there are points I must remind you of."

"First, temporary competition qualification is not formal national recognition. During the competition and afterward, you must continue efforts to earn formal recognition at the Civilization Council."

"Second, the Star Alliance finals gather the Galactic best mech pilots and national powers. The competition is significantly more intense and perilous than Stellar District selections. You must prepare thoroughly."

"Third, and most importantly," Elorin's gaze swept over everyone before landing on Bai E.

"During our assessment, we also focused on the macro situation of this Star Domain. The Bug Race threat hasn't diminished after the Karian engagement; instead, according to intelligence from the higher-ranking Star Alliance network, new Bug Race fleet shadows are appearing at the Star Domain edge, seemingly conducting some form of new assembly or maneuvering. While specific targets are uncertain, given your star's edge location and possessing high-threat objectives like Mr. Bai E, the possibility of becoming a target for Bug Race attacks isn't ruled out. The Star Alliance cannot provide direct military protection for every member or candidate, especially before formal recognition. You must possess the capability to independently confront potential threats, or... have reliable ally support."

Chapter 989: Invasion of the Bug Race... and the Dark Elf (2)

These words cast a shadow over the joy that had just arisen.

The Bug Race forever remains the Damocles' sword hanging overhead.

"We understand," Bai E calmly responded, "We will be prepared to face any threat."

Elorin seemed to want to say more, but finally just nodded: "Then, our investigation mission ends here. We will organize and submit the relevant data and reports as soon as possible. Wish you... good luck."

The Star Alliance's expedition ship slowly ascended, preparing to leave Mine Star's orbit.

Inside the command center, the atmosphere was complex.

There was the exhilaration of gaining temporary tournament qualifications, the helplessness over the lengthy process of sovereignty recognition, and the deep anxiety over the Bug Race threat.

"At least we got the ticket," Catherine sighed with relief, "The next focus is preparing for the Star Alliance grand finals, while accelerating development, striving for early formal recognition."

"About the Bug Race..." Gong Yan furrowed her brow, "We need to enhance vigilance and intelligence gathering, maintain close communication with the Karian Federation and Xing Zhuo."

Bai E stood by the porthole, gazing at the starry sky.

Elorin's warning was not baseless.

His "Insect Race Killer" perception had recently faintly sensed an extremely vague yet indeed malicious Spiritual Energy disturbance, like being watched in the dark.

Only this disturbance was too weak and scattered to accurately pinpoint.

"Proceed according to plan," Bai E ordered, "Seventh Legion and Planet Defense Army enter second-level combat readiness, enhance orbital patrols and early warning networks. Accelerate the final phase of 'New Jing City' fortifications. Meanwhile, notify Kuang Xin, and have 'Dusk's fleet maintain a certain level of alert, but don't overreact to avoid unnecessary tensions."

"Yes!"

The group departed with their orders, yet at that instant, Mine Star's long-range warning array issued a piercing alarm!

"Detected massive spatial disturbance! Location: third asteroid belt direction outside the mining area! Disturbance characteristics... highly consistent with Bug Race biological giant ship jump signals!" The monitor's voice was filled with panic.

On the tactical display in the command center, several red dots representing high-intensity spatial disturbances were rapidly becoming clear and stable.

"Count... five... no, six ships! Six Bug Race biological giant ships! Coming out of jump state!" The monitor's pitch suddenly rose, "And numerous accompanying signals! It's the Bug Race's escort units and swarms! Their... their target is us!"

The alarm instantly resonated throughout "New Jing City" and orbital facilities.

People who had just been immersed in the joy of development and wartime atmosphere were pulled back to the cruel reality.

The Bug Race fleet really came!

And this time, it's six biological giant ships!

Not only exceeding the number from Karian, but no one knew whether they had evolved new abilities.

"All units, enter first-level combat state!" Bai E's voice broadcasted over all channels, calm and resolute, "Repeat, all units, enter first-level combat state! Orbital Defense Platform, Seventh Legion, Planet Defense Army Space Forces, deploy formations as planned, prepare to engage the enemy! Ground forces, guide civilians into shelters, activate 'Sky Dome' shield prototype, prioritize the protection of 'New Jing City' and key facilities!"

Inside "New Jing City," amid the piercing air raid alarms, trained militia and security teams swiftly mobilized, guiding citizens to evacuate in an orderly manner.

The Star Alliance expedition ship that had just ascended was also forced back to the ground, their ship's radar capturing the Bug Race biological fleet's information... no one expected them to come so quickly.

"What should we do? King of Purple Orchid..." Elorin returned once more, though hurried, he still maintained a calm demeanor.

"Only war." Bai E strode toward the frontline combat command center.

"We can only rely on you..." Elorin followed closely, surprisingly not too pessimistic about possibly perishing with this planet in the Bug's belly, "Being able to witness you fight the Bug Race up close is truly our honor."

...

The newly built "Sky Dome" shield generator began charging, a faint blue energy membrane faintly visible over the city skyline.

In orbit, the three main ships of the Seventh Legion and several newly added small escort ships quickly formed a defensive formation with the two newly built orbital defense platforms.

The Planet Defense Army's space fighters flocked out from their hangars.

Everyone knew this would be a tougher battle than the Karian campaign.

Because this time, they didn't have a complete planetary defense system like Karian, nor the possibility of having fifty billion souls' will blessing.

They could rely only on half a year's accumulated resources, and... the leader who once created miracles.

Bai E was already heading into the mecha repository.

The "Star Emperor" mecha, after repairs and partial upgrades following the Karian campaign, was in better condition than before.

But he was aware, this time, the Bug Race would surely come prepared.

They won't forget the lessons from Karian.

The Brain Worm will hide deeper, tactics will be more cunning, and might even design traps specifically targeting him.

"Catherine, Black Beast, prepare mechas, follow me in the first wave assaults for probing attacks, evaluate enemy strength and new changes. Gong Yan, you remain in the command center, coordinate defense and logistics. Kuang Xin, 'Dusk' fleet remains on standby, without my order, do not reveal, serving as the last surprise force."

"Understood!" The group responded in unison.

Bai E sat in the "Star Emperor's" cockpit, system startup, Spiritual Energy link interconnected.

He felt the surging power fed back from the mecha and sensed the cold and hungry Spiritual Energy wave emanating from afar by those four giant ships.

...

Seeing the Bug Race fleet arriving as expected, the few members of the Peak Alliance observing in secrecy had a look of fulfilling conspiracy in their eyes.

"They really came."

"Using alien forces to deal with our own, we have become the type of people we once despised..."

"For the stable future of humanity, some level of adaptation is necessary. The sons of the Empire indicated years ago how a powerful individual could easily cause uncontrollable losses. Compared to external threats, these internal hazards deserve more of our attention."

"But are these bugs truly a problem we can solve?"

Looking at the Bug Race biological fleet floating in cold cosmic space outside the porthole, they were far more hideous and massive than any Bug Race fleet seen prior.

Navigating in the universe like a swarm of cold and heartless locusts, rushing toward the life planet that had just blossomed with a touch of vitality.

Watching shadows of these Bug Race fleets, several humans only felt a shudder from deep within their souls.

"Rest assured, aren't we the ones who invited those..."

The speaker's gaze shifted towards one side of the porthole—

There, a few slender and cold ships silently floated within the cosmos.

Their shapes were strange, completely different from human vessels.

At first glance, like intricately designed branches, or a gigantic key... possessing aesthetics entirely dissimilar to humans.

Among them were the rumors of the Master of the Universe from the prior era—

Elves.

"But are they reliable?" The Peak Alliance person's eyes held concern.

If they were orthodox elves, claiming to help, then naturally reliable...

But it was evident, given their reputation and strength, they couldn't possibly invite orthodox elves.

What came were Dark Elves...

Chapter 990: Despair

The alarms were piercing, as the Bug Race fleet, resembling six meteors trailing eerie green tails, tore through the tranquility of Mine Star's outskirts.

Many mechas shot out from the "Shield of Defense" space station like reverse-moving meteors, charging towards the Bug Race fleet.

During Mine Star's six-month rapid development period, in addition to the newly recruited mobile warriors, Kuang Xin and his "Dusk" security company's former pirates-turned-experienced mecha fighters formed several auxiliary strike teams.

These teams accompanied Bai E, Catherine, and other main forces, like a reverse iron meteor shower, attempting to clear a path for the leaders or execute harassment and interception missions.

Yet, the battle plunged into anticipated difficulties from the onset.

The Bug Race fleet had evidently absorbed lessons from the previous two encounters.

Unlike in Karian, they did not try to initially cover with dense firepower or dispatch large numbers of bugs for frontal assaults.

Instead, the six biological warships, upon entering long-range fire range, did not rush to attack the orbital defense facilities of Mine Star, but rather began to disperse and maneuver in a bizarre but efficient manner.

Numerous openings on the warships' surfaces unleashed countless types of new "floating organisms."

These units were much smaller than regular flying bugs, only the size of a mecha's fist, entirely translucent, with faint spiritual energy glows flickering inside.

Their movement trajectories were erratic and fast, like phosphorescent lights or ghosts in the cosmos, swarming Bai E's team and Mine Star's defensive positions.

"Beware! They're new units!" Catherine's warning echoed in the tactical channel.

The attack method of these floating organisms was neither traditional acid nor bone spikes.

Once close to the target, they would self-detonate, releasing intense spiritual interference pulses and high-intensity electromagnetic radiation.

Although the explosive power of individual blasts couldn't penetrate mecha shields, they were too numerous, and the explosions' spiritual pulses severely interfered with mecha sensors, fire control systems, and even the stability of spiritual energy links.

For humans who rely on sophisticated equipment and spiritual energy coordination in warships and mechas, this harassment tactic was incredibly nauseating and effective.

Even more troubling were those six Bug Race motherships themselves.

Unlike before, when they advanced slowly like moving fortresses or remained stationary as turrets, they began irregularly high-speed movements on the battlefield with astonishing acceleration, like six giant whales swimming in the deep sea, their trajectories unpredictable.

While moving, they intermittently sprayed precise plasma beams or acid barrages from various parts of their hull, attacking Mine Star's orbital defense platforms and approaching mechas.

Bai E attempted to lead the mobile warrior team to forcibly break through the floating organisms' harassment, closing in on one of the giant ships for jump ship operations —

This was the most effective way they had experienced against the Bug Race fleet.

However, the Bug Race tactics had clearly strengthened against this point.

Whenever the "Star Emperor" mecha, relying on its outstanding performance and "Insect Race Killer" perception, narrowly penetrated the floating organisms' interception to lock onto a giant ship, that ship would accelerate instantly and change direction.

Additionally, more dense floating organism swarms would launch from the ship's surface, forming a moving "Spiritual Minefield" composed of self-detonation units, forcing Bai E to abandon the chase or expend massive energy on defense and clearing.

Other giant ships would seize the opportunity to launch precise volleys from the flanks or rear, forcing Bai E to defend or evade.

The spiritual coordination of the Bug Race fleet reached unprecedented heights, as if controlled by a unified and incredibly calm will, seamlessly combining harassment, maneuvering, and fire suppression, completely denying Bai E any opportunity for close jump ship operations.

"They're delaying! Consuming us!"

Black Beast roared in the channel, her "Night Owl" mecha's actions had become sluggish due to continuous interference from the floating organisms' self-detonation pulses, and her armor bore numerous charred marks.

Catherine's "Silver Feather" attempted to use sniping for precise long-range strikes, but the interference from floating organisms made aiming extremely difficult, and the special armor-piercing rounds mostly were dodged by the giant ships or deflected by the momentarily lighting spiritual shields on their surfaces, with little effect.

Bai E's expression was solemn.

He realized that the Bug Race's purpose this time was very clear:

To use absolute numerical superiority, new harassment units, and flexible tactics to maximally deplete Mine Star's limited defensive power, while focusing on limiting him, the greatest threat.

They weren't rushing to destroy Mine Star in one go; instead, they wanted to gradually erode all resistance, like a dull knife cutting meat.

The situation quickly deteriorated.

Those newly recruited warriors, modified mechas of former pirates, and "Dusk" mecha warriors became the first sacrifices under the dense interference of floating organisms and the precise sniper shots of Bug Race giant ships.

Their mecha shields overloaded under continuous pulse explosions, sensors malfunctioned, actions became delayed, and they were subsequently consumed by plasma beams or acid barrages.

In space, small fireballs constantly erupted, each representing the fall of a mecha and a warrior.

The communications channel was filled with short screams, desperate cries, and system failure alarms.

Kuang Xin's mecha warriors, despite their bravery, faced unprecedented tactical tactics beyond their previous experience, making their wild fighting skills seem pale, suffering especially heavy casualties.